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## Team Spotlight



**Dr. Rebecca Hill**  
**Extension Professor, State Specialist, Office of**  
**Engagement and Extension**

Rebecca Hill is an Agricultural Economics Extension State Specialist with a joint appointment with the Regional Economic Development Institute (REDI) and the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Rebecca is also the Co-Director of the Colorado AgrAbility Project and co-leads the Community and Economic Development PRU. Rebecca teaches Agricultural Enterprise Analysis and Water Law, Policies, and Institutions for the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Her research interests revolve around applied research related to Community and Economic Development.



## Sabina Regmi PhD Student, Colorado State University

Sabina Regmi is a first-year PhD student in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and a Graduate Research Assistant with REDI. Originally from Nepal, Sabina earned her undergraduate degree in Agriculture from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. She holds a master's degree in Agricultural Economics from Mississippi State University, where her thesis employed meta-analysis to investigate consumer willingness to pay for broadband in the United States. Sabina also engaged in extension projects on broadband adoption in Mississippi, focusing on disparities between urban and rural areas and across income groups. Building on her master's studies and work experience in rural agricultural development in Nepal, her current research interests lie in regional economics, rural development, and community economic development.

## Mark Your Calendar



### [Downtown Colorado Webinars and Other Upcoming Events](#)

Virtual, unless noted

CSU continues to grow our partnership with Downtown Colorado. They offer a rich portfolio of events around the state including winter workshops and webinars, covering the same breadth of community and economic development issues we strive to support. We have a CSU institutional membership, so tell us if you are interested in attending!

Upcoming sessions:

- [Grants + Loan Programs for Small Rural Businesses Webinar](#), January 27, 2025
- [Strengthening Rural Small Business Networks: Creating a Compelling Pitch Webinar](#), February 24, 2025
- [2025 IN THE GAME Vibrant Downtown Event](#), April 1- 4, 2025 in-person in Greeley. CSU hopes to lead some sessions and tours for over 200 expected participants.

## [CSU's Center for Science Communication \(CSC\)](#)

### Science Communications Club

For students (students in your network)

The Science Communication Club will meet biweekly on Wednesdays from 4-5 p.m. during Spring 2025, Room TBD, CSU. The club is open to all undergrad and graduate students with an interest in SciComm. **Join the first meeting of spring semester to learn more; Wednesday, January 29, 4 - 5:00 p.m.**

### "Hold Our Ground" film screening event

**Wednesday, February 5, 5 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**LSC Theater, CSU**

Join us for the CSC's new "Hold Our Ground" film series. The event was organized by colleagues from the [CSU Climate Initiative](#) and the [Soil Carbon Solutions Center](#) (SCSC) and is sponsored by SCSC and [IN-RICHES](#) to highlight centers that are collaborating on campus, plus the intersection and impact of communication on elevating the importance of science. The film was funded by a multi-million-dollar CDA grant via the Colorado Soil Health Program, working across multiple departments at CSU (soil & crop sciences, economics, sociology, with the CSC creating the film series as part of the project's communication arm).

[Preview the "Hold Our Ground" film series.](#) The [screening guide](#) provides an overview of each episode.

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## [Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference \(SRMAC\)](#)

**Save the date: February 4-6, 2025**  
**Monte Vista, CO**

Organizers of SRMAC partnered with CSU REDI to assess the economic impacts of this important event on Monte Vista as well as the larger region. In the future, we will share the economic impact analysis and white paper on CSU REDI's website including feedback from several presentations in the community to the San Luis Valley Commissioners as well as the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce.

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## [Colorado State University, College of Liberal Arts](#)

### [Democracy Summit 2025](#)

**Lory Student Center, March 5-7, 2025**

The university will hold its second Democracy Summit in March 2025, building on last spring's extremely successful event, attended by more than 1,500 members of the CSU and local community. Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students are invited to present their research, scholarship and artistic work on the theme of Democratic Innovation. The event is open to both the campus and local community and will feature nationally prominent keynote speakers.

The Summit will showcase CSU faculty, graduate, and undergraduate student presenters on March 6. For more information, please contact [Courtenay Daum](#).

[Learn more in the Source article.](#)

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## [Community and Economic Development Program and Research Unit \(PRU\)](#)

### **Save the Date**

**Wednesday February 12, 9:30-11:30 AM [online](#)**

Join us as we continue our efforts with the Community and Economic Development PRU! All are welcome to attend our first meeting of 2025! Whether you're a current member or simply curious about our initiatives, or looking for collaboration opportunities, we are open to all OEE, CSU faculty, and community partners with similar interests.

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## [National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals \(NACDEP\)](#)

NACDEP is an organization dedicated to improving the visibility, coordination, professional status, and resource base of community and economic development Extension programs and professionals.

[Learn more](#) and consider joining if you want to be more involved at the regional or national level.

