

Growing Ventures

The challenge of feeding an increasing population is concerning. Utah produces only about 50% of its own meat, 40% of its dairy, and 3% of its vegetables, importing everything else. This lack of self-sustainability could be dire for the state's future.



UtahStateUniversity

Utah State University Extension 4-H requests funds to support Growing Ventures.

- Growing Ventures is a new youth urban agricultural initiative in Salt Lake County to help foster entrepreneurship and agricultural literacy in youth and build career pathways to agricultural/food science.
- The initiative will help build the capacity of the USU Bastian Agricultural Center to meet the demand for urban agricultural programs. It will also aid USU in its goals to reduce entrance barriers for diverse audiences interested in agriculture.
- USU Extension has collaborated with partners, specifically the Jordan School District, 4-H Refugee Goat Club, and Roots Charter School. USU Extension will deepen relationships with partners and families to provide access and opportunity for all youth.
- Growing Ventures will help urban youth, especially those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds/communities, get involved in growing food through gardening and livestock efforts. Youth will gain entrepreneurial skills and an increased understanding of horticulture, animal science, and agri-science. The program will be a model agri-science educational experience incorporating STEM skills, teamwork, communication, and workforce development.



Skills Taught

- Resiliency/Grit
- Work Ethic
- Budgets
- Leadership
- Entrepreneurship
- Communication and Teamwork

Hub and Spoke Model

The Bastian Agricultural Center uses a “hub and spoke model” to disseminate programs. The Center serves as the hub to a large wheel of programming that radiates first through Salt Lake County and will expand to the entire state. The program will work with a variety of city, county, school, and nonprofit programs to train and build satellite garden and animal programs. The program will use the USU Extension network located in each county to expand the long-term reach.



Career Pathway

Today's youth are tomorrow's workforce. Research shows these youth are credentialed on paper but lack the critical skills to succeed in their careers. This is America's very real, very critical career readiness gap – resulting in only one in five college students saying they feel "very prepared" to join the workforce (National 4-H, 2015). Entering the workforce with soft skills and technical understandings of subjects related to personal interests is key to creating the job satisfaction and retention employers are seeking.

1. USU Extension 4-H uses a four-part career pathway to help youth find and foster their career interest and skills to place them on a pathway to success.
2. Explore - The Bastian Center program will engage approximately 7,000 students in short-term learning events that serve to introduce agriculture to children. These take the form of classroom visits, onsite field trips, and an annual agriculture career day.
3. Learn - Summer camps and afterschool programs that last 6 hours or more deepen youth's understanding of local food and how to get involved. Approximately 500 youth will be involved in summer camps and afterschool programs.



4. Practice - Our 4-H clubs allow youth to learn over months as they work on a project from start to finish. Projects may include raising a garden or livestock. Through the project they learn hard work, leadership, life skills, and entrepreneurship. Approximately 100 youth will be involved in livestock clubs and an additional 175 in gardening clubs.

5. Experience - The last part of the career pathway allows youth and young adults to build their skills as they prepare for a career in local food production. In addition to project work, these youth are leaders in clubs, teens as teachers, and serve as interns to support the learning of others in the program. Ten to 15 youth and young adults will be involved in the capstone of the pathway.



Program Financial Viability

- In order for the youth ag program to lead to sustainable businesses, it requires an increased level of learning and engagement from content experts. Growing Ventures will be a scaffold learning approach that will allow youth gardeners and farmers to learn and gain experience in a directly guided way.
- With sustainability in mind, a portion of the revenues from youth projects will be returned to the program to support the next year's projects. Any additional funds will be awarded to the youth for raising the project.
- This model will teach youth the importance of budgets, markets, and business management. It will also give youth the foundational financial skills needed for a successful future in agriculture. Youth will have the opportunity to sell produce and value-added products at the Utah Grown storefront at the Bastian Agricultural Center.



REQUEST:

➤ **Total: \$325,000 ongoing**

» Operating funds as well as salaries and benefits for three USU program coordinators and three student summer interns who will be responsible for the start-up training and ongoing support of the youth-led urban agricultural efforts. They would work with a larger group of USU faculty and staff to provide the content expertise to build a sustainable program.

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