



Project Narrative Overview

The Bee Brigade – Serving the Underserved Registered 501(c)3 - California Public Benefit Corporation

Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program Project Narrative
Submitted November 18, 2022

1) Introduction & Justification

The Bee Brigade - Registered 501(c)3 - California Public Benefit Corporation is launching the Serving the Underserved (SU), a program designed for BIPOC & Underserved Communities of Southern California to engage in agricultural beekeeping & procure agricultural land. This application under the opportunity Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program USDA-FSA-LANDACCESS-22-NOFO0001219, will enable us to build an impactful, inclusive, and equitable program that increases the ability of the underserved to access land, capital, and new markets in an innovative direction.

This grant will allow The Bee Brigade to build a perpetual 18-month educational program extended to underserved and BIPOC communities in the modern use of agricultural vehicles, such as apiculture (beekeeping), paired with training to execute USDA FSA Farm Ownership Programs, in order to acquire and maintain farmland ownership.

The unbalanced demographic breakdown of beekeepers in the US is predominately white (79%), with the next highest segments being Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish and Other, making up 7% and 6% respectively.

The overwhelming lack of minority beekeepers creates a disadvantage to accessing the beekeeping industry (apiculture) for BIPOC and underserved groups. In turn, the lack of access to the industry, as a whole, creates significant barriers to acquiring and retaining farmlands for such purposes.

With this grant, The Bee Brigade, will create, operate and fund outcome-oriented educational programs designed to provide wrap around technical assistance and support to BIPOC, Veterans, and underserved communities for services such as business development and tax training, which are essential to effectively running their business.

Furthermore, the training will empower them to provide meaningful and sustained access to land, capital, and markets. Further educational opportunities include those that support access to agricultural land, the rural and urban apiculture industry , UDSA FSA Farm ownership

programs, business planning, multi-generation estate planning, and the viable routes to funding these endeavors for themselves.

In addition to providing future producers with the tools to overcome disadvantages, the program enables basic recruitment from the general public, through free classes covering the introduction to vital pollinators, how a honeybee farm operates, and how our food & ecosystem rely upon these livestock as agricultural tools. We will achieve this by building a perpetual educational facility, pollinator habitats, and collegiate research facilities, also known as bee sanctuaries.

In order to execute the Severing the Underserved (SU), The Bee Brigade must secure the land and resources to build approved-infrastructure at sanctuary sites. Designed to self-sustain, after the first year of operations, the revenue drivers include: Hive Sponsorship Program, Corporate Honeybee Classes, Sanctuary Tours, On-site Events, and Sanctuary Admissions. Each component tied to educational outcomes for students that support their advancement from the program and into self-reliant beekeepers and agricultural farm owners.

Funding from this grant will enable The Bee Brigade to achieve the following three major goals which will be tied to their outputs and outcomes in the body of the application.

- Building an Inclusive Beekeeping Academy
- Creating a Business Support Center
- Paving & Instructing Pathways to Land Ownership through USDA Programs

In order to accomplish this, we must

- Secure Land for a Perpetual Educational Facility
 - The grant will allow the purchase of a single parcel that serves to secure the formal spaces needed to organize the educational operations, host classes, and carry out established Bee Brigade goals in a rural location.
- Build Educational Space & Development Land
 - The grant will allow The Bee Brigade to create the on-property infrastructure and class spaces that will be used to provide training, certifications, and tangible learning opportunities for underserved communities.
- Create Equitable Engagement Funnels via No-Cost Community Involvement
 - The grant will enable the building of a no-cost field-trip program extended to underprivileged, tribal, and low-income communities and schools.

2) Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes Overview

“Serving the Underserved” Mission Statement:

To build and maintain an inclusive and equitable educational space where BIPOC & Underserved Community Members are taught, *(1) the art of agricultural beekeeping, (2) how to start and run a beekeeping business, and (3) how to utilize these skills to acquire the land, capital, and access to the industry.*

The below portion elaborates on the specific goals, their outputs, and the outcome we will achieve. More detailed descriptions of the outputs and outcomes for each goal, and how these outputs align with USDA FSA priorities and California’s Public Benefit Corporation, The Bee Brigade’s business and administrative needs, are also described below. The goal and outputs of the USDA FSA Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program align with The Bee Brigade SU Program. Our collective goal is the provision of resources to entities to address land access issues that underserved producers face including land title concerns.

The overall project is one that can be scaled to fit other regions and areas seeking to empower impoverished and underserved communities.

Potential challenges are limited to producer cooperation with a stinging insect. However, our design to incorporate producers at an early stage through field trips, tours, etc. allows for us to eliminate the barrier of fear. We have 10+ producers interested in the program without any recruitment of advertising.

