

GRANT AND GROW

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Western Colorado Soil Health, Food and Farm Forum



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

AGENDA

- 1:00 Introductions
- 1:05 Right Fit Right Funding
- 1:15 Putting a Face to the Funds
- 1:45 Hearing from Applicants
- 2:20 Break
- 2:30 Grant Overview
- 3:15 Putting it all on Paper
- 3:50 Wrap Up
- 4:30 Optional Team Building Exercise:
 - Continuing the Conversation at Wild Horse and Whisky 439 E Main St Montrose, CO 81401



THE GRANT SEEKING JOURNEY

Visualizing and refining your ideas

Getting from idea to reality

Thinking about partners and your other community resources

Building your narrative (project need, goals, objectives, evaluation)

Developing a budget, workplan & timeline

Submitting your grant



WHY TAKE THIS JOURNEY?

The opportunities, big and small!

1. Seed money for innovation in production, processing, market development, applied research
 - Let funders share the risk of trying new ideas!
2. Minimize debt for your business
3. Buy or lease equipment for business expansion
4. Funding to expand partnerships, invest in your community
5. Build a long-term relationship with a funder



WHEN SHOULD YOU LOOK AT ANOTHER PATH?



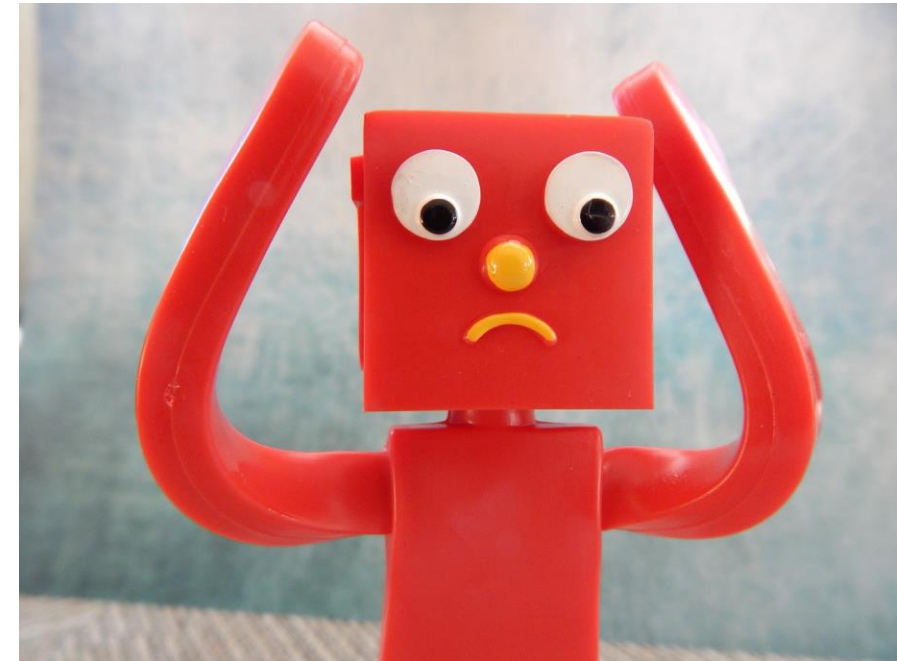
Some limitations, equally big and small!

1. You don't have the time to write and/or manage a grant
2. You don't have the cash flow to support a reimbursement grant
 - Also matching or cost-share that's required for some grant programs
3. You can't fit your idea in available funding opportunities
4. You need to buy land, or purchase another big asset
5. You need funding to sustain your business



HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT GRANT FOR ME?

1. Use your community partners as a resource! Get on listservs to gather information on grant release dates and when they are due
2. Evaluate the type of funding you need for your business stage and operational level
3. Read each opportunity carefully to know if it's a good fit (funding level, purpose/mission alignment, partnerships, timing, what is the success rate for applicants, what strings are attached?)
4. Is this grant going to require more time and resources than you have or want to give?



