

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation

CARINGFORCOMMUNITIES GRANTS

www.bcbsnd.com/caring-foundation

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation partnered with the North Dakota Rural Electric Cooperative Foundation to bring accessible and healthy food options to Walsh County (northeast North Dakota). Through this partnership, the Rural Access Distribution Cooperative installed climate-controlled grocery locker systems in Fordville and Adams; two rural communities that do not have grocery stores. Now—community members can buy local products through a secure, online purchasing platform and have groceries delivered right to their rural town.

The goal is to increase access to locally-retailed and produced products with an emphasis on healthy foods in rural places.

Additionally, this program will bolster the sustainability of the rural grocery stores operating in that region, improve affordability, variety and convenience for the 10,750 residents. Currently, these community members drive 15-20 miles in order to purchase groceries. With the new system, residents can now conveniently place an online order and items are then delivered to the lockers in their town. Rural communities are struggling to compete with big box stores, Amazon and other franchises. This project demonstrates that rural places have power to collectively build volume and control over distribution of healthy and perishable food.

