



NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER

Program Overview & Details



Purpose

The USDA Regional Food Business Centers are established to drive economic opportunities across their region, creating a more diversified and resilient food system.



Center Design

The USDA Regional Food Business Centers are designed to:

Create opportunities for targeted, region-specific solutions.

Maximize locally driven investment impact.

Complement and support other USDA programs.

Collaborate with USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to ensure ongoing, regionally appropriate support and coordination.



Three Main Responsibilities

Coordination - Act as regional hubs coordinating across geographic areas, with USDA, other federal, state, and tribal agencies with relevant resources, regional commissions, and the other Regional Food Centers. They also conduct outreach to underinvested communities and businesses.

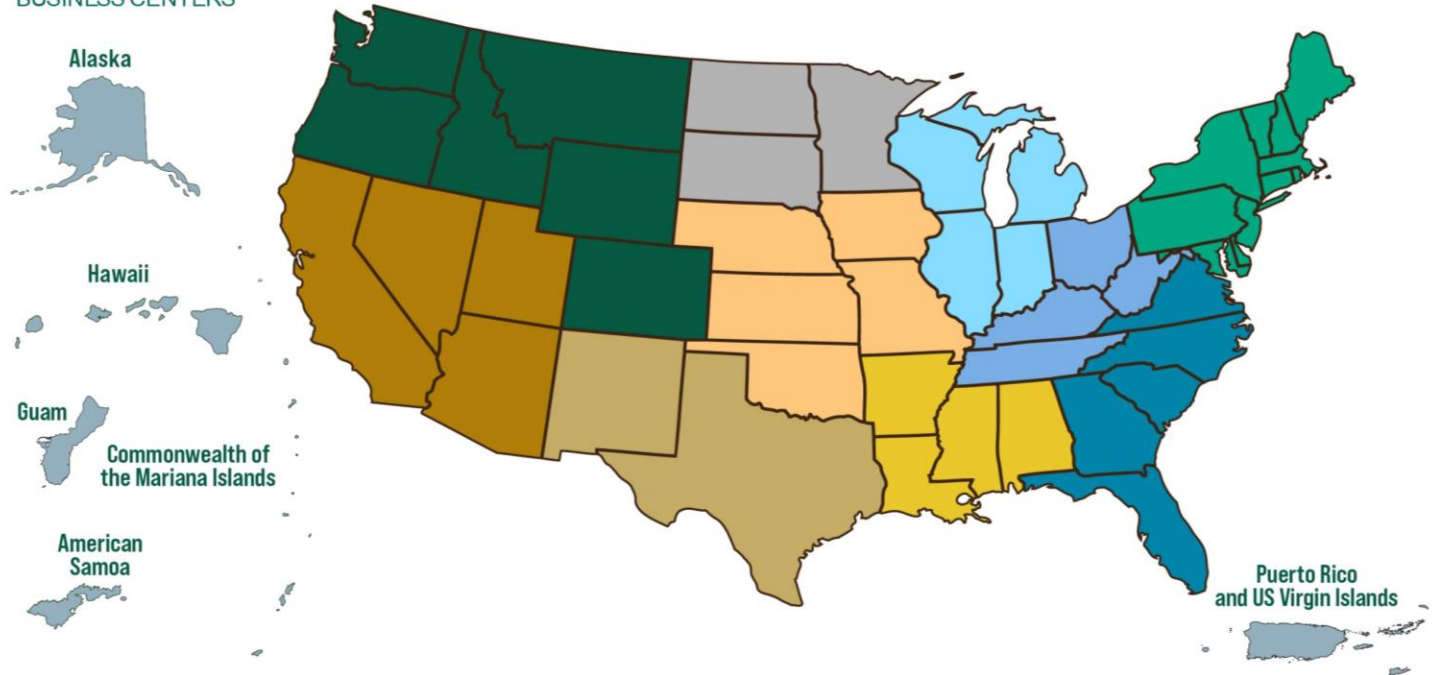
Technical Assistance - Provide direct business technical assistance to small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses (producers, processors, distributors, and other businesses within the food supply chain) and food value and supply chain coordination.