OTHER IDEAS FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT GRANTS

- Partner on a grant with someone with more experience (another farmer, business or community organization)
- Support another grant application (write a letter of support, read through their application)
- Offer to review grants to learn more about the process
- Review funder databases for project ideas and similar projects were developed



Grant Programs Decision Tree

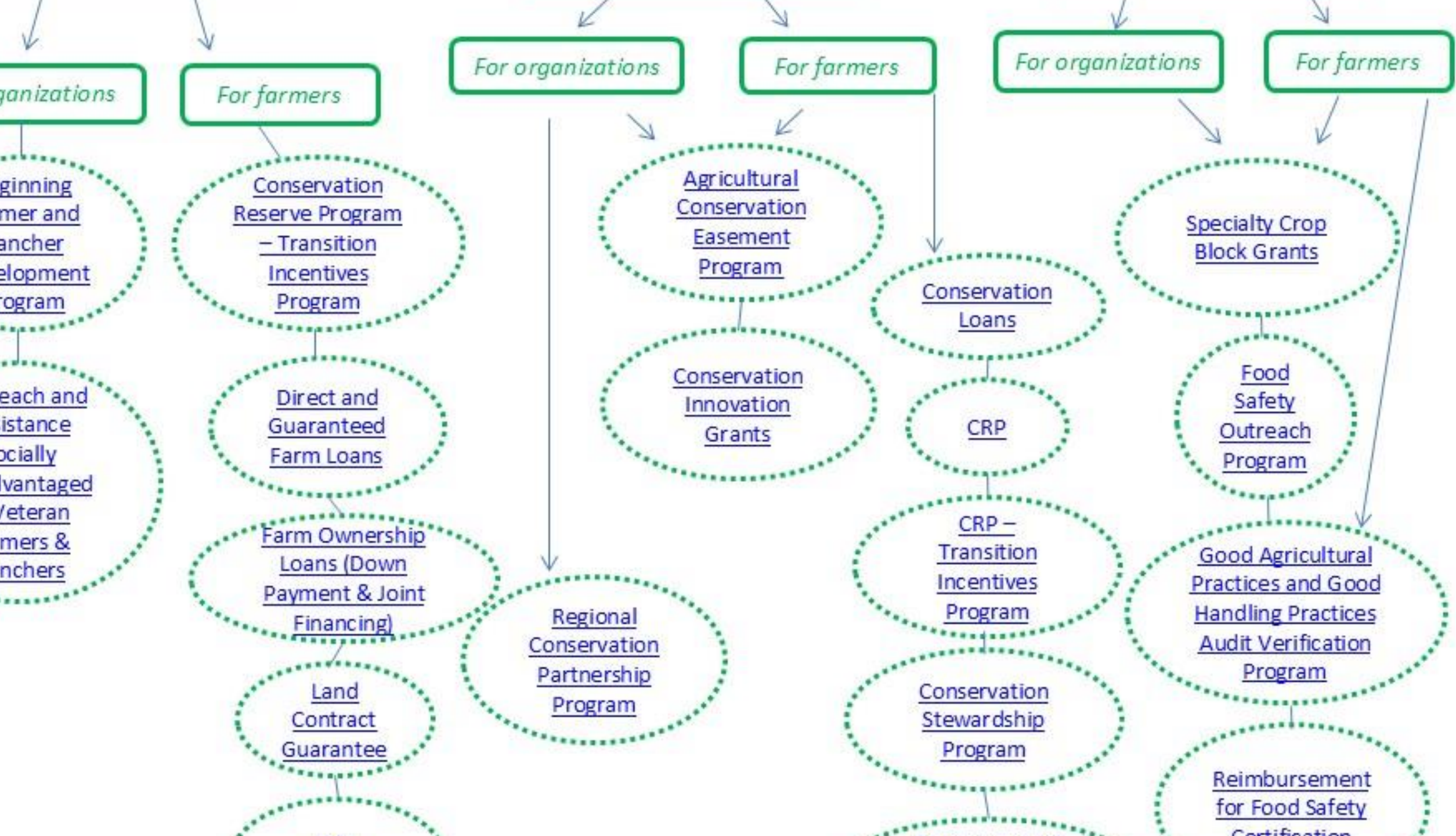
January 2025

*Locate federal and state grant programs
by interest area or application eligibility*



