



A local grocery store keeps small rural communities alive. A community-owned store supports the local economy, preserves the town's local character and provides access to food. It is about quality of life. Restoring this quality-of-life amenity was a major driver behind the establishment of Valley Foods Cooperative in Lynch, Nebraska. Two years after the local grocery store closed, residents in Lynch began to explore reopening the store as a cooperative. With technical assistance from the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center and Rural Prosperity Nebraska, the cooperative opened in early 2022, restoring grocery access in Lynch. "This is about quality of life," said Janie Fisher, Valley Foods Cooperative board member.

Since 2000

Worked in

➤ 157 Communities

Worked on

➤ 300 Projects

Helped Form

➤ 50 Cooperatively operated businesses

➤ 6 Non-profits

➤ 2 Business associations

Dedicated to assisting people prosper in rural Nebraska through all stages of cooperative business development, the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC) is located in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. NCDC programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. NCDC is funded in part by the USDA RCDG Grant Program.



**STRENGTHEN NEBRASKA
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**INSPIRE NEBRASKANS &
THEIR COMMUNITIES**

**ENHANCE THE HEALTH &
WELLBEING OF ALL
NEBRASKANS**



Arapahoe Homecare Worker Cooperative

Arapahoe's long-term care facility closed December 31, 2022. Families scrambled to find alternative places for loved ones, moving from their familiar community to a place unknown. Communities like Arapahoe are exploring home and placement options, including a homecare worker cooperative.

"In the absence of nursing care facilities, communities just need to be focused on what their residents need that we have to just do," said Arapahoe resident Heidi Thomas. "We just have to get past the fact that someone else used to do these things and now we have to do it."

Heidi Thomas, Arapahoe, Nebraska Advocate, credit Omaha World Herald.

Cooperatives Making a Difference in Communities

Many rural and urban communities face increasing challenges to maintain and support their locally-based stores and provide much needed services such as childcare and adult homecare.

Innovative solutions are emerging with the cooperative model

- Four **cooperative grocery stores** opened in Nebraska in the last two years - Farm to Family Cooperative in Hays Springs; Post 60 Market in Emerson; Valley Foods Cooperative in Lynch and Centennial Market Cooperative in Utica.
- **Real estate investment cooperatives** focus on benefits to the community. The investment approach gives individuals an avenue for working together to make things happen.
- Salt Slope is a **worker owned cooperative farm** located on three acres outside of Lincoln, Nebraska. Incorporated in 2022, Salt Slope owns and works the land with a goal of increasing Lincoln's food sovereignty.
- **Childcare cooperatives** can be organized by parents, employer assisted, worker-owned or a combination of the above.
- **Home care cooperatives** can be a viable option for housing elderly citizens within their own communities.

The Cooperative Advantage

- Provide a service or fill a need in the community
- Reduce individual investment risk
- Expand investment capacity
- Enhance economic opportunities
- And, more...



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