Save the Date for the [2025 NACDEP Conference](#)

- June 9 - June 12, 2025
- Charleston, West Virginia

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## [Economic Development Council of Colorado's \(EDCC\) 2025 DRIVE | LEAD | SUCCEED ANNUAL CONFERENCE](#)

**October 2025**

**Location TBD**

CSU is now an institutional member and sponsor for EDCC's Annual Drive|Lead|Succeed Conference, which is geared towards nurturing the growth of Colorado's economy by offering essential resources by:

1. Uniting leading industry influencers and thought leaders to exchange invaluable insights and tackle distinctive challenges.
2. Introducing innovative tools and solutions to address pressing economic issues within Colorado's professional economic development community.
3. Cultivating meaningful collaboration and facilitating the exchange of fresh ideas among Colorado's Economic Development professionals, business and non-profit leaders, government officials, and beyond.

Interested in attending? [Reach out to REDI](#).

[View the full events calendar](#)

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## [National Extension Tourism Network National Conference](#)

**Save the Dates: Oct. 7-10, 2025**

**Meredith, New Hampshire**

Focused on the outdoor economy, including the role of tourism in our state? Consider attending next fall's conference.

## **Funding, Program and Educational Opportunities**

### [The Institute for Entrepreneurship \(I4E\)](#)

**February 13, 20, and 27, 2025, 5-6:45 p.m. MST, online**

CSU's Rockwell Hall West, Room 220, 523 W Laurel St, Fort Collins, CO

*\*In-Person OR Virtual options available. If the times don't work, you will still receive full access to the content if you register!*

[Venture Validator 1.0](#) is FREE, open to all. Aspiring entrepreneurs meet once a week for three weeks to test out their new business concepts. With the support of seasoned mentors and coaches, participants conduct customer discovery and market research, create a business model, analyze their competitive landscape, and prototype products with the goal of launching successful ventures.

[Venture Validator 2.0](#) is a continuation of your customer discovery journey and digs into market opportunity for your business idea. Venture Validator 1.0 is a pre-req for 2.0.

[Venture Jumpstart](#) is a self-paced, modified accelerator focused on providing the tools entrepreneurs need to succeed, whether that's pre-built financial templates, industry connections, or an encouraging community here to help build and grow your business.

## Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Funding Available

USDA Rural Development has grant funding available to help agricultural producers with renewable energy or energy efficiency improvements through our Rural Energy for America Program.

Grant funds for up to 50% of the total project costs are currently available for installation of renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements for agricultural producers and rural small businesses.

Applications for the [Rural Energy for America](#) are accepted anytime, with a final upcoming deadline of March 31, 2025.

Agricultural producers with at least 50% of their gross income coming from agricultural operations can apply for REAP; they can be located in rural or nonrural areas. Small businesses that are located in an eligible rural area are also eligible to apply.

[REAP Renewable Energy System \(RES\) funds](#) can be used for systems such as:

- Small and large solar or wind generation
- Geothermal for electric generation or direct use
- Hydropower below 30 megawatts
- Biomass (for example: biodiesel and ethanol, anaerobic digesters, and solid fuels)

REAP Energy Efficiency Improvement (EEI) funds can be used to buy, build, and install EEI such as:

- Electric, solar, or gravity pumps for sprinkler pivots
- Switching from a diesel to an electric irrigation motor
- Lighting, Insulation, Doors, Windows, Cooling or Refrigeration units
- High-efficiency heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC)

In Colorado, send applications, inquiries and other requests to [SM.CO.REAP@usda.gov](mailto:SM.CO.REAP@usda.gov)

## Community Facilities Loan & Grant Program

The USDA Community Facilities program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial, or business undertakings.

More than 100 types of projects are eligible for Community Facilities funding. Eligible applicants include municipalities, public bodies, nonprofit organizations, and federally recognized Native American tribes. Projects must be in rural areas with a population of 20,000 or less.

[More information on this program in Colorado.](#)

## Colorado Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine (CO-WY Engine)

[CO-WY Engine](#), funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, is thrilled to announce the launch of its Engine-specific startup support program, aimed at empowering climate resilience startups across the Colorado and Wyoming region and the United States, and growing a diverse innovation ecosystem in the region.

This program offers a range of tailored services designed to help startups address the challenges bringing climate technologies to market and drives commercial growth in the emerging climate resiliency marketplace. The Engine startup support program is one of many means the Engine will deploy to build and sustain a nationally leading ecosystem in climate resiliency.

Are you interested in applying to the CO-WY Engine startup services? [Learn more about startup services included and submit an application.](#)

## Colorado Business Builder Grants

The Northwestern Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center Colorado team is offering grants of up to \$10,000 to support small to mid-scale Colorado food and farm businesses. \$200,000 total is available for this program, and we expect to make between 20 and 60 awards. Awards will be announced at the end of February 2025, with the expectation that funded work will be completed within 8 to 12 months.

This Small Grants program is one of two Colorado Business Builder grant programs that will award a total of \$500,000 through July 2027.

Your Colorado-based farm, ranch, or value-added food business may be eligible. The program is for small and mid-scale businesses that are producing in, sourcing from, and focused on local and regional markets, or serving multiple small- and mid-scale food and farm businesses. Grant funds are intended to improve business skills, strengthen the viability of your business, expand your access to markets, or strengthen local and regional food and agriculture supply chains.

