

# CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION TOOLKIT FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR ANIMALS STATEWIDE

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

I worked with CSU Extension, the CSU College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and the Zoonoses and Health Communities teams at CDPHE. While there is research about the impacts of climate change on human health, there is less information about its impacts on domesticated animals. This project seeks to bring together information from different sectors to create a cohesive source of information about the health impacts of climate change on Colorado animals.

## INTERNSHIP GOALS

- Determine the primary climate health hazards impacting domestic, agricultural, and wild animals in Colorado
- Meet with animal health subject matter experts to discuss potential protection strategies, methods of implementation, and barriers to these strategies
- Create public-facing communication materials to educate Colorado residents on methods to protect their pets from climate health hazards
- Create a toolkit which other states and regions can utilize when conducting their own research on the animal climate health hazards

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

I am earning my Master in Public Health degree with a concentration in Animals, People, and the Environment. This internship gave me valuable experience meeting subject matter experts, conducting research, and making health communication tools, all of which are important components of my public health education.

## Figure 1. Colorado Climate Animal Health Hazards

- Extreme Heat
- Air Quality
- Wildfires
- Precipitation changes (drought and floods)
- Extreme Storms
- Waterborne Diseases
- Vector-borne Diseases
- Food Safety Issues
- Animal Welfare
- Impacts on Animal Caregivers

