

Heartland Food Business Bytes

June 2025
Issue 6

Still here. Working hard.

We're not sure if "no news is good news," but the Heartland Regional Food Business Center continues to operate while we wait on final word from USDA regarding review of programs. In January, USDA paused payments to the Heartland Center, among other USDA-supported programs, while the review takes place.



Business Builder Still on Hold

Given this uncertainty, the Heartland Center was unable to award its first round of Business Builder grants to **89 finalists** across Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and northwest Arkansas. The Heartland Center also put on hold the opening of its final round 2 of the **Business Builder** grant.

5-State Meetup

In the meantime, the Heartland Center's 32 **partners** continue to provide food and farm business support the region to the best of their ability.

We are also thinking through what we can do to continue building regional collaboration in support of local and regional food businesses and supply chains.

The Heartland Center recently convened state and tribal leaders of related USDA programs in our region: The Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI), Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA), and Local Food for Schools (LFS) programs. The meeting highlighted innovations and opportunities for growing the capacity of local and regional food entities to deliver on the sector's potential.

Local Food Grant Opportunities

Heads up! Applications are open for three USDA programs authorized and secured by mandatory Farm Bill funding. **Applications are due June 27,**

2025.

USDA's Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) provides grants to help local and regional food entities develop, coordinate, and expand producer to consumer marketing, local and regional food markets, and local food enterprises.



<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lamp>

1. The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) supports producer to consumer markets, such as farmers markets, roadside stands, agritourism activities and community-supported agriculture.
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>
2. The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) supports local and regional food businesses that facilitate indirect producer to consumer marketing (such as food hubs, food processing, and storage).
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>
3. The Regional Food System Partnerships Program (RFSP) supports partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

Check out informational webinars for these LAMP grants. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/webinars>

Consider signing up to be a grant reviewer. Stipends available at \$200 per proposal reviewed. More here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/peer-review>

Contact us at the Heartland Center if you would like to explore connecting with others or getting input on your proposal. Email us at hrfbc@newgrowthmo.org.

Around the Region



Thriving Business is Born

Bevin Brooks owns one of dozens of small farm and food businesses that have started up successfully since the Heartland Regional Food Business Center just last year, in 2024, began putting more boots on the ground to help.

The Kansas City entrepreneur credits her Heartland Center business coach, Jenny Doty, based at K-State Research and Extension, for essential resources and connections. Brooks has used every one of those resources to grow her Lionberry "farm-to-sports drink" business.

It's the specific knowledge of food and farm markets and resources that makes the difference, Brooks said. "I really like that Jenny is someone I can go to who understands the questions I'm asking."

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Iowa Builds Small Food Processing Momentum

Iowa's first-ever Shared-Use Kitchen Workshop March 31–April 1, 2025, brought food entrepreneurs from 25 communities across the state together with each other and with business support staff at Iowa State University Extension, a key Heartland Center partner.

Already, new shared use kitchens are on their way to getting started, said ISU Food Business Specialist Penny Brown Huber. ISU plans to hold the event annually to keep momentum going.

Workshop participants are also taking the lead. They have formed a statewide working group to continue learning and collaborating on shared-use kitchen development.

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Shared Kitchens Build Food Business Community

The Shared Kitchen in Wichita, Kansas, offers essential space and equipment for food enterprises, business networking, and mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs like owner Diane Kriwiel.

Today, The Shared Kitchen regularly welcomes a diverse array of chefs and food artisans. The eclectic mix includes bakers, candy makers, caterers, and international cuisine.

Heartland Food Business Center partners in Kansas are working to build awareness of incubator kitchen resources and support the state's small and startup food business community.

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Nebraska Study Highlights Food and Farm Opportunity

Nebraska saw a blossoming of its local food scene after a statewide study in 2010 showed how much residents depend on global markets for food. A 2025 update to that study provides another enlightening view of how much the state's farms depend on volatile global markets, and how much they could make with more Nebraska local food purchasing and market development.

"If each Nebraska resident purchased \$5 of food each week directly from farms within the state, this would generate \$512 million of new farm income," said Kjersten Hyberger, local foods associate with Heartland Center partner the Center for Rural Affairs.

Community health benefits, through greater access to fresh and nutrient-dense foods, are among the opportunities that the study indicates could result from diverting even a fraction of the \$5 billion per year that Nebraskans spend buying food that is sourced from out of the state.

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Resources and Events

Farm and Food Celebration - June 13 - Grinnell, IA

Kansas Local Food Summit - July 29-30 - Salina, KS

Get information on events, webinars, and training around the region.

[See Events](#)

You're welcome to also [submit](#) your Events, News, or Resources!

Farm to Fork Heartland Facebook Group

For buyers, sellers and support organizations- including farmers markets, food hubs, and food system professionals across Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and NW Arkansas: share your events, resources, and opportunities!

Encourage farm and food businesses receiving technical assistance to join and showcase their products or needs here.

[Join the Facebook Group](#)





The Heartland Regional Food Business Center helps farm and food enterprises develop local and regional food businesses and markets.

Partners provide assistance from startup through growth, and also support supply chain connections.

Heartland Partners Map

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