

## Rural Food Business Assistance Project

The N.C. Rural Economic Development Center has partnered with USDA Rural Business Development Grant to launch the Rural Food Business Assistance Project. The Rural Food Business Assistance Project provides direct technical assistance and training to agribusinesses and builds regional support networks of organizational stakeholders supporting local farmers, value-added processors and food service businesses.

### Technical Assistance & Training

The project provides comprehensive case management services to clients across six rural regions. Rural Center staff provides one-on-one assistance to clients, an individualized assessment, and scholarships for business and skills development trainings. Additionally, clients co-enroll with their local community college small business center to receive referral services and networking assistance from a regional coordinator.

### Regional Support Networks

The center has identified partners in six regions with a demonstrated economic need. Each region contains a core leadership group interested in developing a food business support network. In addition to the lead partner, each regional network comprises a broad set of stakeholders including local extension centers, community colleges, small business lenders and local nonprofit and civic groups.

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### Regional Support Networks Map