## WHAT YOU DID

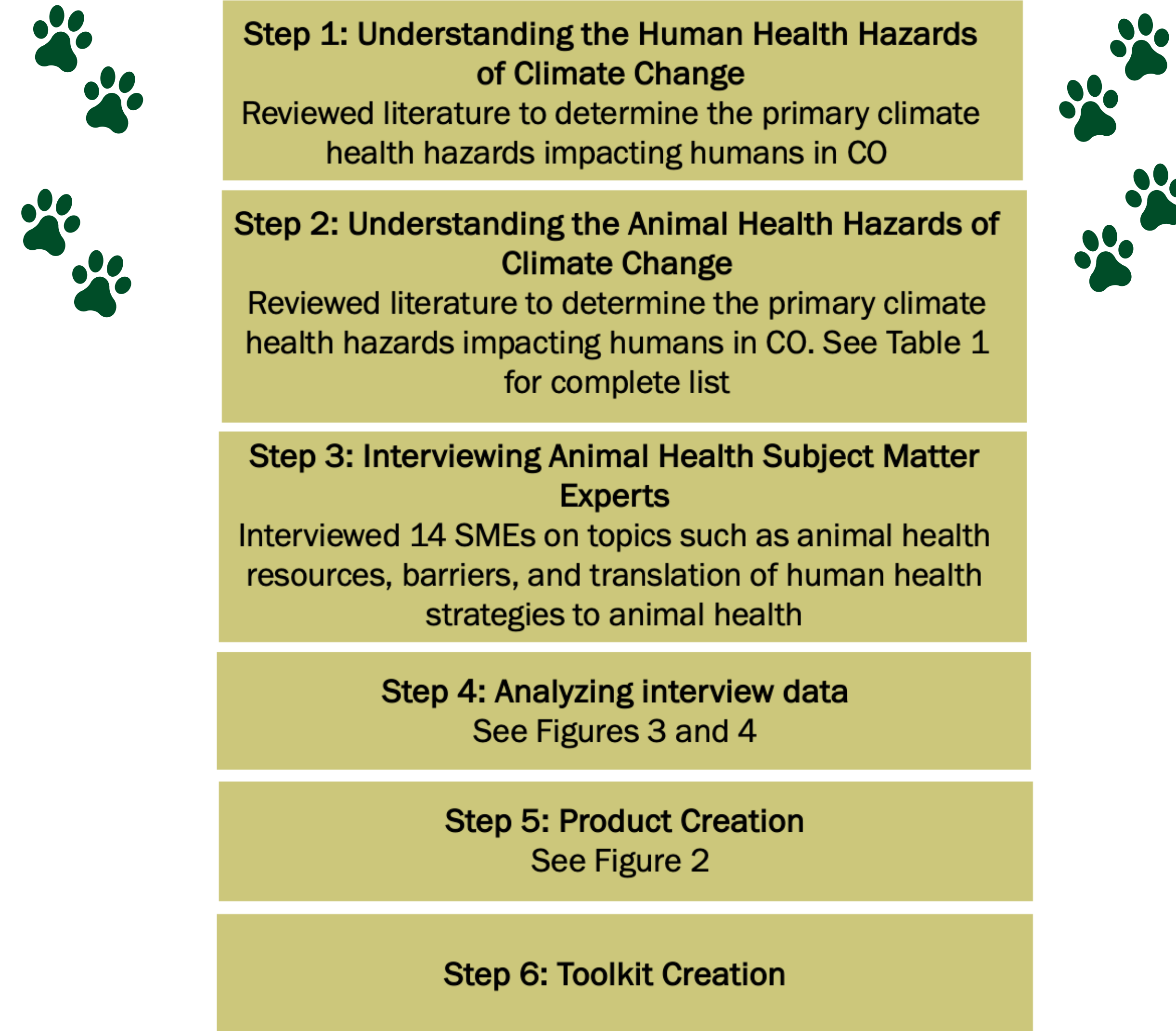


Figure 2. Infographic



### Protecting your pet from Climate Hazards

Climate hazards that harm people also harm pets, but there are ways to protect ourselves and our pets!

- Extreme heat**
  - If temperatures are above 90°, your pet (and you) are at risk of Heat Related Illness (HRI).
  - Walk your pet during cooler times and avoid asphalt.
  - Help your pet stay cool with access to water and shade.
  - Seek vet care immediately if you see signs of HRI.
  - NEVER leave your pet in a car.
- Air pollution**
  - Check the Air Quality Index (AQI) daily on your weather app or the CDPHE website. If AQI is poor, minimize time outdoors.
  - In the summer, exercise outdoors in the morning, when many pollutant levels are lower.
  - Seek vet care if you see signs of air pollution exposure in your pet.
- Natural disasters**
  - Have an emergency plan that includes your pet!
  - Make sure your pet is microchipped, has ID tags, and is vaccinated.
  - Have an emergency kit with food, water, medications, vaccine records, and a leash or carrier.
  - Sign up for local alerts.
- Waterborne illnesses**
  - Check for lake closures before letting your pet swim in any body of water.
  - NEVER let your pet swim in or drink from a closed lake.
  - Talk your vet to ensure about protecting against waterborne illnesses.
- Vector-borne diseases**
  - Work with your vet to make sure that your pet is protected against fleas, ticks, and heartworm.
  - Dump standing water.
  - Keep pets away from wildlife (alive or dead).
  - Check your pet for ticks regularly.

## WHAT YOU LEARNED

- Animals are impacted by the same climate health hazards as humans, but there is fewer specific data about these impacts
- Communication of current resources is a major challenge in promotion of animal health
- When working with marginalized communities, it is important to consider the health of the animals as well as the people
- When promoting animal health, we must consider information from multiple sectors

