

APLU BAA Vision Document Story Bank Template

Begin with a good news story or success that relates to a vision statement. Add how your program contributed to making this successful. Share a problem or challenge that impacts either the success of the people working on this or how helpful your people could be and which prevents you from achieving the vision goal. Describe exactly what was done that solved the problem.

1. Start with the essential background on an issue or topic that is relevant to your district or state and contributes to one of the themes. Just 1-2 sentences, if possible.
 - a. Example: "Our rural communities have [a great economic or environmental resource that everyone cares about]. It provides [e.g., jobs, tourism revenue, farmgate revenue]."
 - b. Example: "Our state/district is a leader in new, successful small businesses. In fact, just last year, there were [cite statistics]."
2. Add how your (research, Extension, etc.) program contributes to the above issue that your representative/district/state cares about.
 - a. Example: "Here at [our institution], we work with [farmers, veterans, entrepreneurs, the tourism industry, etc.] to contribute to this success [be specific]."
3. Share a challenge you face that directly ties to/prevents you from achieving the vision.
 - a. Example: "Our facilities are dilapidated and out of date, which impacts [the specific things you want to do]."
 - b. Example: "We would love to expand this program, but we do not have the facilities to [things you want to do]."
4. Describe what is needed to overcome the challenge.
 - a. Example: "Our work [fixed the problem] so that [vision goal] could be maintained/secured."
 - b. Example: "We launched a program that [fixed the problem] to ensure [vision goal]."

Here are two examples related to **"Rural communities are economically and environmentally healthy places to live."**

1. Small businesses are the lifeblood of the rural economy, and these businesses contribute to healthy rural communities.
 2. Every year, young graduates of agriculture colleges are inspired to found new rural business ventures,
 3. but starting and maintaining a successful business is not easy.
 4. The **University of Nebraska-Lincoln's** Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program, founded nearly a decade ago, has been training, mentoring, and cultivating young leaders. Alums of this program have started more than 70 companies, most in rural areas of Nebraska, and are employing more than a hundred people.
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1. South Florida is home to the Everglades, a unique and delicate ecosystem that is both a source of pride and economic revenue, through tourism.

2. The University of Florida cares deeply about the health of the Everglades and commits significant resources to research and Extension relating to keeping it healthy.
3. One of the Everglade's top challenges is the Brazilian peppertree, an invasive plant originally brought to Florida in the 1890s as an ornamental that has exploded across the Everglades, pushing out native plants and establishing itself in 700,000 acres. While it can be removed manually or with herbicides, both of these methods are costly, and neither are permanent solutions.
4. As early as the 1980s, research entomologists at the **University of Florida** began investigating natural enemies of the Brazilian peppertree in South America. Over decades, these researchers discovered a native pest that feeds exclusively on this tree and on no other plants, native or otherwise, found in Florida. The researchers spent years evaluating its potential to meet highly stringent standards set by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, such as whether the insect would likely survive in Florida and that it posed low risk for off-target environmental impacts, and it was recently approved to be the first biocontrol effort aimed at the Brazilian peppertree infestation, potentially saving the Everglades from this invasive plant. This increases the value of the Everglades to every Florida resident.

Here are two examples of stories that are not as useful and that do not follow this format.

1. Growing Together bit.ly/23-EiETeam-Award is a multi-state SNAP-Ed donation garden collaborative that aims to promote healthy food access and offer nutrition and garden education for individuals who are nutrition insecure. This multi-state collaborative, including Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and most recently, South Dakota, meets regularly to share resources, promising practices, and challenges, while also building relationships and connections across state lines. Each state has tailored their effort to best meet their specific programmatic and community needs.

What's good about this is that it starts with a "good news" story, and it leads with the states that are involved. But there is a lot missing. There is no information on why this is needed or how "connections across state lines" helps people. It is also unclear who a "multi-state collaborative" is – are these collaborators part of a university, state agency, non-profit organization, or something else?

2. Jiff Martin, Extension Educator, was the 2023 Winner of the Northeast Excellence in Extension for providing solid ground for an inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable local agriculture industry and food supply. Since joining UConn Extension in 2010, Jiff Martin has been an active manager of several extension programs related to food and farming in Connecticut. She is a team member of UConn's Center for Land Use Education and Research. In 2012, she led the creation of the *Solid Ground Farmer Training Program* which offers a suite of trainings, field days, online courses, and videos for beginning farmers. To increase market access for new, small farm businesses, she has directed several buy local initiatives, including the *Grown Connected* marketing initiative in Northeast Connecticut and the *Put Local On Your Tray Program* that links

local farms to school cafeterias. In 2023, she launched Extension's new online course *Climate Adaptations Strategies for CT Farmers*. A pilot training program, *Leaders of Color in Conservation Training Program*, has unearthed new pathways to connect farmers of color to financial and technical resources. Jiff's salary and programming activity are partially funded by Smith Lever 3(b&c) Extension capacity funding through NIFA.

This is a story about an incredible person. The short version of this story is: "Jiff Martin is a UConn Extension Educator who has created programs that help farmers and small farm businesses." There is no mention what problems she solved, why those problems were important, or how they connect to the vision document. It is a terrific profile, but it is not an appropriate story for the Vision Document.