Interested in applying? [Learn more.](#)

**Application deadline: January 10, 2025 (11:59 p.m. MST)**

## Regional Economic Development Institute (REDI@CSU) Reports

# REDI@CSU

## Regional Economic Development Institute

Visit our [website](#) for additional reports and updates.

### December 2024 REDI report Irrigators' Perspectives on Water Management and Adaptation in the San Luis Valley

Stephen Lauer, Steven Smith, Jonah Allen, and Larry Brown

#### Key Findings

San Luis Valley Producers:

- Decisions are driven by both yield/profit and impact on future generations
- Are more sensitive to policy changes than to drought
- Prefer to change technologies rather than crops
- Are divided on whether current groundwater rules have a positive impact
- Agree that current groundwater rules are legitimate and are being followed
- Believe that current groundwater rules have a disproportionate impact on certain groups

- Support a broad variety of policies to manage groundwater

[Download PDF Report](#) to learn more.

## **November 2024 REDI report Economic and Community Contribution Analysis of the Forest Product Industry in Colorado**

Nara Chung, Derek Lowstuter, Timothy Reader, Anita Alves Pena

### Key Findings

- The forest product industry in Colorado is innovative and provides various economic and ecological benefits.
- The contribution of the forest product industry in terms of output and value added is over \$6,088M (0.59% of total state output) and over \$2,843M (0.49% of state GDP) respectively.
- The estimated economic impact of 2024 USDA Wood Innovation Program Grants to the state is 4.71 times larger than the total amount of grants awarded.

[Download PDF Report](#) to learn more.

## **October 2024 REDI report The State of Homelessness in Colorado**

Luke Maddock

### Key Findings

- 4,439 people experiencing homelessness, up from 9,754 in 2013 and 10,940 in 2017
- 150% increase in chronic homelessness over the past decade (1,780 to 4,457 individuals)
- Significant racial disparities: Black/African American (3x), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (14x), and American Indian/Alaska Native (3x) overrepresented compared to general population
- 31-44% of the total homeless population suffer from severe mental illness or chronic substance abuse, and 11% are victims of domestic violence

[Download PDF Report](#) to learn more.

## **September 2024 REDI report The Economic Impact of Pathfinder Event Center**

Henry Williams

### Key Findings

- Pathfinder Event Center provides economic benefits to Fremont County, CO.
- Using input-output modeling and analysis-by-parts, we estimate the economic impact of Pathfinder in 2023 across four metrics to be:
  - Total Output: \$711,591
  - Value Added: \$212,025
  - Labor Income: \$114,829
  - Jobs: 3.9
- By output, the impact of Pathfinder was 3.2 times greater than its budget.

[Download PDF Report](#) to learn more.

# **Colorado Futures Center Reports**



# COLORADO FUTURES CENTER

The Colorado Futures Center is an independent, nonpartisan and academically grounded 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to informing about economic, fiscal, and public policy issues impacting community economic health and quality of life in Colorado and beyond.

Our Partners at the Colorado Futures Center regularly release their Statewide Economic Forecast, [ColoradoCast](#), and recently released the [December report](#). A key finding is that “For the first time since mid-2022, the Colorado economy is projected to experience growth in the range of four percent annual rate.”

## About Us - Community and Economic Development

### Connect with the Northwest and Rocky Mountain USDA Regional Food Business Center

The Northwest and Rocky Mountain USDA Regional Food Business Center (RFBC) is one of 12 Regional Food Business Centers funded by USDA, with the goal of improving local and regional food systems and better serving underinvested farm and food businesses. The Northwest and Rocky Mountain RFBC serves Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Learn more about the Center's educational and technical support programs for small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses, and [sign up for updates](#).



### Join the Conversation: CSU Civic Centers Collaborative

CSU's Collaborative of Civic, Community, and Economic is a network of Centers and Initiatives who align through their interests in connecting and elevating communities through engaged social science and humanities scholarship. The Collaborative has identified a particular focus on assessing and supporting the engagement, resilience and health of urban and rural Colorado communities through integrated learning, research and outreach programming.

Add your contact information to the [online membership list](#) to stay up-to-date.



**FAMILY LEADERSHIP  
TRAINING INSTITUTE**  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

# ABOUT The Family Leadership Training Institute

## Promoting Leadership Development, Increased Civic Capacity and Equity in All Policies

The Family Leadership Training Institute of Colorado (FLTI) is a nonpartisan, multi-sector, and community-driven collaborative that seeks to bridge the gap between local residents and decision-makers in order to foster the co-creation of programs and policies that reflect diverse community voices.

[Learn more](#)

## Stay Connected

Visit the Regional Economic Development Institute [website](#) and sign up for updates.

Missed a past newsletter? [Find back issues.](#)

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### Community & Economic Development

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Mission: To empower people to build resilient, vibrant, and healthy communities and economies by enhancing their well-being, leadership, civic engagement, and economic development.

We do this by:

1. Creating resilient communities and economies
2. Developing leadership and civic engagement
3. Promoting community health and wellbeing

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