



*“Implementing and Evaluating Your Healthy
Food Project: Building and Sustaining
Public Issue Partnerships”*

*A presentation to the CED/JOLI
Grantee Conference*

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Kansas State University's Center for Engagement and Community Development

Mission

To connect the resources and expertise of Kansas State University to the significant issues of public need facing Kansans and communities worldwide.





Public Issue Partnerships

Definition:

- Projects formed explicitly to address social / political / economic issues and actively engage partners on an ongoing basis.
 - Partnerships involve organizations rather than individuals
 - Partnership is cross-sectional rather than within sector
 - Partnership focus is broad-based public issue



Public Issue Partnerships

Partnership Development and Maintenance
is Ongoing:

- Partnership Formation
- Partnership Implementation
- Partnership Outcomes



Public Issue Partnerships: Best Practices

1. Shared power, resources, and decision making
 - Partners participate equally in major decisions
 - Roles, responsibilities, and processes are established with input from all partners
 - Power and resources are shared in equitable manner
 - Build structures to ensure this best practice
2. Cooperative goal setting and planning
 - Partners all contribute to initial grant goals (The Give / Get Model)
 - Full participation in planning and implementation



Public Issue Partnerships: Best Practices

3. Group Cohesion

- Partnership is characterized by flexibility and willingness to compromise
- Partners show respect for one another
- Partnership is based on common vision and partners are willing to set aside self-interest to pursue common vision
- Mutual trust exists among partners
- Communication is open and honest



Public Issue Partnerships: Best Practices

4. Partnership Management

- Partnerships should involve multiple organizations, multiple sectors, multiple departments
- Connections are built by working together in all phases of partnership (formation, implementation, outcomes).
- Partnerships exist through personal connections. Need individuals for “critical bridge”
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of partnership

5. Institutionalize Best Practices

- Build capacity and networks (both campus and community)
- Successful partnership will breed additional successful partnerships

Rural Grocery Stores: The Public Need

- **Economic Development:**
 - Rural grocery stores provide local jobs, provide important tax revenues, and support other businesses
- **Food Access:**
 - Rural grocery stores provide healthful foods, addressing issues of food deserts and food insecurity
- **Community Sustainability:**
 - Rural grocery stores are an important community asset, used in recruiting and retaining citizens and businesses



The RGI Partnership

Partnership development focused on cross-sector organizations / depts involved in rural food systems

- Store owners
- Economic Development
- K-State Research and Extension
- Food Access Non-Profits
- Food Distributors
- Multiple University Depts

RGI

Rural Grocery Initiative

**Strengthening Our Stores.
Strengthening Our Communities.**

The RGI Partnership

Multiple entry points for input into goals and implementation

- Grant team
- Leadership team
- Rural grocery surveys
- Rural Grocery Summit
- Social Media

RGI

Rural Grocery Initiative

**Strengthening Our Stores.
Strengthening Our Communities.**

Rural Grocery Initiative Goals

- Identify the significant challenges facing rural grocery stores (in communities of 2,500 or less)
- Develop “best practice” responses to grocer challenges
- Develop a national information network for rural grocers
- Identify and highlight sustainable business models for rural grocery operations