Future Producer/Students Statistics:

- Regionally supporting Southern California underserved Producers with a low to medium socioeconomic status.
 - 10-50 Producers annually through the training program
- Workshops & Field Trips at the facility & in the field will be completed monthly serving from 25-250 underserved students per session.
 - 250+ served at elementary or high school levels
- Justice 40 Criteria Met: Training & Workforce Development
- Producers will be recruited through high schools, community colleges, city & county rehabilitation programs, and hubs within the inner cities.

Goal One: Beekeeper Training Academy

Beekeeper Training Academy – Inaugural Class Start Date: Spring 2024 (6 Month Phase)

Phase #1 - The Beekeeper Training Academy serves as the base level of knowledge required for all successful graduation and certification from the program. Producers will meet at the rural facility in Pauma Valley, California, on a weekly basis. Transportation will be included in the program.

Goal 1 Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs Include:

- 1.1 Equipping students with the beekeeping skills and ability to build their agricultural business that serves as the basis for their livelihood that will enable land, market, and capital access.
- 1.2 Educational Space Development – Purchase of Property, Agricultural Infrastructure, Classroom & Work Spaces – December 2023 Completion
- 1.3 Student Apprentice Master Beekeeping Certification (CAMBP) – November 2024 Completion – End of the first beekeeping season
- 1.4 National Apiculture and Beekeeping Organization/Association Mentorship

Outcomes & Benchmarks Include:

- Established Beekeepers with the Knowledge, Skills & Abilities to maintain an agricultural operation.
- Perpetual Training Facility equipped to Serve the Underserved indefinitely
- Students Graduate with Apprentice Level Master Beekeeping Certification Completion of the first phase of program with Apprentice
- Networking within the industry to build base of future business.

The Bee Brigade requirements to accomplish this goal include: Educational Space Development – Purchase of Property, Agricultural Infrastructure, Classroom & Work Spaces are covered here.

- (The scheduled timeline has been chosen as the steps to acquire the land will take approximately 3-6 months. Building a beekeeping school will require 3-6months of development. This allows the inaugural class to start in 2024.)

Performance Reports will be built and monitored by the Program Administrator after each phase to determine breakdowns that contribute to overall success. Results will be stored as historical program data.

Goal 2: Beekeeper Business Planning

Beekeeper Business Planning – Inaugural Class Start Date: Winter 2024-25 (6 Month Phase)

Phase #2 – In alignment with the USDA FSA Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program, this phase introduces students to the “beekeeping market” as legitimate producers of an agricultural commodity. Producers will meet at the rural facility in Pauma Valley, California weekly. Transportation will be included in the program.

This portion of the Serving the Underserved Program is where students build upon learned beekeeping skills by pairing them with instruction on the basics of business development. This empowers and provide them the organizational skills to lead their own operations in the modern-day business world leveling the playing field for underserved communities. The Bee Brigade will mentor & guide students through each step ensuring success and completion.

Outputs Include:

- 2.1 Instruction to the Beekeeping Students in the basics of building their own business.
 - Agricultural Business Formation/Development
 - Accounting, Budgeting, Taxes, & Cashflow Comprehension
 - Short & Long-Term Planning (2 & 5 Year Plans)
- 2.2 Building Business Relationships
 - Strategic Banking – USDA Approved Banks (Future Funding Opportunities)
 - Industry Contacts – Dependent upon direction of the student
- 2.3 Salesmanship Course – Teaching students how to move commodities from inventory to a cash producing crops
- 2.4 One on One Coaching: Dedicated coaching & counseling time to ensure student success

Outcomes & Benchmarks Include:

- *Business Ownership* - Students will *own and operate* their own agricultural business providing them the vehicle to land ownership in Phase #3.
- *Financial Literacy* - Students will understand and comprehend beekeeping financials & how they are used.
- *Experience* - Hands on experience in a dynamic business environment with professional support

(The scheduled timeline, Fall 2025, has been chosen based Phase #1 completion, compounded with the required time to complete Phase #2)

Performance Reports will be built and monitored by the Program Administrator after each phase to determine breakdowns that contribute to overall success. Results will be stored as historical program data.

Goal 3: Pathways to Land Ownership & Retainment

Pathways to Land Ownership & Retainment Course – Spring 2025 Completion Date

Phase #3 - This goal, along with its associated outputs and outcomes, is consistent with the USDA FSA Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Programs priority to focus on increasing land access, mitigating and preventing land loss to Underserved farmers.

This portion is where students and teachers carve the individual pathways for students to own land bringing the program full circle with them gaining their own land. Future producers will meet at the rural facility in Pauma Valley, California weekly. Transportation will be included in the program.