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<https://foodsystems.colostate.edu/educational-impacts/grants/>



PUTTING A FACE TO THE FUND



Sarah Erickson
USDA NRCS



Miranda Kersten
WSARE



Brian Coppom
Colorado Department
of Agriculture



RESTORE GRANTS

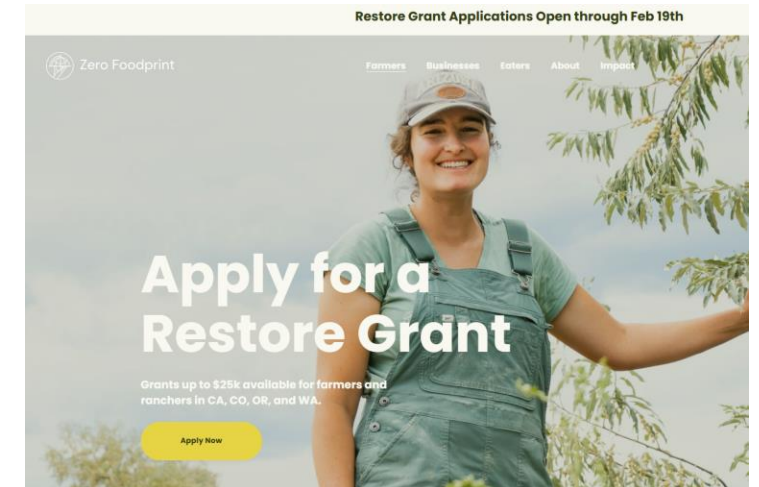
Let's restore the climate together! Farmers and ranchers in select states are eligible for Zero Foodprint's Restore Grant, which provides funding to implement farm practices that build healthy soil and sequester carbon.

Receive up to \$25,000 for cover cropping, hedgerow establishment, and other regenerative practices. Applications are open in California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington from January 15th to February 19th, 2025.

Learn more about eligibility requirements and apply:

[ZeroFoodprint.org/apply](https://zerofoodprint.org/apply)

Additional Questions: grants@zerofoodprint.org



NW AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS BUILDER GRANTS

For **grain and pulse** businesses, the [Diverse Markets Business Builder Grant](#) is designed to build and expand local and regional non-commodity markets for climate resilient grains, pulses, and pseudocereals—offering between \$3,000 and \$50,000 in funding. Entities must have been in operation for a minimum of two years at the time of application. Applications are due March 1, 2025.

For **meat/livestock** businesses: the [Enhancing Local and Regional Meat Supply Chain Business Builder Grant](#) is designed to expand the capacity of meat, seafood and poultry businesses that provide important services to small or mid-scale meat and/or poultry producers and brands. Grants offered are between \$3,000 and \$50,000. Applications are due March 7, 2025.

For **value-added food** businesses: the [Connecting and Scaling Food Entrepreneurs Business Builder Grant](#) is designed to expand the capacity of facilities that incubate and support multiple small, value-added food businesses by providing access to commercial kitchen space, business development support, and other assistance, such as advanced food manufacturing services. Grant funds are intended to be used for businesses to supply more product, more quickly, at a lower cost without reduced quality, and to expand services to more businesses. Grants offered are between \$20,000 and \$35,000. Applications are due April 1, 2025.



HEARING FROM APPLICANTS

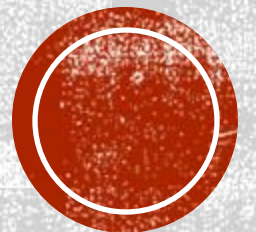
- Elizabeth Agee, Duck Berry Farm
- Alberto Pantoja & Nelly Garcia, Pantoja Family Farms

