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Agricultural Grant Funding Sample Proposal

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Sandra Welleston
Chair
Bascom Foundation
2000 Bakerview Drive
Suite 201
Marktown, MO 63300

Ms. Welleston,

I represent the Slocum Community Farm Project.

We are a group of five individuals committed to developing a jointly owned organic farm that will serve the local community with sales of organic produce and leases of family gardening plots.

One of our group, Beverly Lawson, recently inherited the property we intend to use for our farm, and now we seek \$40,000 in funding to convert the property for our intended use—growing organic fruits and vegetables for local sale, as well as creating community garden plots that urbanites can lease on a yearly basis to complement the county's overloaded program.

We have strong community support, investors from the local area, and the pledges of restaurants and farmers markets to accept our produce after harvest.

We strongly believe our business plan has been thoroughly outlined and will meet or exceed all of your funding requirements. We look forward to meeting with you to show you our plans and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frieda Caswell
Representative
Slocum Community Farm Project
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Business Plan

Funding the Slocum Community Farm Project

Prepared for:

Sandra Welleston
Chair

Prepared by:

Frieda Caswell
Representative



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Market Demand

There is already a large market demand in Winover County for community supported cooperative agriculture, as demonstrated both through local community garden programs, where urban dwellers can reserve space within a public garden to grow their own produce; and through subscriptions to CSA programs, where families pay local farmers to deliver boxes of fresh produce to them on a regular basis. In addition, the demand for fresh produce in local markets increases each year, as well as the demand from local restaurants for fresh produce. We've provided some details below.

● Community Garden Patch Demand

In the previous year, the county community garden program had 225 garden spaces available at a price of \$75 per year, and 294 applicants. This year, in spite of a price rise of 33.3% to \$100 per year, the county had 320 applicants for the same 225 garden spaces. Clearly the county needs more space for community gardens.

We plan to offer 120 spaces at \$125/year and supply tools for communal use to accommodate these urban farmers. We will also sell seeds, plants, fertilizers, and other products to these customers.

● CSA Share Subscription Programs

The local farmers who sell CSA shares within our county reported a 120% increase in annual subscriptions from the previous year. They anticipate even more customers next year, and are currently struggling to meet demand. After we have established our crops, we plan to sell CSA shares to cash in on this growing trend of buying local fresh food.

● Farmers Markets

Our four county farmers markets are booming. Direct sales to customers last year through farmers markets were estimated to be near \$1 million dollars and are expected to grow. We will establish outlets at all four farmers markets and sell our produce there. As our farm will be located at a major crossroads, we also plan to sell our produce in our own on-site produce stand.

● Local Restaurants

Our research shows that when restaurants can advertise "fresh local" food, they attract more customers, and the local menu items outsell other menu items two to one. Local restaurants owners need more suppliers of fresh fruits and vegetables for their businesses.

Summary

The trends of eating fresh fruits and vegetables and buying local are expected to continue to grow over the next decade. Our cooperative farm plans to cash in on these trends and deliver what the market wants.





Return on Investment

Detailed below is the Return on Investment (ROI) analysis for the project. The costs for the development, operations, and ongoing maintenance of the project vs. the benefits are summarized for a 5-year period.

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Total Costs	\$150,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$350,000
Benefits	\$50,000	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$135,000	\$150,000	\$545,000
Net	(\$100,000)	\$40,000	\$70,000	\$85,000	\$100,000	\$195,000
Ratio	-0.67	0.80	1.40	1.70	2.00	0.56
ROI	-66.67%	80.00%	140.00%	170.00%	200.00%	55.71%

Financial ROI Benefits

As you can see by the chart above, the initial startup cost can be earned back within only a few years. Within ten years, we can easily sustain the farm project, pay back our investors, and make a healthy profit each year. All the profits earned by the farm will stay in the local community, thus supporting local schools and other small businesses.

Non-Financial ROI Benefits

The non-financial benefits of our communal farm project are immeasurable to the Winover County community. We will provide healthy organic food for the community, bees that will help pollinate nearby crops, and educational and recreational opportunities.





Support

We have broad local support for our communal farm project.

- **Winover County Council**

The Winover County Council has heartily endorsed our project and approved the creation and leasing of community gardens on the property.

- **Marktown Investment Network**

Seven members of the Marktown Investment Network have each pledged to invest \$20,000 to be paid back in 10 years at 5% interest.

- **Winover County Restaurant Association**

This local restaurant association is enthusiastic about our farm as a new source of fresh local produce. Ten restaurant owners have expressed desires to purchase produce from us as soon as our first harvest is in.

- **Marktown Farmers Market Association**

All four farmers markets in Marktown are eager for our new farm to sell produce in their roadside markets.

- **Beekeepers Association of MO**

Our state association of beekeepers was excited to learn that we plan to establish our own bee colony on our farm. They will add our farm name and address to their literature, help us create a healthy, thriving bee colony, and assist us in selling honey and beeswax products.



- **Organic Farm Council of MO**

This state council will assist us with gaining and maintaining our organic certification, and will also assist us in marketing our organic products.

- **Marktown Community College**

Our local community college wants to use our farm as a teaching example of organic gardening. They plan to bring groups of students to see our farm, and agriculture students at Marktown Community College may also serve as a pool of part-time interns as needed.

Summary

In addition to all the organizations listed above, the community at large is enthusiastic about the possibility of a new small organic farm and community garden. There is currently an unmet community demand for CSA subscriptions and leased garden plots.





Property

The property on which we propose to establish the communal farm is the old Slocum farm, located at 1032 Market Road. This property was inherited by Beverly Lawson on the death of her uncle, Jonas Slocum, who specified in his will that the property was to continue as a farm.

- **Land**

The property encompasses 512 acres. It is currently used for the following purposes: pasture for cattle (currently leased by the neighbor) (60%), production of hay (30%), and a market garden (now abandoned) (10%).

- **Buildings**

On the property is a farmhouse built in 1958, a barn constructed the same year, and several small equipment and storage sheds. All are in good shape.

- **Utilities**

Water is supplied by two wells on the property and is adequate for all needs proposed for the farm project. A septic system is in place and is large enough to handle several additional bathrooms on the property. Electricity is supplied by the county utility district.

- **Machinery**

All machinery and tools left on the property were inherited by Beverly Lawson. These include a tractor, plow, harrow, and various other farm implements that are all in usable condition.

Summary

The property now owned by Beverly Lawson is ideal for our communal farm project. Real estate taxes and upkeep are the only expenses that our group will need to pay for use of this property.



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