

## USDA Rural Development Celebrates National Small Business Week Value-Added Producer Grant

By Deborah Drbal, USDA RD Business Programs Specialist  
May 5, 2022

National Small Business Week has been celebrated every year since 1963. USDA Rural Development considers it a privilege to provide programs that assist small businesses in rural areas.

Rural Development's Value-Added Producer Grant program facilitates the creation and development of value-added farmer-owned businesses. The VAPG program helps agricultural producers across the state enabling farmers, ranchers, and cooperatives to grow their businesses through the development and marketing of new and existing products.

Independent agricultural producers, farmers or rancher cooperatives, and producer-controlled entities are eligible. VAPG funds may be used for planning activities or working capital expenses related to producing or marketing a value-added product.

Producers have enhanced their business operations using VAPG funds to:

- Expand value-added activities related to the processing of grapes into wine.
- Create one part-time position, increase the number of stores and restaurants served, increasing business income for a small family mushroom operation.
- Expand market area and distribution of micro-greens, eggs from pastured hens and pastured boiler chickens through implementation of a marketing campaign involving multiple media avenues.
- Create two part-time positions, increase the number of stores served, and increase business income for small family operation. This resulted in an exponential increase in income for local producers in the region and additional honey purchased..
- Increase market support for locally produced farm-fresh eggs from pasture raised hens.

To discuss applicant and project eligibility or for more information on the VAPG program contact Brant Richardson, [brant.richardson@usda.gov](mailto:brant.richardson@usda.gov) or 402-437-5568, Daniel Janke, [daniel.janke@usda.gov](mailto:daniel.janke@usda.gov) or 402-371-5350 extension 115 or visit [Value-Added Producer Grant \(VAPG\) program](#).