For many rural grocery stores, meeting minimum buying requirements is the primary barrier to staying in business and providing healthy and nutritious food for rural citizens. National food distributors require that stores purchase a minimum dollar amount of food. If that minimum cost order cannot be paid, food distributors won’t stop in your community. This challenge affects many elements of a rural grocery including: making it difficult to stock specialty items such as ethnic foods or organically grown foods; restricting a grocer’s ability to purchase “Land of Kansas” products or even buy locally grown foods.

Solutions

Through networking with grocers across Kansas, CECD has identified several possible options for addressing this issue. Short term solutions include collaborating with other rural grocery stores in your area to combine your purchases together in order to meet the minimum buying requirements. Another solution is to expand business through adding other institutional buyers. Network with other local institutional food buyers (schools, nursing homes, prisons) to explore favorable shared purchasing options. Also, it is always good business practice to assess buying costs, services and options. Please see our website for examples of food distributors across the state. Longer term solutions may require the development of new, innovative food distribution systems. Join us in finding solutions to these challenges at our website: www.ruralgrocery.org.