



Pathway to Membership

*Strengthening our members through
collaboration to forge a sustainable future*

**Independent
Natural
Food
Retailers
Association**

Associate Retailer

Food retailers with an illustrated commitment of natural and organic practices, continuous improvement, and values based operations are encouraged to begin the path of member ownership in INFRA.

Retailers are invited to participate in INFRA as an Associate Retailer prior to becoming a Member of the cooperative. By providing a pathway, the retailer and INFRA can determine if member ownership is a good fit. Because there are additional benefits to member ownership, INFRA staff will support the Associate Retailer in becoming a Member. We anticipate this process will take between 12 to 18 months.

The Associate Retailer category is a non-ownership method of affiliation with INFRA. This means that there are no investment requirements and no ownership rights, such as voting. However, there are many other benefits and programs available to Associate Retailers.

Benefits

Associate Retailers have access to the following programs, services, and peer networking:

- CoMetrics, financial benchmarking
- Academy of Retail Training (ART), online staff training
- INFRA's Listserv, peer business discussions
- Category Management webinars
- Annual educational conference and tabletop show
- Regional events, including share groups, store peer review, best practice sharing and presentations from industry experts
- Access to the members' library, including handbooks, job descriptions, policies, and procedures
- INFRA staff expertise

Financial Requirements

The annual fee for an Associate Retailer is set at \$800 to be paid \$200 per quarter. The first \$200 is due at the time of approval.

How to Apply

Interested retailers that meet the criteria and characteristics of the Associate Retailer will be invited to submit a registration form for review. The following steps will be followed:

- The registration form is reviewed by INFRA to ensure the retailer meets the eligibility and qualifications.
- If met, the registration form is submitted to the CEO for approval. The retailer is then notified if they have been approved.
- Once accepted, the retailer must submit a signed agreement and \$200 for quarterly dues. Once this information is received the retailer is eligible to join INFRA!

Interested in joining INFRA? Please fill out the inquiry form at: <http://www.naturalfoodretailers.net/retailer-inquiry>

Independent Natural Food Retailers Association (INFRA) is a purchasing cooperative that works to secure a sustainable future for independently owned food retailers. Working together is how independent retailers compete and differentiate themselves in the marketplace. The INFRA community has a shared vision and commitment that allows participants to bring high quality organic food to their individual communities. INFRA is able to facilitate this through the programs and services that support retail operations.

INFRA Programs/Benefits	Associate Retailers	Member Owners
Events		
Share Groups	\$	✓
Intensives	\$	✓
Annual Conference	\$	✓
Marketing		
Marketing Campaigns	\$	\$
Marketing Webinars	✓	✓
Operational Support		
Academy of Retail Training (ART)	\$	\$
Category Management Webinars	✓	✓
CoMetrics	\$	\$
Listserv	✓	✓
Members-Only-Area	✓	✓
National Cooperative Bank	✓	✓
SPINS	✓	✓
Purchasing Programs		
Aisle7	x	✓
Business Services	x	✓
Co-Brands	x	✓
Delicious Living	x	✓
ECRS	x	✓
EDLPs	x	✓
INFRA Deals	x	✓
Independent Choice™ Control Label	x	✓
New Placement Offers	x	✓
Operational Supplies	x	✓
Supply Agreements	x	✓
\$ = program based fee ✓ = included x = not included		



Member Owner

Membership in INFRA is ownership in INFRA. INFRA is owned and governed by independent natural and organic food retailers of all sizes working together to leverage our voice in the industry. Membership carries the responsibility of investment in INFRA, and brings governance rights.

Benefits

As a Member Owner, you receive all the benefits of an Associate Retailer with the advantage of the programs and services listed below:

- Distribution pricing agreement
- Discounted retail business services
- Aggressive pricing on monthly product promotions with flyer and digital formats, distributor Co-Brands, EDLPs, and store supplies such as deli containers and paper bags
- Reduced prices on technology programs from ECRS, SPINS, and Aisle7
- Marketing and Human Resources Sharing Series

Financial Requirements

Members are required to contribute to INFRA's capital base as well as pay annual dues. A one-time equity contribution is required to become a member. The investment and annual dues are based on .05% of the prior year's annual sales. The dues are a reoccurring expense for Members and are separate from the equity investment. Dues provide ongoing operating funds to cover INFRA overhead and are billed quarterly.

Becoming a Member

INFRA staff will work closely with Associate Retailers to ensure that they are on the path to compliance with becoming a Member Owner. INFRA is incorporated as a purchasing cooperative in the state of Minnesota. In accordance with cooperative law, the Board of Directors must approve all new Members.

- Once the qualifications and requirements have been met for membership, a recommendation will be made to the CEO.
- The CEO will bring the recommendation to the Board of Directors for approval. The retailer is then notified if they have been approved for Member status.
- Once accepted, the retailer must submit a signed Member Agreement and equity contribution. Once the documents and investment are received, the retailer is eligible to become an INFRA Member.

"INFRA has changed the way we do business, and it is amazing."

*Dean Nelson, Owner of Dean's Natural Food Markets
INFRA Member since 2005*



Who We Are

INFRA, started in 2005, is one of the industry's largest key accounts. Over 230 members representing more than 350 retail storefronts maintain independence while operating as a group to influence industry standards, distribution direction, and product standards.

INFRA is a purchasing cooperative owned and governed by independent natural and organic food retailers of all sizes working together to leverage our voice in the industry. We unite our members for the purpose of providing operational support, leveraging purchasing power, and engaging in marketing activities.


National Community of Retailers Who:

- Commit to being independently owned natural food retailers.
- Focus their primary business on the sale of natural and organic foods.
- Support the Association and its vision, mission, goals, and policies.
- Are willing and legally qualified to enter contractual agreements with the Association for products, programs, and services.
- Have a history of profitability, or trending towards such, and be willing to verify this to the Association.
- Have, or are planning for, installation of a point of sale system.
- Sign and adhere to confidentiality and membership agreements.



"I have been dreaming about just such a group as INFRA for over 25 years; one that includes best practice sharing, operational support and pooling our purchasing power. This is a group that captures the spirit of why many of us got into the business to change the world. It's so great to see this group so strong and growing."

*Bud Stockwell, Owner of Cornucopia Foods, MA
INFRA Member since 2005*



"Working together is how we compete and differentiate ourselves in the marketplace, and gives us a higher chance of success. The level of integrity and commitment of the retailers who are INFRA members helps us shape a future together where we will be able to continue to bring high quality organic food to our individual communities, because we have a shared vision and commitment."

-Corinne Shindelar, INFRA CEO

Strategic Priorities of the Association

1. Strengthen INFRA's infrastructure to support its robust growth.
2. In order to improve member competitiveness, INFRA will strengthen member operational alignment in existing and new supply agreements.
3. To increase member profitability and competitive edge, INFRA will provide targeted resources to facilitate the implementation of best practices.
4. To enhance our members' competitive edge, INFRA will develop strategic partnerships and alliances to secure long-term access to core products.
5. INFRA will identify and develop opportunities to ensure member differentiation.

INFRA's Core Values

- A Healthy Sustainable America
- Opportunity and Success for Independent Businesses
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Diversity



**Independent Natural Food
Retailers Association**
2356 University Ave W, Ste 200
St Paul, MN 55114

  
(651) 888-4700
info@infretailers.com
www.naturalfoodretailers.net