

Winter Quarter 2026

WRDC Support Helps Launch the Western Food Business Collaborative

With support from the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC), we're carrying the work of the Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center forward as the Western Food Business Collaborative (WFBC). WRDC's Sustaining Western Food System Collaborations project helps us build on the partnerships and resources developed from 2023 to 2025 through the USDA Regional Food Business Centers program.

That support will help us keep partners connected across state lines and make it easier for food businesses to find practical resources. The project has three priorities:

- Keep regional partners connected. A shared leadership team, quarterly partner meetings, and regular communication will help state programs and food system organizations coordinate their work across the West.
- Put existing tools to work in more communities. We'll share resources developed through the Food Business Centers program, help local providers use those tools through train-the-trainer programs, and work with partners to develop grant proposals.
- Make support easier to find. Through broader outreach, we'll help food businesses and the organizations that serve them find educational resources and connect with technical assistance providers.

We're grateful to WRDC for helping us carry this work forward! Read more about WRDC programs here.

WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Meet the WFBC New Logo and Website

The Western Food Business Collaborative (WFBC) has a new look and a new home online. As we build on the work of the Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center, we're excited to share our new logo and website at **westernfoodbiz.com.**

We're building the website as a resource hub for food businesses and the organizations that support them. It gives us a place to share practical tools and educational materials developed through the former Center, connect readers with technical assistance resources, and keep our partners informed as the Collaborative's work takes shape.

We developed our new logo to reflect our focus on helping food businesses reach new markets and strengthening regional supply chains across the West. Check out the website below!

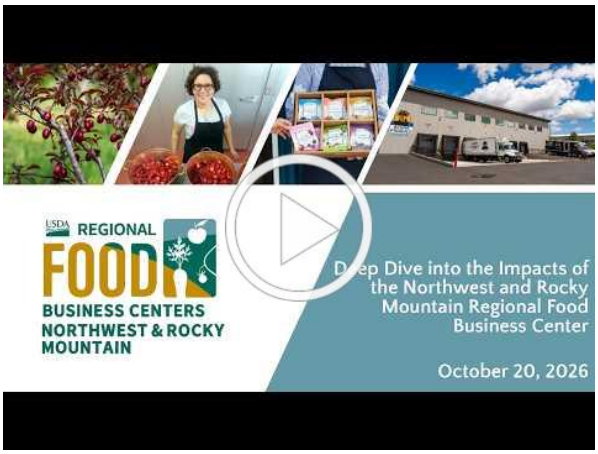
Visit Our Website

Watch the Deep Dive into the Impacts of the RFBC Webinar

As we move forward as the Western Food Business Collaborative, we invite you to take a look back at what we accomplished together through the Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center.

Our final webinar recaps how the Center and its partners supported food businesses across the region through Business Builder grants, technical assistance, and resources to help businesses reach new markets.

Click the video to watch the recording.



Stay Connected with Us!

We're setting up a new email list for the Western Food Business Collaborative (WFBC). If you'd like to keep hearing from us, **sign up for the WFBC newsletter** for updates from the Collaborative, practical resources for food businesses, and news from our partners across the West.

If you'd prefer to stop receiving emails from this list, use the Unsubscribe link at the bottom of this email.

Events & Webinars



Wyoming Food Coalition's 2026 Annual Conference

November 12-14, 2026
Casper, Wyoming

The Wyoming Food Coalition’s 2026 Annual Conference brings together producers, food businesses, advocates, and local food system leaders for hands-on learning, networking, and community building. Topics include whole carcass breakdown, food safety and the Wyoming Food Freedom Act, cooperative business models, producer storytelling and social media, rural resilience, and local food policy.

Register Here

Tilth Conference 2026

November 16-18, 2026
Bellingham, Washington

This year’s Tilth Conference will bring together hundreds of farmers, organizations, food system activists, researchers and educators to learn, work and play in Bellingham, Washington. Tilth Alliance and the Tilth Conference work to create and support a sustainable, healthy, and equitable food system.

Register Here



Webinar

Exploring the Economics of Regional Food System Investments: Featuring the Local Food Impact Calculator

December 2, 2026
11:00AM - 12:15PM MT
Virtual via Zoom

What difference did Biz Builder grants make for regional economies? In this webinar, the Western Food Business Collaborative and Colorado State University REDI share how they used the Local Food Impact Calculator to estimate the economic impact of projects funded by the Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center.

Learn how to use the calculator for your own projects, what the team learned from the evaluation, and how you can help shape future improvements to the tool.

Register Here



Webinar

Building New Food Business Supply Chains: a Look at Emerging Models

December 3, 2026
10:00AM - 12:00PM MT
Virtual via Zoom

How are Western businesses and communities opening new markets for grain, pulse, and specialty crop producers? Hosted by CSU Extension, the Montana Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming collaborators, this webinar features five case studies on how businesses used partnerships and financing to overcome supply chain barriers and connect producers with buyers.

Future webinars will explore how businesses in the middle of the supply chain can expand their infrastructure and find financing at different stages of growth.

Register Here



3rd Annual Colorado Grain Summit

March 13, 2027
Salida, Colorado

The Colorado Grain Summit aims to inspire businesses using local grains to envision pathways for sustainable growth and increased market impact. This single-day conference will feature curated networking sessions, expert panels, and keynotes highlighting innovative success stories across the grain supply chain. The goal is to create an environment that fosters partnerships, provides pathways to market expansion, and connects grain producers with businesses across Colorado.

Pre-register Here

Resources & Opportunities

NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

Next Generation Farmer Fund Grant Program

The Next Generation Farmer Fund is a $1 million-plus initiative offering direct financial support and technical assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers under 40 who use sustainable farming practices. Whole Foods Market will match donations dollar for dollar, up to $500,000, through November 30, 2026.

Applications are due December 1, 2026.

Learn More

FACT
Food Animal Concerns Trust

FACT Fund a Farmer Grants

Livestock and poultry producers can apply for up to $3,500 for animal welfare projects such as improving housing or expanding pasture access. FACT will accept the first 300 eligible applications for these grants.

A separate grant of up to $10,000 for larger changes to production systems is open through January 10, 2027.

Learn More

Farm to Stay Grants

American Farmland Trust and Airbnb are offering $5,000–$10,000 to help U.S. farmers and ranchers start or expand farm stays and other on-farm visitor experiences. Applications are scheduled for November 30–December 4, 2026. The program plans to accept approximately 350 applications and review them in the order received.

Learn More

Regional Coordinator and Chef Consultant Training Intensive Program (TIP)

Nourish Colorado is accepting applications for a paid training program for prospective Regional Coordinators and Chef Consultants. Coordinators help Colorado producers sell to K–12 schools, and consultants train school nutrition staff to cook with local foods.

Up to 40 participants will earn $40/hour plus travel expenses. Training runs February 23–May 31, 2027, with three in-person sessions in Greeley, Salida, and Grand Junction. Completion is required to apply for contract roles beginning July 1, 2027.

Learn More

Subscribe to WFBC Newsletter

The Collaborative will remain actively connecting based on the generous efforts of our state-based partners, support from their employer organizations and with financial support from the Western Rural Development Center.

Western Food Business Collaborative | Colorado State University | Fort Collins, CO 80523 US

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice