

Request for Proposals

The Rural Grocery Initiative at Kansas State University is seeking proposals for presentations at the National Rural Grocery Summit on June 20-21, 2022 in Wichita, Kansas.

The National Rural Grocery Summit is the premier networking and resource-sharing venue for independent grocers and rural food access stakeholders. This biennial summit brings together store owners, citizen leaders, food suppliers, academic researchers, healthy food access practitioners, policy makers, and funders to learn from and strategize with one another about sustaining rural grocery stores and improving rural access to healthy foods.

We invite you to submit a proposal to share your work at this important conference. We are seeking presentations, panel discussions, and posters that relate to summit objectives and suggested topic areas. Proposals should be submitted online by 11:59 PM Central on February 1, 2022.

Below, find details on:

- Summit objectives
- Potential topic areas
- Who should submit a proposal
- Presentation formats
- Submission requirements
- Key dates
- Available support
- Contact information for additional questions

Summit Objectives

- Explore the connections between rural grocery operations and community vitality
- Provide rural grocery store owners and rural grocery stakeholders the opportunity to network and learn from each other
- Highlight innovative models and strategies for strengthening healthy food retail in rural communities
- Chart a path for robust rural food systems that improve the health and well-being of rural communities

Potential Topic Areas

Topics to be covered at the summit include, but are not limited to:

- Equity in rural food systems
- Innovation in rural food access (e.g. emerging grocery models, rural food distribution solutions, creative partnerships, etc.)
- Connecting local food production and rural grocery
- Effects of COVID-19 on rural grocery and rural food systems – in particular, practices implemented during COVID-19 that will continue
- Local, state, and federal policies to support rural grocery and strengthen rural food systems
- Resources (financial and informational) to support rural grocery and rural food access
- Rural grocery stores as community builders
- Rural grocery best practices including, but not limited to:
 - Ways to increase sales and attract new customers
 - Overcoming challenges (e.g. supply chain issues, operating costs, competition, consolidation, minimum buying requirements, labor, etc.)
 - Addressing changes in shopping behaviors and consumer preferences
 - E-commerce
 - Strengthening community relationships
 - Building customer loyalty
 - Increasing business value
 - Succession planning

Who should submit a proposal?

You! A lot has happened since the last time this conference convened in 2018. We are looking for proposals from a broad range of rural grocery, healthy food access, and community vitality stakeholders. This may include, but is not limited to, grocers, practitioners, resource providers, academic researchers, policy makers, funders, and students from across the country.

Presentation Formats

Presentations at the National Rural Grocery Summit may take the form of:

1. Breakout Session

- a) **Presentation Session:** Share research findings, emerging strategies, lived experiences, and resources in a presentation. Three to four selected presentations will be grouped thematically by the conference planning team into a single breakout session. Up to two individuals may co-present on a selected presentation. Each presentation will be given 10-15 minutes for oral presentation, followed by audience Q&A.
- b) **Panel Discussion:** Engage in a conversation about rural food systems during a panel discussion. Each panel will consist of three to four speakers who will share their unique insights and perspectives on a common theme. Panelists may discuss research, resources, case studies, firsthand experiences, and so on. Panelists will have 5 minutes to introduce themselves, followed by moderated Q&A and dialog with co-panelists. If you wish to be on a panel, you are not required to identify and confirm co-panelists in your proposal. The conference planning team will thematically group panelists.

2. **Poster Session:** Share and solicit feedback on your existing and emerging projects during a poster session. Posters typically mix a brief narrative description with photographs, organizational or historical charts, maps, videos, etc. Posters may share empirical research, community action research, participatory research, and more. They may also share innovative ideas and practices, programmatic successes, and/or reflections from food access practitioners. Poster presenters are expected to discuss their poster during a dedicated session. If you have questions about poster formatting, please contact us.

Submission Requirements

Submit the following information using the online form no later than February 1, 2022 at 11:59 PM Central. The online form is located at: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bx7SM0lc0FqZBEW.

1. Presentation format (select one)

- Presentation Session
- Panel Discussion
- Poster Session

2. Contact information of primary presenter and co-presenter (if applicable)

- Name
- Email
- Phone number
- Institutional affiliation (business, organization, academic institution, etc.)
- Position title

- City
- State
- Biography (2-3 sentences)

3. Title of presentation, panel, or poster

4. Topic (select one)

- Equity in rural food systems
- Innovation in rural food access (e.g. community-supported grocery ownership models, rural food distribution solutions, creative partnerships, etc.)
- Effects of COVID-19 on rural grocery and rural food systems
- Local, state, and federal policies to support rural grocery and strengthen rural food systems
- Resources to support rural grocery and rural food access
- Rural grocery stores as community builders
- Rural grocery best practices
- Other

5. Brief description of presentation, panel, or poster (1-3 sentences that will be included in the summit program, if selected)

6. Summary of presentation, panel, or poster (500 word limit) that addresses the following:

- What information will be covered?
- How will this session connect with summit objectives?
- What knowledge, skills, or new understanding will attendees gain?

7. Laptops, projectors, and screens will be available for presenters. Do you have any other special requests or requirements for your session?

8. Currently, the National Rural Grocery Summit is slated to be in-person at the Drury Plaza Broadview Hotel in Wichita, Kansas. If necessary, are you willing to work with summit organizers to transition to an online format?

- Yes
- No

Key Dates

- **Presentation Proposal Submission Deadline:** February 1, 2022 at 11:59 PM Central
- **Selected Presenter Notification:** Mid-March, 2022
- **Conference:** June 20-21, 2022

What support is available to defray the cost of attending the summit?

Complimentary registration is available for up to two representatives from an individual grocery store. Presenters will receive a reduced registration rate.

Questions?

To learn more about the Rural Grocery Initiative, please visit www.ruralgrocery.org. For additional questions about the initiative or the summit, please contact us at rgi@ksu.edu.