

Identifying Information

Project Title: Cooperative Development Center of New Mexico

Proposal I.D.: 13341

Applicant Name: Arturo Sandoval

Legal Name of Applicant Organization: Center of Southwest Culture

Proposal Narrative Categories

Applicant Organization:

Established in 1991, the Center of Southwest Culture (CSC) promotes healthy communities through economic, educational and cultural initiatives. The Cooperative Development Center of New Mexico's (CoDeCe) is a project of CSC that helps mostly minority farmers to create long-term sustainable farming enterprises that will also improve public health and preserve the heritage of these traditional communities. Through education, training and outreach, CoDeCe enhances self-employment in farming while promoting sustainable, organic agriculture that will feed local communities and promote economic security.

Social or Economic Factor:

New Mexico remains among the poorest states, ranking 43rd in terms of personal income, 40th in unemployment, 3rd in "food insecurity" and fifth in hunger. Recent U.S. Census Bureau figures show a worsening in the state's poverty rate, and the 2011 Kids Count Data Book shows that fully a quarter of our children live in poverty. *County Health Rankings* affirms that our four target counties – Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Mora and Taos – suffer disproportionately from poverty in a state that is already among the poorest.

County	% Not in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate (%)	% Below Poverty, 2006-2010
Mora County	50.82	13.9	11.9%
Rio Arriba County	42.81	8.4	19.7%
San Miguel County	43.32	7.3	24.8%
Taos County	37.25	9.1	17%
Average, Target Area	43.55	9.75	18.35%
Average, U.S.A.	36.08	8.2	13.8%

Taking into consideration just one of our four counties – Rio Arriba – it is easy to see the negative ripple effects that poverty has on the population, approximately 72% Hispanic and 15% Native American. County health care reports document growing childhood obesity and early-onset Type II diabetes. Mortality rates for children are higher in this county than for the state as a whole, and indicators for selected chronic

conditions for ages 20 and younger show that rates are much higher for children and teens here than in New Mexico as a whole. The asthma rate is more than twice the state rate, for example. Substance abuse and teen suicide are extremely high. All of these public health concerns underscore the despair bred by lack of opportunity.

CoDeCe will address the root problems of these health issues by promoting economic development. We will help form cooperative groups and assist groups to form partnerships. We will provide technical assistance in organic farming, business management and marketing and will train farmers through a hands-on apprenticeship program in organic farming methods. These steps will improve economic prospects in these traditional communities but they will also educate and empower younger community members regarding the value and sustainability of the cooperative model. Ultimately, our program will instill pride and foster self-sufficiency in these communities, making youth more apt to be sustained in these communities and hold onto their lands.

CoDeCe will strengthen economic security in a culturally respectful and community-based fashion, thereby fostering opportunity for families and children who are at present among the most at-risk in the nation. As an example, rather than imposing foreign ideas and methods, CoDeCe will work to re-instill communities' pride in their ancient irrigation systems and re-engage them in cleaning and maintaining their acequias (irrigation canals). CoDeCe will assist communities in adopting a new paradigm of community and economic development that is more consistent with their history and culture, and which relies on cooperative development as a means for building wealth and creating economic opportunity.

One direct impact of our efforts will be to increase the availability of locally-grown organic fruits and vegetables. Our outreach activities will raise awareness about nutrition, and decrease the stigma attached to organics, now seen by many as being out of reach. Long term, our efforts complement those of public health officials and others, to reverse the negative public health trends plaguing these communities, especially as locally-grown produce increasingly finds its way to the school lunchrooms of the four target counties.

Policy or System Change:

This initiative is urgent if we are to stem the loss of homes, land, and water rights, which is now happening at an accelerated rate. The U.S. Department of Agriculture 2002 Census Report documents a total of 20,770,712 acres of farmland owned by Hispanic

farmers in New Mexico. In its 2007 Census report, the USDA showed a decline in to 17,054,007 acres. This loss of 3.7 million acres in arable land ownership in five years reflects the accelerating impacts of agribusiness. The small size of these farms (52.3% are 49 acres or less), poses a special challenge in New Mexico. Farms are getting smaller, in fact, at a rapid pace. The time to act, therefore, is now. The system change that CoDeCe proposes will offer environmentally sound, meaningful and profitable alternatives to selling the family farm.

We have created a program for alfalfa farmers and ranchers, to convert them to organic farming; once they harvest their produce, we help them to market the produce through a number of partnerships. We recruit apprentices who already know how to plant and irrigate arable land. That is a strong experiential base upon which we can build top-notch organic farmers. We are also coordinating the organic farming with other economic development activities tied to the existing land base, including cultural and eco-tourism and affordable housing using traditional building materials. Sustainable agriculture, therefore, is tied to a larger economic redevelopment effort to guarantee success for farmers and their families.

CSC President Arturo Sandoval is CoDeCe's Project Director and a Hispanic New Mexican who himself grew up raising vegetables in rural northern New Mexico. He has a fundamental commitment to this project and its families, and possesses extensive experience in creating marketing cooperatives in northern New Mexico. He also manages a small business incubator program that assists immigrant women to develop and market craft-based business enterprises. Our lead farmer is Don Bustos, who is the owner-operator of Santa Cruz Farms. For the past two decades, Don has developed a high-yield small sustainable organic farm. He is a native of northern New Mexico and has a unique ability to connect with our target audience. We know from Santa Cruz Farms data that it is possible to generate \$35,000 - \$45,000 per acre from cultivation of organics. A principal collaborator is Pamela Roy, Co-Director of Farm to Table, a New Mexico organization working on farm and ranch issues, Farm to School initiative, farmers' market development, and food and agriculture policy. Ms. Roy has close to 20 years of organizational development and farmers' market experience and has worked internationally in lesser-developed countries in this work.

