The Cooperative Development Program provides comprehensive cooperative business development services in Michigan rural areas, and is administered by the Michigan State University (MSU) Product Center-Food, Ag, Bio (Product Center). The Product Center has worked with cooperatives since its inception in 2004, and the Cooperative Development Program within the Product Center provides business development expertise, direct development assistance, and educational services to individuals and groups in rural areas desiring to organize cooperative businesses or seeking to expand existing cooperatives. The main goals of the Cooperative Development Program are to:

1) Provide educational and business development services that support potential or existing cooperatives in rural areas in Michigan.

2) Improve the economic conditions in rural areas through the development of new cooperatives and the expansion of existing cooperatives.

3) Contribute to the improvement of economic conditions of rural areas through the formation of new cooperatives and expansion of existing ones that will result in the creation of jobs; the investment in facilities, equipment, and infrastructures; and the generation of new revenues to support local communities.

4) Utilize private consultants and other private firms, external educational institutions, and federal, state and local agencies to supplement the expertise of the program staff to develop and deliver the educational and cooperative business development programs.

6) Provide assistance to multiple rural groups in Michigan who desire to start cooperative businesses, and to existing cooperatives wishing to improve or expand operations.

The Product Center, under the USDA Cooperative Development Program, is available to provide workshops and counseling for groups interested in pursuing cooperative business organization as a way to improve business income.

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