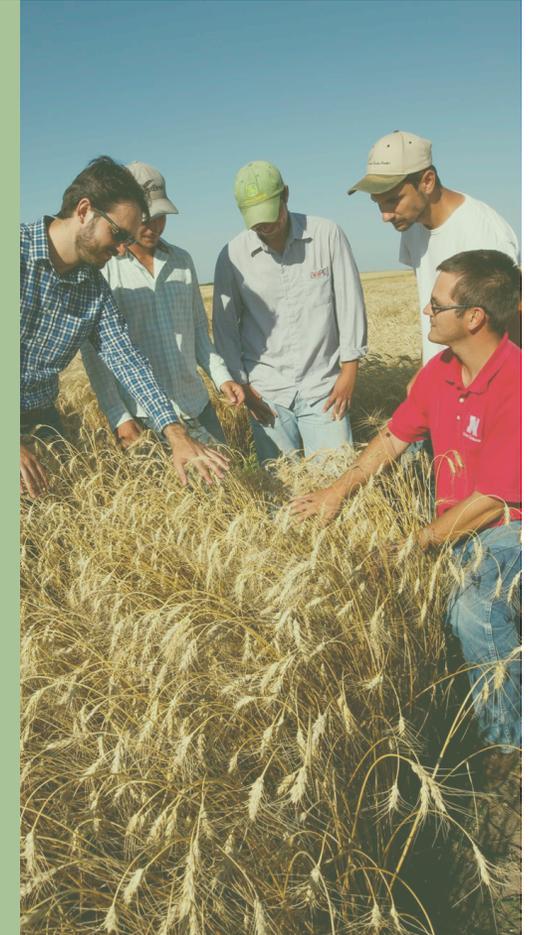


# Update on Capacity Funding Initiative

Wendy Fink, Associate VP, FANR

Nov. 4, 2025



# Presentation Overview

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- **Context for why we are focusing on capacity funding**
- **Capacity Initiative three phases**
- **Phase 1 research & key takeaways**
- **Things you can be doing now**

# What are USDA Capacity Funding Grant Programs?



1862	1890
Hatch Act (Research)	Evans-Allen Capacity Grants (Research)
Smith-Lever Act (Extension)	Agricultural Cooperative Extension Programs at the 1890s Institutions
McIntire-Stennis Capacity Program (Forestry Research)*	

\*McIntire-Stennis Funding is also provided to several public non-land-grant institutions and to 2 1994 institutions.