Capacity Building - Provide financial assistance through business builder subawards up to \$100,000 to support projects focused on emerging regional needs and businesses that are working towards expansion and other investment.

Center Locations



USDA Regional Food Business Centers Geographic Regions



★ National Intertribal Food Business Center - Intertribal Agriculture Council will serve tribes nationwide. ★

Northwest and Rocky Mountain
Colorado State University

Southwest
University of California
(This Center will serve the Colonias counties in California and Arizona.)

North Central
Region Five Development Commission

Heartland
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Rio Grande Colonias
Texas A&M AgriLife
(This Center will serve the Colonias counties in New Mexico and Texas.)

Great Lakes Midwest
Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems

Delta
Mississippi Delta Council for Farmworker Opportunities

Appalachia
Rural Action, Inc.

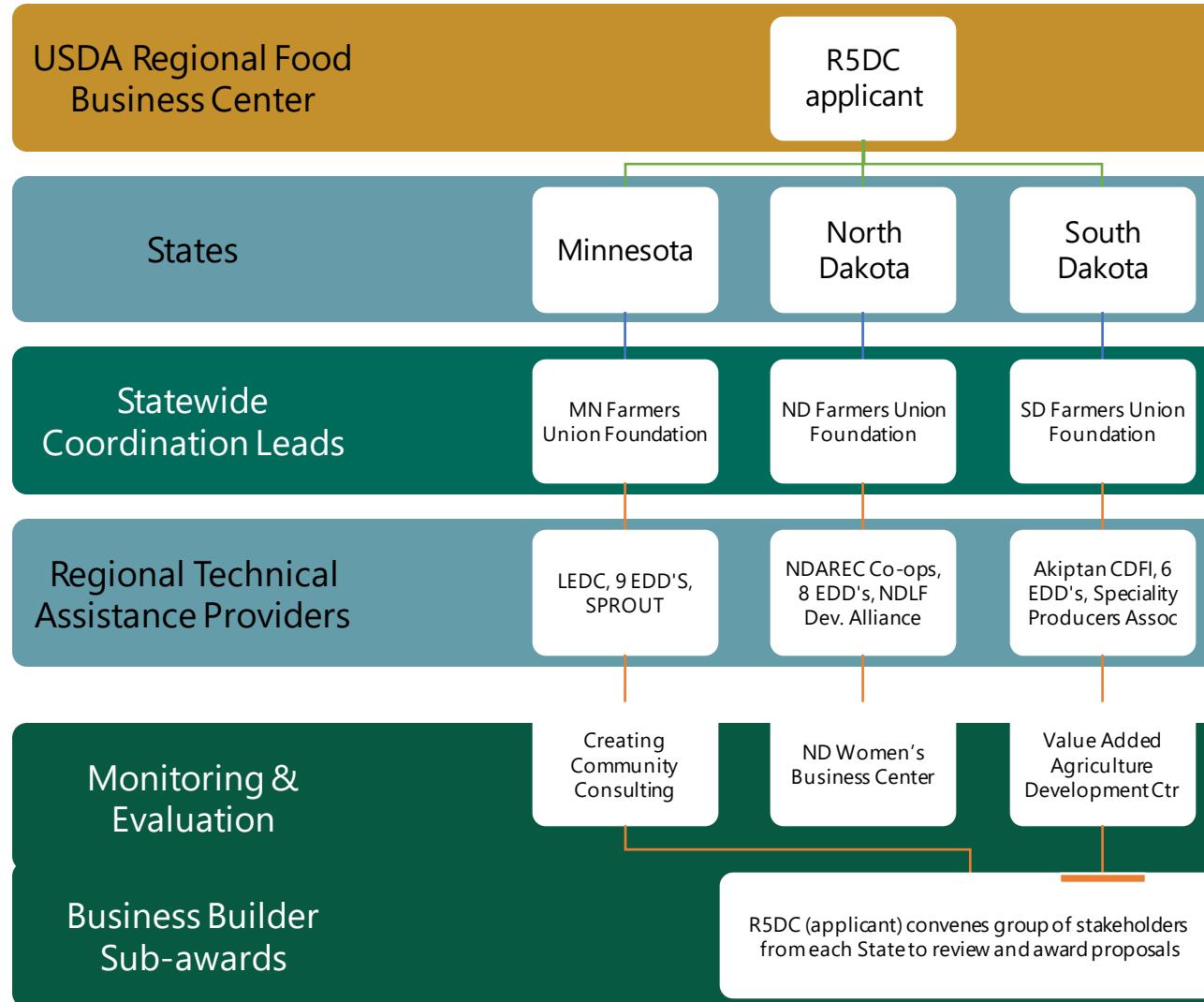
Northeast
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Foundation