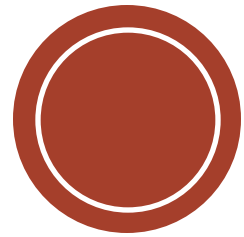




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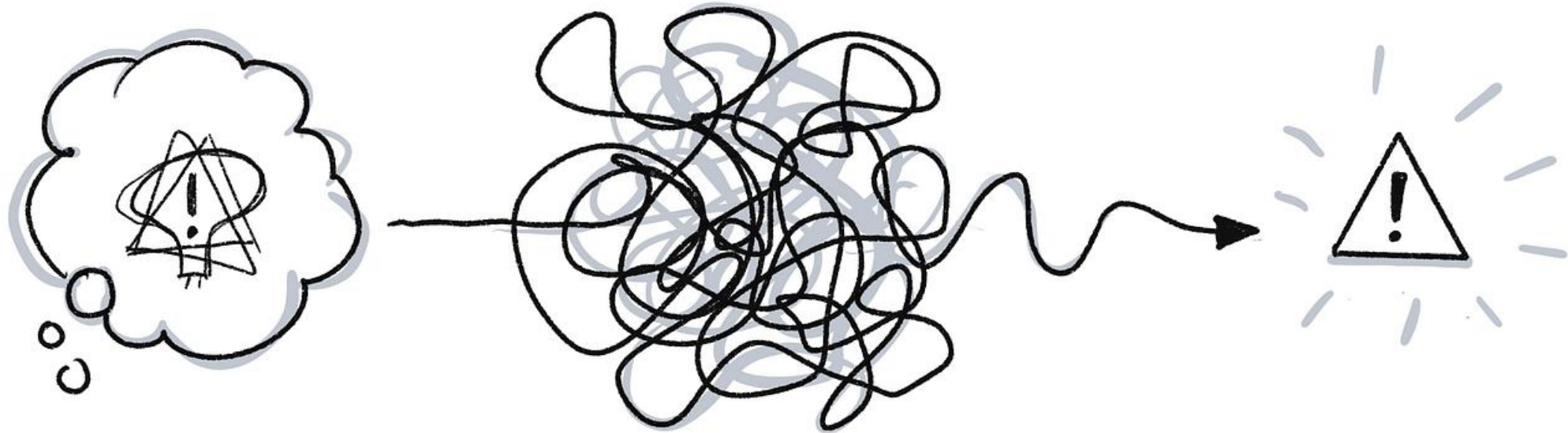
BREAK





GRANT OVERVIEW

FRAMING YOUR PROPOSAL AND OBJECTIVES



VAGUE IDEA OF
THE PROBLEM

COMPLEXITY!

CLEAR, SUCCINCT
PROBLEM STATEMENT



QUESTIONS: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU SEEK TO ADDRESS?

- Labor shortages
- Short shelf life of product
- Too short of season
- Need to improve soil health
- Growing number of limited access residents can't purchase product
- Excess product



ROADMAP INTO

- Abstract
- Background
- Goals/Outcomes
- Resources
 - Work
- Outcomes
 - Benef
 - By en
 - After
 - How v
- Partners

1. Short summary of the project.
2. First impressions SO important
3. Bulleted lists may how you draft key theme, activities, partners and outcomes
 1. Then connect with narrative to share context
4. Avoid jargon, hyperbole, and overly technical language.
5. Focus on your project and how it will invest funding
 1. Avoid grand statements