- **Outputs Include:**
 - 3.1 Instruction of applicable Land Ownership Programs
 - Public: City, County, State, & Federal Programs including USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, Farm Service Agency farm loan programs, Rural Development loan or grant programs or any other programs and services administered by USDA.
 - Private: Corporate & University Grants
 - United States Small Business Administration Programs
 - 3.2 Application to a viable program for land ownership
 - 3.3 Land Loss Courses & Prevention
- **Outcomes Include:**
 - Fully equipped beekeepers with skills & abilities to physically carry out an agricultural beekeeping operation
 - Business Ownership as the vehicle to land ownership for each student
 - Completed applications to the Land Ownership Program of the future producers choice that is specific to the producer's needs.

(The scheduled timeline for completion of Phase #3, Fall 2025, has been chosen based Phase #1 & #2 completion, compounded with the required time to complete Phase #3.)

The ultimate test of performance is the producer's benchmarks for each phase. Performance Reports will be built and monitored by the Program Administrator after each phase to determine breakdowns that contribute to overall success. Results will be stored as historical program data.

3) Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Key Personnel

Project Manager: Travis Wolfe – Founder & President, Bee Leaf USA Inc., Founding Director, The Bee Brigade

Travis will serve as the project manager for the duration of this grant project. He was selected for the role based on real life experience in the beekeeping industry as a business owner with experience using USDA Farm Services Agency Loan Programs, and successful application of US SBA programs over the last 5 years. Travis' historical involvement in serving underserved producers spans from the areas of elementary education in the San Diego Inner City, African Outreach and Chaperone Programs, and leading a multi-year, Wounded Warrior Program at Camp Pendleton Marine Base.

Travis has founded the Tribal Gaming Student Association where he developed the leadership skills to recruit and engage tribal students in the path to higher education and graduation with a degree. He understands what is required to educate, inspire, and impact the lives of the underserved and how to effectively motivate them to produce results.

His project responsibilities include:

- Program oversight & securing of resources
- Coordinating the development of the educational spaces
- Curriculum writing and oversight
- Assist Project Administrator & Facilitator in normal operations
- One – on – One Coaching for future producers

Project Administrator: Julia Rodriguez - Founding Director & Secretary, The Bee Brigade, Assistant COO, Trademark Venues.

Julia will serve as the Program Administrator for the duration of this grant project. She was selected for the role based on her experience as a director of a hotel Food & Beverage Operations for the Ritz Carlton & Gaylord Hotels leading a staff and management team of 120+ staff members.

Additionally, Julia has experience in serving underserved communities through her work with local San Diego based non-profit agencies. These agencies include IVAT- Institute for Violence, Abuse and Trauma; as well as Walden Family Services. Both organizations work with underserved communities and provide areas of opportunity for them.

Julia has experience is obtaining grants, the SAM process, and basic functions of government funding pathways and opportunities. She has spent time learning and understanding the USDA Farm Loan Process over the last 12 months.

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Her project responsibilities include:

- Daily Activity Oversight
- Basic Program Administration (Internal & External Communications)
- Recruiting & Retainment of Producers
- Interfacing with Vendors, Developers, and various groups of Underserved Communities
- Scheduling & Planning
- USDA Funding Trainer/Coach
- Performance Monitor

Project Facilitator: Shiella McNulty – Director, Compliance & Risk Management Division
Marine Corps Community Services

Shiella will serve as the Program facilitator for the duration of this grant project. She was selected for the role based on her vast experience as a Director with the Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS). Sheila has over 30 years working for the Federal Government, its affiliates.

Her project responsibilities include:

- Basic Program Facilitation (Internal Communications with Producers)
- Interfacing with Vendors, Developers, and various groups of Underserved Communities
- Staff Hiring (Beekeeping Teachers and Business Firms)
- Staff & Producer Onboarding

4) Overview of Project Budget

The total budget for this project is \$2,432,600.00 with \$2,432,600.00 in direct grants funding. This project not a partnership project.

The proposed project budget also includes \$300,000.00 budgeted for contractual costs. Contractor services will be procured through open solicitation for a minimum of 3 vendors according to The Bee Brigade bylaws.

This project is requesting a total of \$205,000.00 in equipment and a total of \$132,600.00 in supplies. This project is requesting no funds be allocated to travel costs.

The dynamic nature of the SU program is designed so each goal intertwines, uses the same infrastructure, and are weighted equally in the training of future producers. As each goal will utilize the same infrastructure, we choose to split the allocation of costs to acquire, develop, and operate the program while and successfully accomplishing the goals set forth.

Further elaboration upon the budgeted costs of the program can be found in the Budget narrative.