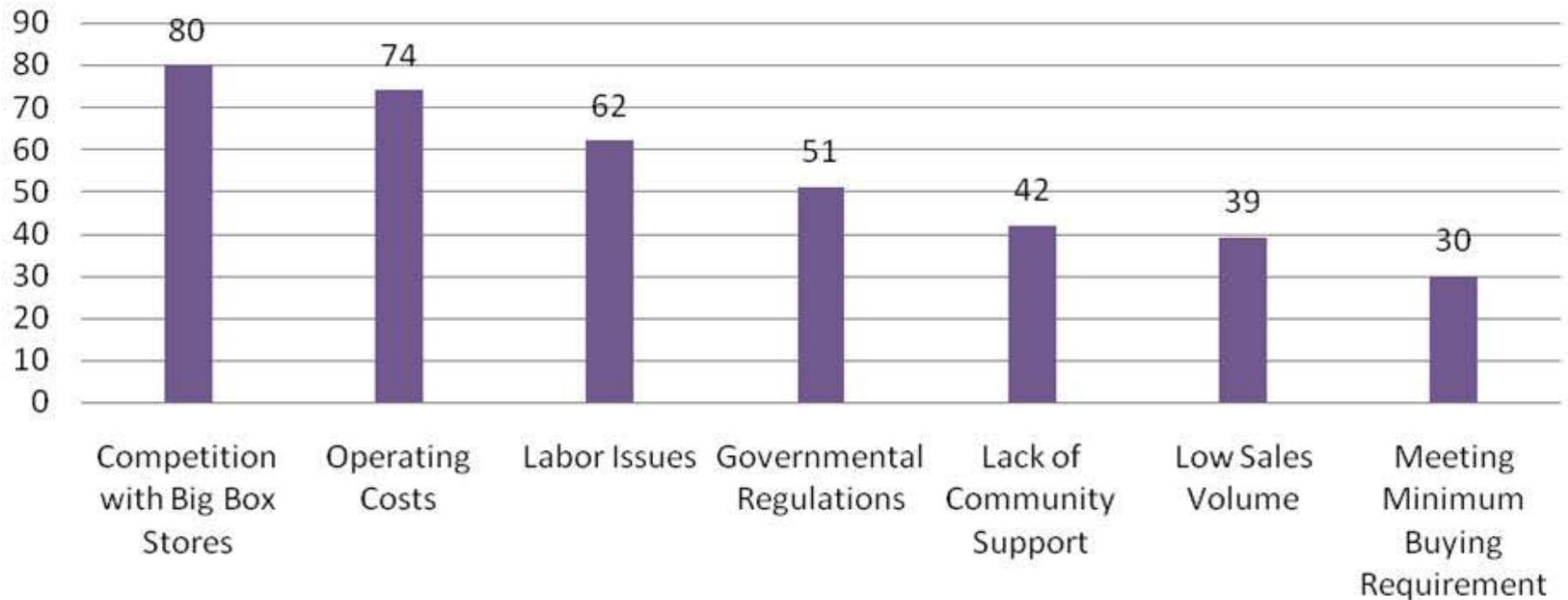
R G I

Rural Grocery Initiative

Strengthening Our Stores.
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Rural Grocer Challenges: Percent of Owners Identifying Each Challenge



Responding to Rural Grocer Challenges

1. Competing with big box stores
2. Coping with high energy costs
3. Meeting minimum buying requirements
4. Managing labor issues
5. Securing community support
6. Finding the right ownership model



Working to Save Our Rural Grocery Stores One Challenge at a Time

Challenge 1: Competition with Big Box Chain Grocery Stores

In the past twenty years, we have seen the dramatic rise in the number of big box stores, and it is difficult for rural grocers to compete with these stores. Customer surveys indicate that the top two reasons people select grocery stores are food price and variety of food choice – often the very strength of big box stores. At the same time, many rural citizens working in larger cities simply stop for groceries on their way out of town. Yet, local grocery stores are critical to our rural communities and we must strive to find ways to increase sales volume providing more dollars for community investment and rural community sustainability.



Solutions

Surveys of rural grocery customers offer some possible solutions to pulling more people into local groceries. While the top two reasons people shop at particular stores are **price** and **food variety**, the next four

reasons people select stores offer rural grocers an opportunity to attract additional business. Rural customers reported important to their choice of grocery store were issues of: **customer service**, **store cleanliness**,

convenient business hours, and **supporting local business**. Each of these offer areas rural grocers can address. For additional information please visit our website at www.ruralgrocery.org.

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Fast Facts:

- A 2005 study reveals big box grocery stores displace smaller, local food stores.
- Food prices may be up to 40% higher at rural stores, in part due to transportation costs.
- 42% of rural households have no access to public transportation.
- Incidences of diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and heart disease increase by a lack of access to healthy foods.

Kansas Best Practices:

The goal of Little River's grocery store – the Garden of Eden – is to give complete, friendly, superior service. Owner David Nelson tells his customers, "This is your store. What would you like us to put on the shelves? Let us know what you need and we will get it. Let us carry your groceries and load your car."

Developing an Information Network for Rural Grocers

- www.ruralgrocery.org
 - Best practices
 - Food suppliers / food networks
 - Key research
 - Rural grocery news & videos
 - Funding opportunities
- Facebook: Rural Grocery Initiative
- Rural grocery blog: <https://blogs.k-state.edu/ruralgrocery/>
- Rural Grocery Summit III: <http://www.dce.k-state.edu/conf/ruralgrocery/>



Bush's Market in Solomon

Identifying Sustainable Ownership Models

- *School-based enterprise*
 - *Leeton, MO; Rothsay, MN*
- *Community owned / Co-ops*
 - *Gove, KS; Walsh, CO*
- *Public / private partnerships*
 - *Onaga, KS; St. Paul, KS*
- *Sole proprietorships*
 - *Little River, KS; Jetmore, KS*
- *501(c)3*
 - *Plains, KS; Morland, KS*



Thank You

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