



# Office of Sustainability, Climate Action & Resilience

DATE: 2/24/2022  
TO: Board of County Commissioners  
FROM: Tim Broderick, Senior Sustainability Strategist and Susie Strife, Director of Sustainability, Climate Action & Resilience  
RE: Memo of Approval for the Local Food and Agricultural Fund

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In November 2016, Boulder County voters approved a .125 percent sales tax starting in 2020 to support countywide sustainability infrastructure and programs. The scope of projects funded by the sustainability tax will include energy efficiency and renewable energy services, zero waste, sustainable transportation, water conservation, and local food and sustainable agriculture. Given the ballot initiative specifically called out the need to address the priorities of local farmers and agriculture producers, Boulder County's Office of Sustainability, Climate Action & Resilience created a "Local Food and Agriculture Grant Fund" of approximately \$405,000 dedicated to supporting environmental sustainability projects that benefit Boulder County agricultural lands and food systems.

This funding opportunity is dedicated to supporting four broad local food and agriculture areas:

1. On-farm regenerative agriculture and soil health practices;
2. farmer/producer education, conferences, and workshops that focus on sustainable and regenerative agriculture demonstrations;
3. on-farm and farmer's market infrastructure; and
4. sustainable local food and crop production.

The grant fund launched in November 2021, and Boulder County businesses, non-profit organizations, and government entities were invited to apply, \$380,000 was set aside for large projects and \$25,000 was allocated for smaller budget. Applications were then reviewed by a screening committee made of local food and agricultural experts from Boulder County Parks & Open Space, CSU Extension, Boulder County's Office of Sustainability Climate Action & Resiliency, Land Use, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts, Boulder County's Parks and Open Space, and a selected Rancher /Farmer.

Boulder County's Office of Sustainability is seeking approval of recommended projects below totaling \$405,000 in funding.

## **LARGE FUND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Mariposa Farm High Density Apply Orchard**

**Recommended Grant:** \$68,000

#### **Project Summary:**

Mariposa Farms is seeking to establish a high-density apple orchard to produce value-added apple products on site and in their barn. A high-density orchard has early apple production

with higher yields and is economically sustainable by breaking even in 6 to 7 years compared to 10 to 12 years for traditional standard tree orchards. The orchard will be a sustainable source of healthy fruit and will further the long history of apple growing in the county.

### **Grama Grass and Livestock Regenerative Livestock Infrastructure**

**Recommended Grant:** \$56,500

#### **Project Summary:**

The proposed project consists of three main objectives: 1) fund the purchase of equipment to enable the efficient transportation of cattle by Grama Grass and Livestock (Grama Grass) and partner farms, 2) an agroecological impact evaluation to quantify the impacts of our regenerative grazing program, and 3) community outreach and education. Funding this project will create more regenerative practices on publicly held and privately owned land that will build native food resiliency.

### **Masa Seed Foundation Building a Local Grain Movement from the Ground Up with Soil, Seed and Diversity**

**Recommended Grant:** \$75,000

#### **Project Summary:**

The goal of this project is to advance the ancient and heritage grain movement in the Front Range of Colorado by bringing a wider diversity of grains into production, growing them using regenerative practices and working with a community of regional partners to explore their use through a series of fun and educational events. Funding will go towards a multi-crop plot harvester to enhance our ability to harvest and clean a wide variety of grains.

### **Jack's Solar Garden Agrivoltaics Equipment, Infrastructure, and Education**

**Recommended Grant:** \$40,000

#### **Project Summary:**

Jack's Solar Garden is the country's largest demonstration project of agrivoltaics. Through partnerships with Sprout City Farms and the Colorado Agrivoltaic Learning Center, Jack's Solar Garden seeks funds to invest more in on-site farm infrastructure and equipment to further Sprout City Farms path towards regenerative agriculture practices on our land and in installing educational interpretive panels to be used during farm tours and planned farmer workshop days.