Technical Investigation



1
Visual Assessment

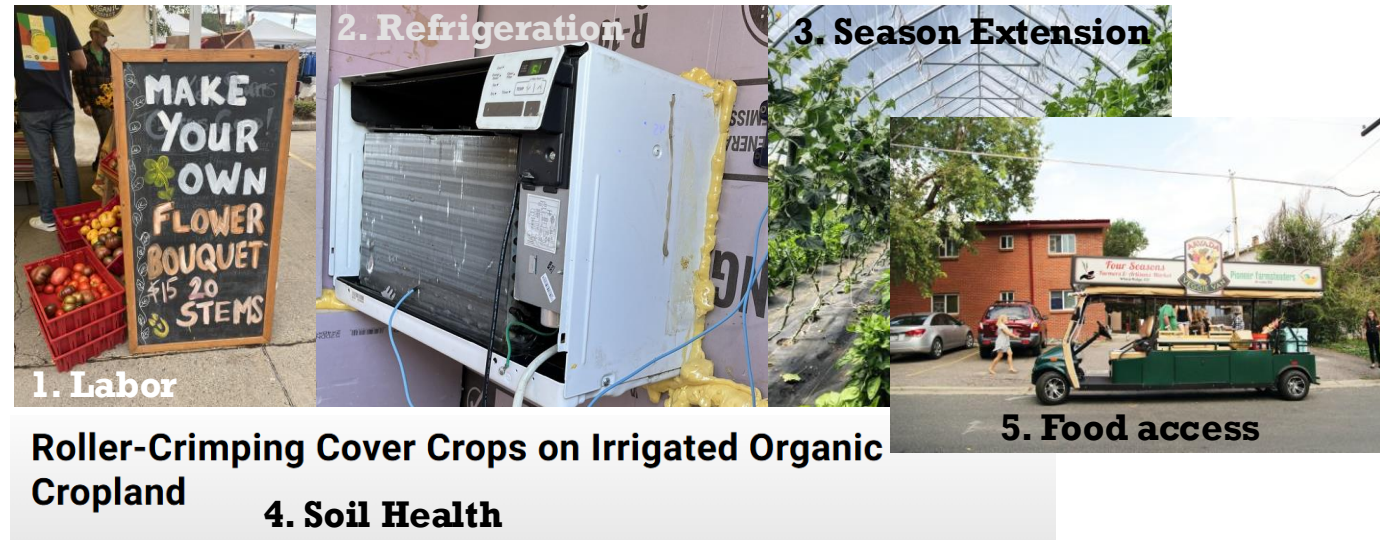
2
Soil Sampling

Study

8
Marketing Plan

QUESTIONS: HAVE OTHER PEOPLE (LOCALLY OR ELSEWHERE) ADDRESSED THIS PROBLEM? AND, IF SO, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Labor shortages
2. Short shelf life of product
3. Too short of season
4. Need to improve soil health
5. Growing number of limited access residents can't purchase product
6. Excess product



Project Overview

[View the project report](#)

Commodities

- Agronomic: pinto beans

Practices

- **Crop Production:** cover crops, no-till, stubble mulching
- **Education and Training:** on-farm/ranch research
- **Natural Resources/Environment:** carbon sequestration, soil stabilization
- **Pest Management:** allelopathy, mulches - killed, smother crops
- **Production Systems:** organic agriculture



QUESTIONS: WHO ELSE MIGHT BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR ISSUE? SHOULD THEY BE INVOLVED? WHAT ROLES SHOULD THEY PLAY?



WHAT IS YOUR PROJECT OBJECTIVES TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM? WHY IS THIS STRATEGY BETTER?

- Specific, measurable steps designed to solve that problem;
 - actionable goals derived from identifying a problem you want to tackle, outlining exactly what needs to be achieved to address it effectively.
- What is a realistic timeline for each of the objectives?



SPECIFIC

Make your goals specific and narrow for more effective planning.



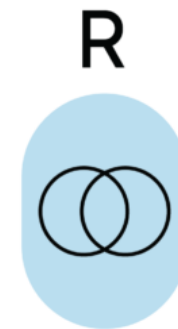
MEASURABLE

Define what evidence will prove you're making progress and reevaluate when necessary.



ATTAINABLE

Make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain time frame.



RELEVANT

Your goals should align with your values and long-term objectives.



TIME-BASED

Set a realistic ambitious end-date for task prioritisation and motivation.



EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

<u>General</u>	<u>More Specific</u>	<u>Very Specific</u>
Teach public	Inform food buyers	Craft educational programs that link food choices to health outcomes
Help markets	Assist markets in being sustainable	Assist market vendors to increase sales per market
Farmers	Organic Farmers	Certified Organic Farmers with less than 50 acres

Return to Worksheet to Develop or Refine Goals





<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/colorado/small-acreageurban-agriculture-colorado>

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU NEED (INCLUDING THOSE THAT AREN'T PART OF THE GRANT)?

- There may be items that the grant won't cover (e.g., equipment, staffing) but without these items your project cannot happen.
- Some grants also require matching (cash or in-kind) support (cannot say "I'm working on these").
 - Can you leverage other resources in your community (zero-interest loan programs, community funds)?





