

CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS

Lyons, NE



OVERVIEW

We are unapologetically rural. We stand up for rural America—the small family farmer and rancher, new business owner, and rural communities.

Since 1973, we've been a leading force engaging people to build a better rural future. Our policy work spans the nation and is focused in Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota. Our on-the-ground work with communities and farmers takes place in Iowa and Nebraska. We lend to small businesses and homeowners in Nebraska.

As long as rural advocates are needed for sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and community development, you can bet we'll be on the front lines, building a bright rural future.

The Center for Rural Affairs' mission is to establish strong rural communities, social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, and genuine opportunity for all while engaging people in decisions that affect the quality of their lives and the future of their communities.

GRANITE COUNTERTOP BUSINESS OWNER DOESN'T TAKE CENTER ASSISTANCE FOR GRANTED

After moving from Mexico to Minnesota in 1998, Froylan C. Roustand found his passion while working for a company installing granite countertops. The more experience he gained and the more he learned of the trade, the more he loved it. He decided to move to Nebraska in 2008 to pursue his dream of opening his own business.

At first, Froylan kept busy doing side jobs. As customer interest in his work grew, he was able to provide his services to others, which opened the door for him to start his own business. Froylan made his dream official when he opened Husker Granite Top, LLC, in March 2020, in Omaha. As the business grew, Froylan looked to the Center for Rural Affairs for financial assistance after his wife, Elizabeth Gaona, attended a small business workshop with the Center and learned it offered loans.

In August 2022, Center staff helped him secure a loan to expand and purchase specialized heavy equipment, including a granite saw machine, forklift, and compressor. Veronica Spindola, Latino loan specialist with the Center, guided Froylan and Elizabeth through the process. Veronica says she's had the opportunity to visit one of Froylan's project sites and was impressed by all of the logistics involved. "He is a rock star when it comes to countertops," she said. "Froylan is very focused and is always finding ways to grow and move his business to the next level, but he is not alone. I believe he couldn't do it without the support of his amazing wife, Elizabeth."

Although the construction-based business specializes in marble and granite countertops, Froylan and his three full-time employees, including one of his sons, also offer other services. They can install marble and granite almost anywhere—walls, fireplaces, bathrooms, kitchens, outdoor grills, and more, in residential and commercial properties. Froylan's daughter also works part-time for the company, helping with accounting.

Froylan credits the Center for helping him get his business to where it is today. "Working with the Center has been good and very productive," he said. "Other business owners can benefit from them too, because we have had a great experience and it was a great opportunity to be able to start something and purchase tools with that loan."

THREE-YEAR IMPACT

- ▶ \$5.4 million in loans
- ▶ 101 total businesses financed (46 minority-owned, 40 women-owned)
- ▶ 113 jobs created at businesses