Multisector Coalition or Network:

We have already begun the creation of a statewide network of organizations working on sustainable agriculture, which we launched in March 2010, when 100 people met for two days for the New Mexico Food System Summit. We continue to build partnerships, including:

- La Montanita Co-op a community-owned consumer cooperative grocery and Whole Foods, a national grocer, have agreed to serve as a markets for our produce.
- Revolving loan funders that have committed to this project include La Montanita Co-op and the New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union.
- Truchas Peaks Place, a premier conference center, supports our work through reduced lodging costs for launching tourism products and for meeting space.
- The Rio Grande Community Development Corporation (RGCDC), will bring producers the technical know-how and expertise to become food entrepreneurs. Since 2005, RGCDC's commercial kitchen has helped create over 80 food-based businesses in New Mexico.
- Farm to Table, a Santa Fe-based non-profit that links local food production to local needs, will help our farmers to market their produce.
- Agri-Cultura Network, a farmer-owned brokerage that markets and sells locally-grown organic produce, offers technical assistance to our farmers in marketing their organic produce, as well as helps with crop selection and soil analysis.
- Las Vegas, New Mexico's *Farm to Restaurant* will help to connect farmers and ranchers with local restaurants.
- CoDeCe will work with the Small Business Administration's Small Business Development Centers for technical assistance.
- CoDeCe will draw on the resources and expertise of The New Mexico Environment Department for food safety training.

Community Engagement:

The target audience for this project is limited-resource, socially disadvantaged Hispanic or Native American farmers and ranchers and their families. The age range is therefore broad, including children under the age of five and their parents. The table below offers U.S. Census data on the ethnic composition of the counties where the project will focus.

Urban/Rural Population, Poverty and Ethnicity of Target Areas

	Mora	Rio Arriba	San Miguel	Taos
Total Population	4,881	40,246	29,393	32,937
Urban*	0	17,765	17,892	12,121
Rural*	5,180	23,425	12,234	17,858
Percent Hispanic/Latino	81%	71.3%	76.8%	55.8 %
Percent American Indian	0.3%	14%	0.8%	5.3%

Our assessment of need came from 20 years of experience in northern New Mexico and kitchen-table talks with residents as well as community meetings with acequia associations and land grant boards. We know that our assessment is on target, as we have a growing waitlist of communities that want our help to form cooperatives and learn organic farming. We are only limited now by our resources, which have not been able to keep pace with the growth in interest from across northern New Mexico.

Matching Funds Partners:

We are pursuing matching funds with applications pending for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s "Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge" as well as funding from the McCune Foundation and the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation that. Our cooperatives will also contribute funds to reach the matching funds goal. Many of our partners are themselves nonprofits, and much of their assistance will come primarily in the form of in-kind donations of technical assistance, training, and education. CSC will contribute in-kind services in the form of training, meeting facilitation, work plan development, organizational and business plan development, outreach materials, etc. One of our principal partners, the RG CDC, will help our producers create products that can be marketed year-round. CSC anticipates future in-kind labor and technical assistance contributions from the American Friends Service Committee, Agri-Cultura Network, Chimal Designs, the Colonias Development Council, the Latino Sustainability Institute, New Mexico Public Lands Action Network, Taos Land Trust, Embudo Valley Acequia Association, Bioneers, and Farm to Table. All of these organizations share our vision for northern New Mexico, and will partner with us on discrete aspects of the program – e.g. marketing, product development, technical assistance to farmers, soil analysis, etc.

BUDGET

Definitions:

- Personnel – salary and fringe benefit costs.
- Other Direct Costs – office operations, communications/marketing, travel, meeting expenses, and project space.
- Purchased Services – consultant and/or contract costs.
- Indirect Costs – administrative expenses related to overall operations. The Foundation’s approved rate for Indirect Costs is 12% of Personnel, Other Direct Costs and Purchased Services. When Purchased Services total more than 33% of the RWJF portion of a budget, the Foundation limits indirect costs on the Purchase Services category to 4%.
- Other Support – cash match and in-kind support.

Budget Table

Budget Category	RWJF Support	Other Support
Personnel	45,000	55,000
Other Direct Costs	90,000	70,000
Purchased Services	45,000	60,000
Indirect Costs	20,000	20,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$200,000	205,000

Budget Narrative

The budget outline above will allow CoDeCe to grow its cooperatives and expand the acreage we plant in the existing agricultural cooperatives. Financial assistance will support our cooperatives’ expansion to include more farmers, add more acreage, and cover the fees needed to receive organic status when ready. Financial assistance will also increase recipients’ capacities to grow produce throughout the year with the construction of additional coldframes – transparent-roofed enclosures, built low to the ground that protect plants from cold weather. Financial assistance will also allow us to purchase needed liability insurance for our cooperatives and underwrite the costs of initial planting in new areas. We can also use funds to underwrite the costs of new

product development and initial marketing of food products for our food entrepreneurs from these same cooperatives. Technical assistance including business plan guidance and community education will also be supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Grant Duration

24 months