HELP REVIEWERS FOLLOW YOUR VISION

IMPLEMENTATION

- How and when will your project be implemented?
 - Develop a work plan with specific activities/actions and a defined timeline
- Who are the participants, partners and grant beneficiaries?
- Where will activities be conducted and where will impacts be felt/seen?
- How will these methods accomplish the project goal(s)?



ESTIMATING COSTS

Personnel

- Show the actual salary (in years, months, etc.) and the % on this project, include benefits

Equipment

- Specify needed equipment by type, brand, model and price-MAY NOT BE ALLOWED

Travel

- Estimate number of trips, and include mileage, air, hotel, parking, and meal costs

Supplies

- Be specific as to type and number, provide accurate costs for each

Facility Rental and Events

- Document quotes, share details, consider targeted investments to elevate content and provide more access



DO NOT PROMISE WHAT YOU CAN'T DELIVER



REALITY CHECK

- Does this fit with the mission of both your organization and the grant?
- Is the scale correct in terms of time, funding levels and skill set to accomplish the grant program?
- Do you have everything you need to accomplish objectives?
 - Either on hand or via proposed grant expenditures
 - Can you signal long term ripple effects or sustainability?



IMPACTS AND EVALUATION

Crafting Impact Statements

- Stating the activity isn't enough, must relate to outcomes such as increased jobs or sales.
- For example:
 - “Conduct market manager training”
 - Not enough
 - “Market manager training will lead to increased produce sales “ by
 - Added vendors
 - Increased attendance
 - Other _____



IMPACTS AND EVALUATION

Impact Statement Example

1. There will be 100 new visitors to agritourism venues and events
2. FM manger training will lead to increased produce sales
3. Farmer use of incubator kitchen expands sales of value-added products

Evaluation Technique

1. Conduct follow-up survey with producers and event coordinators on participants
2. Compare vendor produce sales 2 and 4 months after manager training to pre training sales
3. Conduct pre and post (6 months) assessment of farmer value-added product sales

USING AI FOR GRANT WRITING



AI PLATFORMS

There are many AI platforms to choose from

Main AI platforms (free but can pay for upgrades)

- ChatGPT
- ClaudeAI

Others (pay to use)

- Instrumentl (paid)
- Grantable
- Grammarly
- And more!



THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE USING AI

- **All information that is given to AI is stored in the system**
 - Recommended to not give personal information
- **Do not copy and paste when using AI**
 - AI language can be impersonal and recognizable, you can copy and paste it into another document and edit the response from there
- **AI is not always accurate**
 - Be careful when using AI for a scientific response, ex: inputting your soil test into AI will not always give you accurate results or recommendations

AI isn't that scary, and it can be super helpful when writing Grants



USING AI FOR FORMATTING

You can give AI information to help you form **objectives, proposal narratives, timelines, budget, etc.**

EX: "I need a grant objective, I'm applying for a grant that would give me the money to purchase tools to create a greenhouse, the greenhouse would extend my growing season to offer fresh veggies to my local community in the fall and winter."

- **ChatGPT response:**
 - "To secure funding for the purchase of **tools and materials** necessary to construct a greenhouse, enabling the extension of the growing season and the provision of fresh, locally grown vegetables to the community during the fall and winter."
- **ClaudAI response:**
 - "To establish a climate-controlled greenhouse **operation** that extends the growing season and provides fresh, locally-grown vegetables to [your community name] during fall and winter months when **local produce is scarce**. The funding will support the purchase of **essential** greenhouse **equipment and tools**, enabling year-round production of **nutritious** vegetables while strengthening local food security and reducing the **community's reliance on imported produce**."
- **Think before you copy & paste**
- **Are these details correct for your project**
- **Is this a true statement for your specific situation?**
- **Unnecessary words that might make your word count go up**



USING AI TO GENERATE IDEAS

You can give AI information to help you think of details you should include in your budget, proposal, background, etc.

EX: What are some things I should put in my budget?