Southeast
Georgia Minority Outreach Network

Islands and Remote Areas
Hawaii Good Food Alliance

**These boundaries are not rigid but for visualization purposes only. USDA anticipates collaboration with communities across state and county lines.*

Organizational Chart





Partner Organizations

Representing Minnesota

- Northspan
- **Creating Community Consulting**
- East Central Regional Development Commission
- Headwaters Regional Development Commission
- **Latino Economic Development Center**
- Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
- **Minnesota Farmers Union**
- Northwest Regional Development Commission
- Region Five Development Commission
- Region Nine Development Commission
- Southwest Regional Development Commission
- Sprout MN
- Upper Minnesota Valley River Regional Development Commission

Representing North Dakota

- Lake Agassiz Development Group
- North Central Planning Council
- **North Dakota Farmers Union**
- ND Rural Electric Cooperative Foundation
- **ND Women's Business Center**
- **ND Local Foods Development Alliance & FARMS**
- Red River Regional Council
- Roosevelt Custer Regional Council for Dev.
- Souris Basin Planning Council
- South Central Dakota Regional Council
- Tri-County Regional Development Council

Representing South Dakota

- **Akiptan**
- Central South Dakota Enhancement District
- District iii
- First District Association of Local Governments
- Northeast Council of Governments
- Black Hills Council of Local Governments
- **Value Added Agriculture Development Center**
- SD Specialty Producers Association
- **South Dakota Farmers Union**
- South Eastern Council of Governments

TEAL = Coordinators

BLACK = TA providers

BLUE = Advisory TA providers

GOLD = Evaluators

Coordinator Responsibilities

Coordinators:
MN, ND, SD
Farmers Unions

Statewide Coordinators **host every other monthly online updates with all statewide TA providers, and evaluators** to identify needs, share progress and lessons learned; special presentations based on identified needs and by USDA program experts and BIPOC-led groups to allow for service refinement.

Coordination of guest speakers on Zoom calls held every other month, such as; Tribal food sovereignty organizations, Urban Ag groups, organizations including faith-based groups engaged in food access, philanthropy committed to climate change solutions and food security, underserved community producer groups and populations, niche producers &/or producer groups such as wild rice or Kernza and underserved supply chain businesses. Coordinators will take notes of important information that would inform the evaluation.

Work together to **host an annual 2-Day Summit** attended by ALL TA Providers, Evaluation partners, USDA, and guest speakers.

Promote Technical Assistance to producers, and producer groups with an intentional focus on underserved producers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and other businesses within the supply chain.

Advisory Technical Assistance (TA) Responsibilities

MN: Latino Economic
Development Corporation

ND: Local Foods
Development Alliance

SD: Akiptan

Attend statewide Kick-off meetings and annual Exchange Summits.

Conduct outreach to respective communities and regional value-chain businesses to assist other TA providers in the development of a regional action plan that will include implementation and. Inviting and bringing together culturally specific small- and mid-sized food value chain businesses.