Figure 3. Interview Data: Barriers to implementing animal health strategies

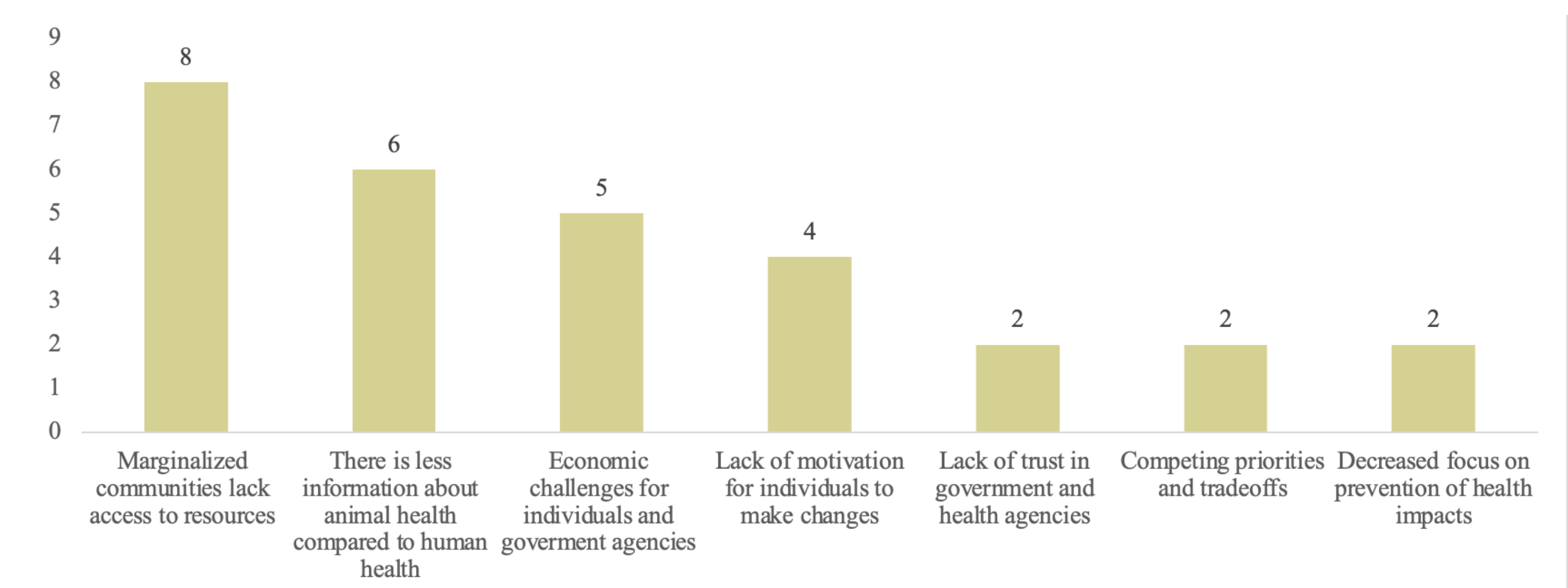
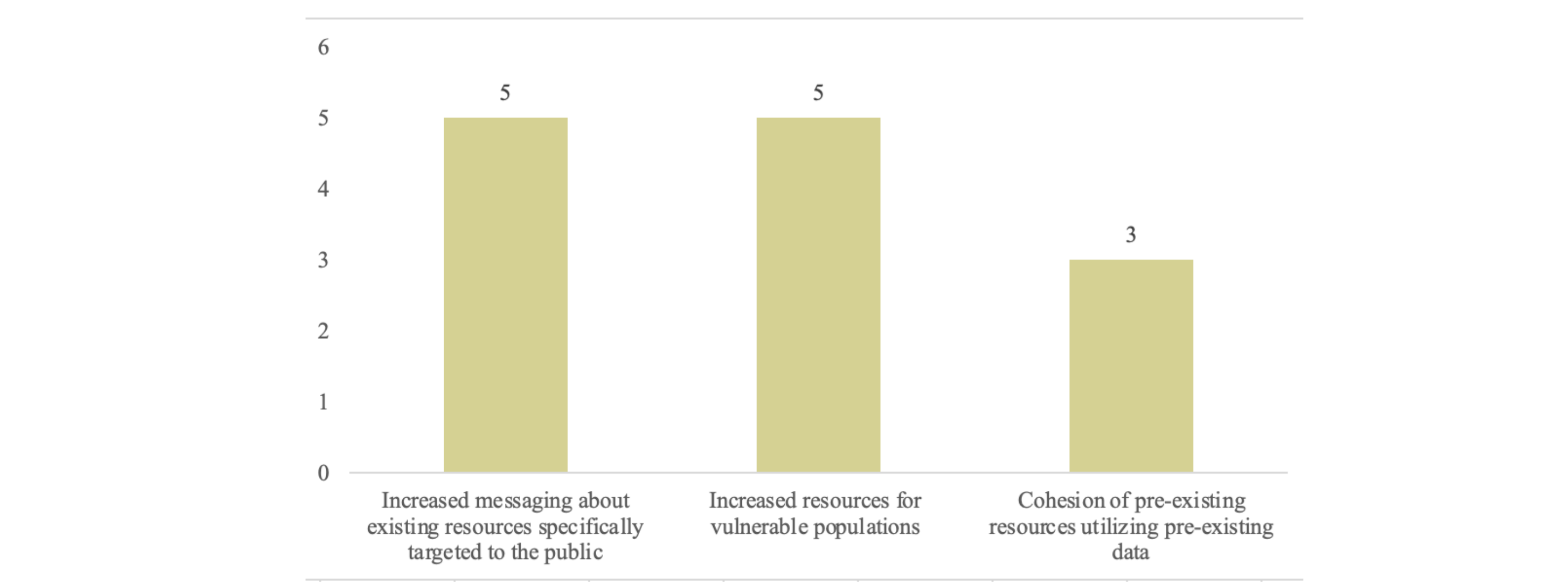


Figure 4. Interview Data: Desired resources to support animal health



## NEXT STEPS

- Finalizing the communication materials and determining dissemination sites
- Finalizing and disseminating the toolkit
- Conducting further research about climate health hazards' impacts on animals in marginalized communities in Colorado