- ChatGPT Response

- **Greenhouse Structure:** Frame materials, covering materials, foundation materials.
- **Tools and Equipment:** Power tools, hand tools, specialty tools for greenhouse assembly.
- **Climate Control Systems:** Heating equipment, ventilation system, thermometers, humidity monitors, shade cloths, thermal curtains.
- **Irrigation System:** Drip irrigation components, water tanks, hoses, timers, pumps.
- **Planting and Growing Supplies:** Seed trays, pots, soil, compost, growing media, seeds, starter plants.
- **Lighting (if necessary):** Grow lights, light fixtures, installation supplies.
- **Utilities:** Electricity for lighting, heating, and ventilation, water for irrigation.
- **Labor Costs:** Wages for construction or installation, volunteer appreciation or training.
- **Permits and Licenses:** Building permits or zoning approval fees.
- **Transportation and Delivery:** Delivery of greenhouse materials or equipment, transportation of tools or plants.
- **Maintenance and Repairs:** Spare parts for irrigation or climate control systems, replacement coverings or frames.
- **Educational or Outreach Materials:** Signage about the greenhouse project, flyers or brochures for community engagement.
- **Unexpected Expenses:** A buffer (usually 5–10% of the total budget) for unforeseen costs.



USE AI FOR EDITING

Ex: “This is my project overview - please spell check and make it sound more formal

- “The purpose of this project is to provide the funds for me to buy greenhouse equipment. With a working greenhouse I can extend the growing season all year-round so that the local community can access fresh vegetables even in the winter. This will also make my farm business more financially resilient and I will be able to create my own plant starts in the spring instead of relying on nurseries...”

ChatGPT response:

- The purpose of this project is to secure funding for the purchase of greenhouse equipment. A fully operational greenhouse will enable year-round vegetable production, ensuring that the local community has access to fresh, nutritious produce even during the winter months. This initiative will also enhance the financial resilience of my farm business by reducing reliance on external suppliers for plant starts in the spring, as I will be able to cultivate my own. By extending the growing season and increasing self-sufficiency, this project will contribute to a stronger and more sustainable local food system...”



LET'S PRACTICE!

- <https://chatgpt.com>



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LET'S DRAFT A WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

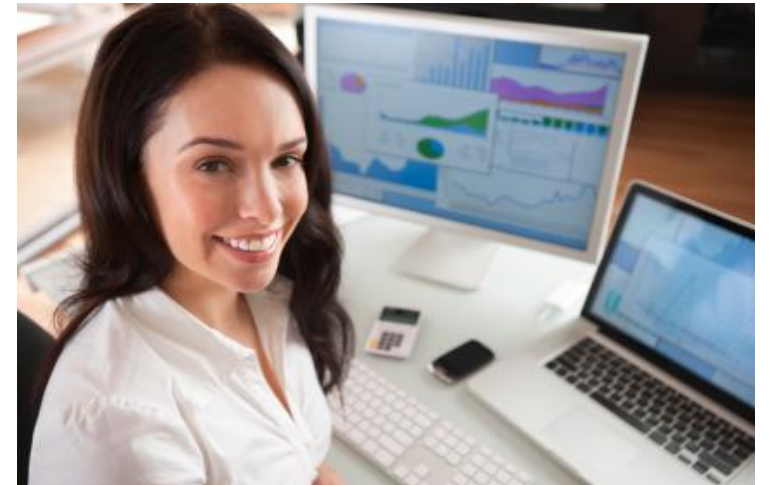
OUTREACH AND MARKETING

- How will the project be promoted?
- How will you create buy-in from project team and stakeholders?
- How will you communicate success?
- How will you communicate who benefited from the project?



FINAL LOOK AT THE PROJECT

- What is the project going to accomplish?
 - Who will benefit and why should people care?
 - Did the project create/retain additional jobs or sales? Could it in the future?
- How will you report what was measured combined with community context and hope for future projects?



WRITING TIPS

- Hallway - Using AI (Jess)
- This room - Grant Program Decision Tree (Martha)
- This room - Refining Scope of Work (Libby/Nicole)
- Hallway - Help with budgets/evaluation (Dawn)





THANK YOU!

Questions?

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