About NCDC

NCDC assists groups and communities who are exploring or have formed a cooperative business. NCDC can guide a cooperative effort from visioning to implementation. Services include facilitation, providing resources, technical assistance, and education.

About Cooperatives

Cooperatives are user-owned and user-controlled businesses *formed to benefit a group of members*. Cooperatives are designed to reward use, encourage users to commit to using the services, and encourage users to voice opinions about how the business is doing. Cooperatives may be formed to:

- Provide a service or fill a need in the community.
- Improve bargaining power.
- Reduce individual investment costs.
- Obtain products or services otherwise unavailable.
- Expand new and existing market opportunities.
- Increase income.

Benefits of a Cooperative

- Preserve town's local character.
- Support local economies.
- Complement other local businesses.
- Create a sense of place and pride in the community.

Process

- Explore the possibilities.
- Assess feasibility & plan.
- Implementation.

Considerations in Exploration

- Exploring the Concept
  - What is the Business Concept?
  - What is the need (that you want) to be address?
  - What is the vision for the grocery store?
  - What type of understanding or awareness is needed to pursue the opportunity?
  - Is a co-op the best structure to meet our shared need?
- Willingness to Work Together
  - Are you willing to create overall plans together?
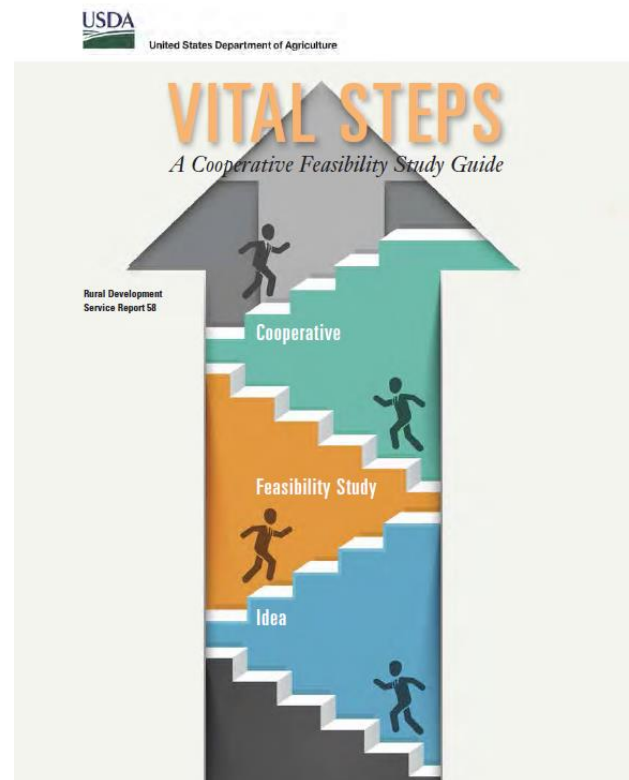
- o Are you willing to invest together?
- o Are you willing to make decisions together?
- o Are there a group of people interested and willing to invest the time and energy to start the business?
- o Are you looking for a long-term, sustainable solution?
- o Do you need/want to have control of the business for long term sustainability after it is formed?

If the answer is yes, identify people (a steering team) to begin working on the feasibility. Feasibility includes the finance, community support, organizational structure and more.

What Will be Expected of Steering Team Members

- Contribute to the exploration of a cooperative/multi-owner approach.
- Reach out to community members to be members of a potential cooperative.
- Explore the various models and look at the feasibility of the grocery store.
- Listen to the community members and represent the community in the process.
- Form subcommittees as needed to move forward. Subcommittees and examples of responsibilities may include:
  - o **Finance** – Identify initial financing options, track monies, create a financial and business plan.
  - o **Facilities** – Solicit quotes from contractors for building repairs and/or remodeling, determine any necessary insurance companies for building and equipment coverages.
  - o **Business Operations** – Identify legal council and accounting firm. Solicit insurance coverages appropriate to company, investigate legal entity choices, determine business name, and identify vendors.
  - o **Public Relations** – Option to create a survey if interested. Plan and coordinate community meetings, updates, and recruit membership.

For more information, contact:

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Learn from Others

Other Rural Community Examples – *Stapleton,Elwood, O'Dell, Friend, Cody*

Nebraska Grocery Industry Association *Focuses on the grocery store industry exploring regulations and policy..*

USDA How to Start a Cooperative *Many resources relative to cooperatives.*

Rural Grocery Store Intiative *Kansas State Rural Grocery Initiative (RGI) is to provide resources to help sustain and enhance independently-owned rural grocery stores.*

Food Cooperative Guide *Guide to assist in walking thru steps to form a food cooperative (focused on organic).*

Regulations for Food Establishment Operations *Regulations and policies regarding Nebraska food establishments.*

Buy Fresh Buy Local *Connects Nebraskans to Local Farms and Foods*