Attend and secure a speaker to present on food value-chain cultural topics at each annual Summit. Throughout the training and summits, it is imperative for TA providers who do not have direct contact with Tribal, Latinx, and niche or underserved value chain businesses to learn the nuances of serving diverse communities and markets. Presentations could include best practices, showcasing a specific project, or a panel of guests to share challenges and opportunities.

Secure a representative to serve on the Business Builder grant review committee.

Ensure survey collection from Business Builder awardees from your respective States. This task is intended to offer assistance to any of the Business Builder awardees in your State to complete the required surveys that allow for responsive evaluation and program revisions.

Offer one recorded Zoom workshop a year. Business development services or any training including financial literacy, legal and regulatory awareness, succession planning, record keeping, and other topics identified and prioritized in the Regional Action Plans. The entire North Central RFBC will promote the workshops and the North Central RFBC supports presenting workshops in native languages other than English if desired.

Evaluator Partner Responsibilities

MN: Creating Community
Consulting

ND: Women's Business
Center

SD: Value Added
Agriculture Development
Center

Develop and monitor the Evaluation Plan.

Take the lead in compiling data for USDA AMS Semi-annual reports that capture information about the Regional Food Center's operation as a whole and from Coordinators, TA Providers, and Business Builder sub-award recipients.

Deliverables include:

Design and collect data – per the *Evaluation Plan* from:

- TA providers
- Small and mid-sized companies who receive TA from the TA Providers
- Business Builder Award recipients
- Annual Summits to capture personal testimony as to the impact of this learning/sharing time and approach.

Attend every-other month state calls hosted by the Statewide Coordination Leads (AKA the Farmer's Unions). These calls are intended to offer TA providers time to share progress and challenges as well as hear from a variety of guest speakers about programs that may assist their value chain. It will be important for the evaluators to harvest information about potential ripple impacts that might otherwise be missed in the notes taken by Farmer's Unions.

Host Zoom meeting interviews a year to collect more in-depth information from Business Builder awardees. Evaluators allow for deeper conversations about lessons learned, opportunities & challenges.

Attend the Kick-off meeting and Annual Summit. This is an opportunity to capture information that might otherwise be missed.

Semi-annual reporting to USDA AMS. Semi-annual reports indicate how we are progressing toward achieving the Evaluation Plan target goals and will be submitted to USDA and shared on the North Central Regional Food Business Center website.

Financial Summary

Amount = \$15M

- Lead Applicant 7%
- Partners 70%
- Business Builders 23%

Regranting Portion

- \$1.0M for MN
- \$1.0M for ND
- \$1.350M for SD

Term: 5 Years

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER

by the numbers

- 1** USDA Cooperative Agreement
- 3** States (MN, ND, SD)
- 5** Years
- 15** Million Dollars
- 35** Partners



Business Builder Sub-Awards

- Once a year open application period
- Max \$50,000.00 awards – No match – 2-year implementation period
- Review committee comprised of 5 individuals from each State
- Eligible applicants: small to mid-sized value chain businesses (producers/growers, aggregators, distributors, processors, and food access points)
- Eligible uses: staff time, business planning activities (market analysis, feasibilities, EIA's) software implementation, equipment, marketing, and more.

Priority is given to:

- Applicants within or serving priority distressed zip codes
 - Minority or underserved applicants (Veterans, women, BIPOC, disabled, low-income, other)
 - Groups or consortiums of small to mid-sized value-chain businesses
 - Those that are receiving or have received Technical Assistance from TA providers
 - Those seeking to expand markets to institutions
 - Those meeting a specific market bottleneck or meeting ACTION PLAN goals
 - Equitable geographic distribution across each State.



Are you a potential collaborator?

Opportunities for all other organizations/groups to serve this effort:

1. Participate in regional Action Planning.
2. Present as a guest speaker:
 - Every-other month calls hosted by Farmers Unions (Coordinators)
 - Annual Exchange Summits
3. Deliver services covered by a Business Builder Sub-award or other funding investments secured independently or by the TA Providers.



REGION FIVE
Development Commission

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regionfive.org/rfbc