

Building and expanding a

# Welcoming Community



featuring assistance from the Center for Rural Affairs.



## West Point, NE



Community members including Aliza Brunsing, co-owner of The Hog Yard, and Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, executive director of the West Point Chamber of Commerce, brought their entire community together through a common tool: a farmers market. Learn how the Center's community coaching has helped the city of West Point bring together inclusive events for adults and children alike, with activities and services offered in English and Spanish.



### Starting with a dream

Aliza grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska, and one of her favorite aspects of Lincoln was its farmers market. After moving to West Point, she had a dream of bringing the buzzing excitement to her new community on Saturday mornings. After speaking with the local Chamber of Commerce executive director, Tina, the plans started to take form. In the summer of 2021, the West Point Farmers Market was born.



“A beautiful thing about a small community is that it usually only takes one person talking about their dreams and what they want to see happen for someone else to agree and hop on board.”  
-Aliza Brunsing, market manager”

### A vision for the community

With an influx of new, young families moving into the rural area of West Point, the city community members work hard to provide some of the same amenities available in larger cities, just on a smaller-scale. The West Point Farmers Market was one of these items.



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“ I wanted to make sure this market was a place to enjoy, from young families to our elderly population. Also, this was a beautiful way to include our Hispanic minority population in our community efforts. A lot of them are gardening and producing their own fresh fruits and vegetables, making baked goods and other foods that everyone can enjoy, as well as other items.

-Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong,  
West Point Chamber of Commerce  
Executive Director ”



## Center provides assistance

Center staff have assisted the city of West Point with language accessibility through translation services. There is an ongoing partnership that involves a translator/interpreter being brought into the Cuming County courthouse for three hours every month. This allows the Hispanic community members access to language assistance throughout the courthouse and DMV. This individual has translated farmers market signage, as well as other forms and radio announcements.



The Center for Rural Affairs has also offered valuable resources to West Point Farmers Market managers and vendors. For example, instructions regarding how to register with the State of Nebraska and training in how to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

A bilingual story hour was also led by Center staff in partnership with West Point's local library.



## Vendors appreciate the market

“ My food and veggies were accepted and I have had people reach out to me through Facebook and continue to buy my food. I was able to make money and meet great people. I can speak some English and was happy to meet some people that would try to speak in Spanish to me.

*Some of the things that I sold people have never tried (I am from Bolivia) and it made me happy to see their smiles after trying it and telling me 'it's good!'*

*I am excited for next year. I am motivated to make my garden bigger and hope to sell even more variety. I truly appreciate all the Spanish material.*

-Eliana, market vendor ”

“ With this experience I have made friends I never would have thought of ever having. I have never been part of anything like this. It has given me the opportunity to not only make money, but meet new people and, best of all, feel included. ”

-Mary, market vendor ”