### **Eco Cycle On Farm Composting and Compost Use – Demonstrations**

**Recommended Grant:** \$37,000

#### **Project Summary:**

Eco-Cycle seeks funding to provide aerated static piles on-farm composting systems to several high-profile farm partners. They will also partner with local farmers to field test a variety of finished compost blends to produce finished compost that meets the needs of local regenerative farmers. Our goal is to demonstrate at a small, low-risk scale how our community can move toward a local circular system for turning our organic discards into useful soil amendments for land regeneration.

### **Project Protect Promotora Network Boulder County Resource Distribution**

**Recommended Grant:** \$42,500

**Project Summary:**

The Project Protect Promotora Networks serves frontline farm workers across 6 different agricultural regions of Colorado. The Regional Director, Promotoras, and Neighborhood Organizers of the North 1 region would use Sustainable Food and Agriculture Funding to purchase safety resources for distribution based on ongoing outreach to workers in Boulder County. Items would be purchased in phases throughout the year to meet the changing needs of the seasons.

### **Light Root Community Farm Soil Health and Farm Resiliency with Holistic Farm Management Practices**

**Recommended Grant:** \$40,000

**Project Summary:**

Light Root Community Farm's goal is to build soil health and farm resiliency through fertility management systems from within the farm, including expanded compost production, multi-species management intensive grazing systems, and integrating cover cropping into reduced tillage and no-till crop and pasture systems.

### **Bridge House Mission Meals for Casa De La Esperanza Community**

**Recommended Grant:** \$21,000

**Project Summary:**

Bridge House's Mission Meals program provides frozen, precooked meals-in-a-bag to food-insecure households within Casa De La Esperanza Community at no cost to them and consist of a 4-serving size meal package made from scratch at Bridge House's Community Table Kitchen. Sample meals include stews, soups, chili and other healthy meals that are fully-cooked and frozen, and only require warming prior to eating. Prioritization of locally grown and raised food inputs will be made when cost effective and available.

### **SMALL FUND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Harvest of All First Nations Festival and Drylands Agroecology Research: \$5,000**

The Harvest of All First Nations festival will foster cultural and ecological regeneration by reconnecting BIPOC communities with their traditional foodways. The event will bring together diverse groups to share locally-grown heritage foods and Indigenous Knowledge through workshops and classes. It proposed to be a catalyst for the more widespread adoption of these varieties and the regeneration of BIPOC communities.

#### **Supporting Low-Income Voucher Programs at Boulder County Farmers' Markets: \$4,920**

The Erie and Louisville Farmers' Markets, frontline farm organizations run by Kelly Enterprises, will participate in low-income voucher programs starting with their 2022 seasons. These programs will advance equity and inclusion at these farmers' markets and in

their host communities, provide local, sustainable food to a diversity of Boulder County residents, and aid frontline farm workers. A Boulder County Sustainable Food and Agriculture Fund Program grant would support these programs' administration in their initial year.

**Boulder Valley Honey Pollinator Education and Hotspots: \$4,948**

Boulder Valley Honey (BVH) aims to leverage raw local and recycled materials to build pollinator presence throughout the greater eastern Boulder County Area. By purchasing local rough-sawn lumber and processing it into beehives and rearing hardy local bees from its resilient queen stock, BVH will also provide hands-on educational opportunities to the community to further individuals' understanding of beekeeping and the honey production process.

**Boulder Community Pollinator Corridor and Living Classrooms: \$5,000**

The objective of the project is to create a chain of conservation pollinator gardens, native bee habitat and living classrooms in collaboration with local farms, schools, non-profits, community gardens, municipalities, local businesses, HOAs, neighborhoods, and private residences.

**Citizen Science Soil Health Project: \$2,700**

The CSSHP helps 48 growers prove they are improving their soil, by providing FREE Haney and PLFA soil health tests for 10 years. We are applying for funding for website construction, which will feature 1) CSSHP annual group findings, 2) three reporting templates we have developed, 3) two long instructional videos of Lance Gunderson explaining the Haney and PLFA tests, and 4) six video profiles of CSSHP growers' soil health practices.

**Milk and Honey Farm (JCC): \$2,432**

Milk & Honey Farm will transition to no-till farming along with cover crops to reduce the carbon emitted from the farm. Funding will be used for tools, compost, silage tarps, and perennials. The goal of the project is to sequester carbon, maintain soil health, and increase the efficiency of the farm.