University of



University of Rhode Island



Colorado State University



Kansas State Unive



University of Conne

Capacity Funding  
Enables

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Tennessee State University



University of Florida



Oklahoma State University



University of Maryland



# Capacity Funding Enables



University of Kentucky

North Carolina A&T University

# Capacity Funding Enables



University of Illinois - Urbana



University of Florida



University of Connecticut



University of Guam

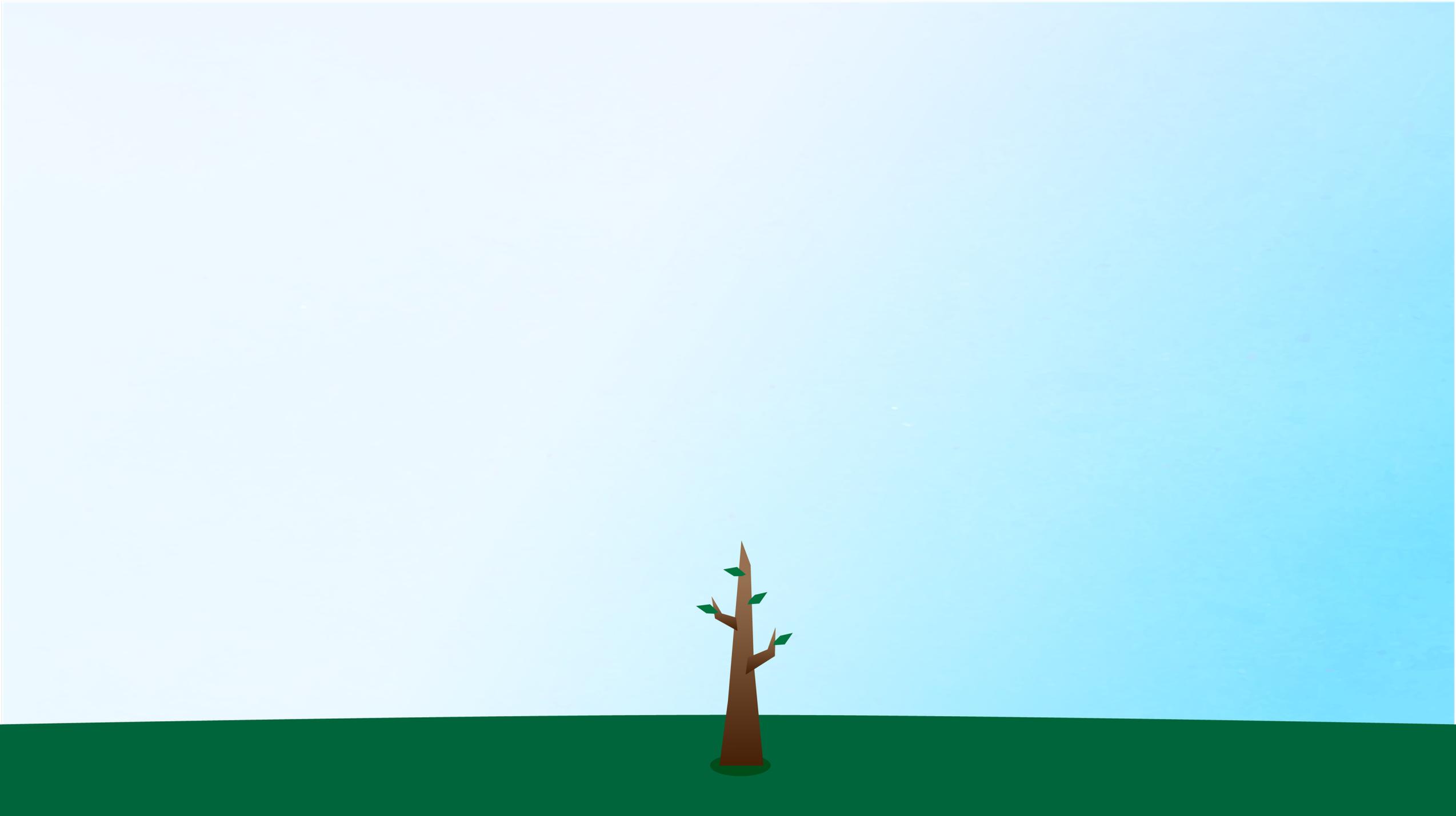


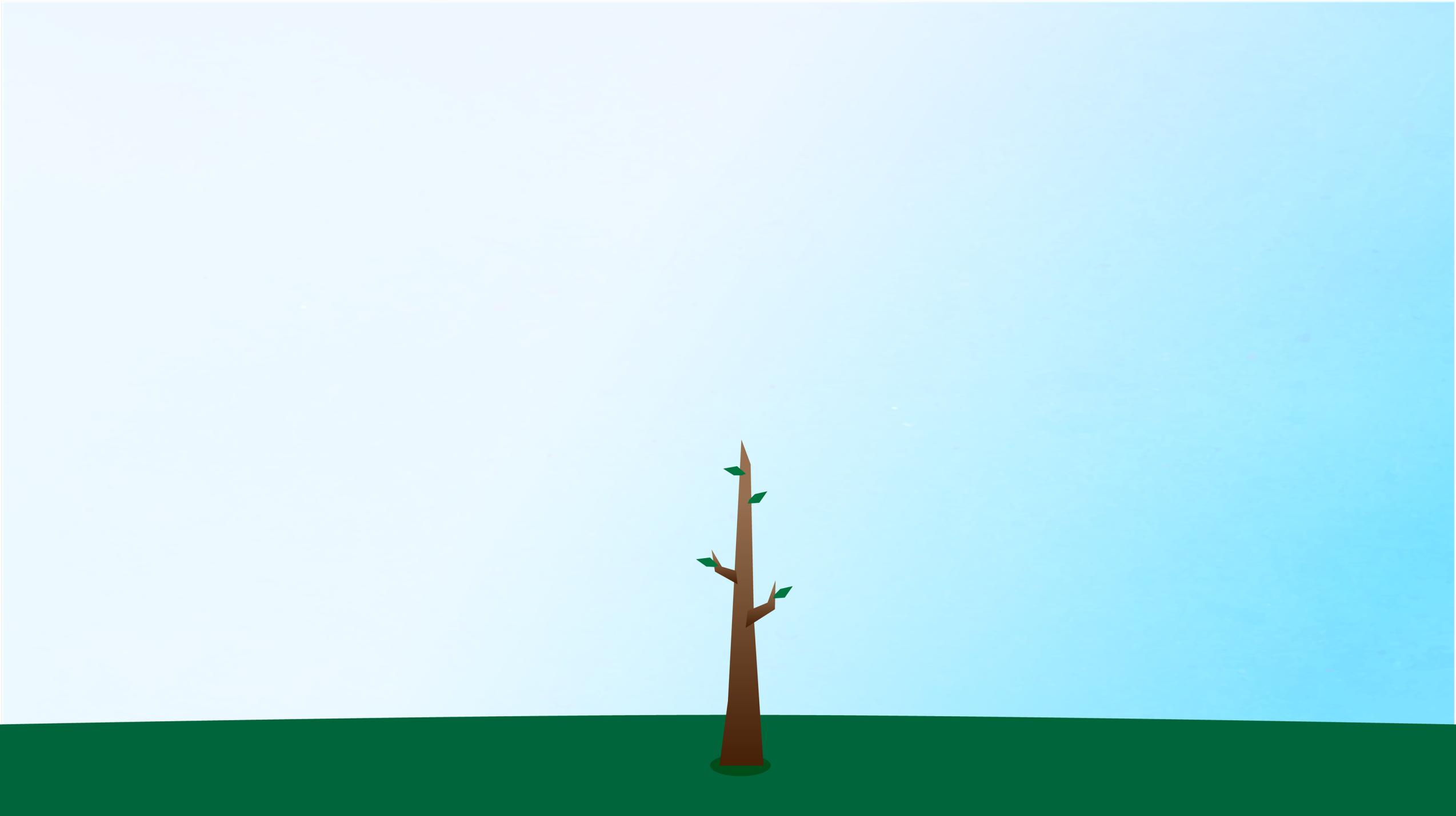
College of Micronesia

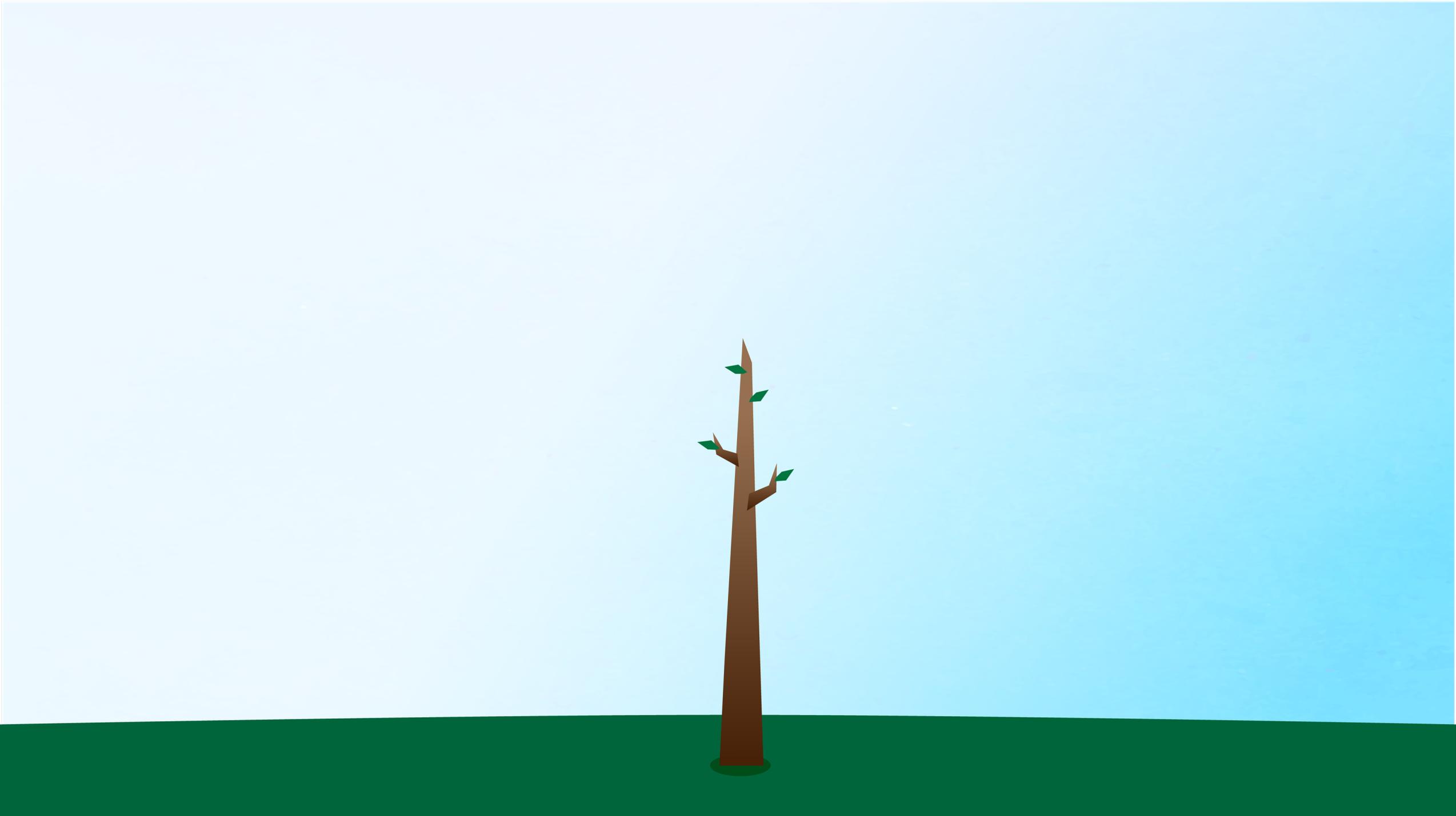


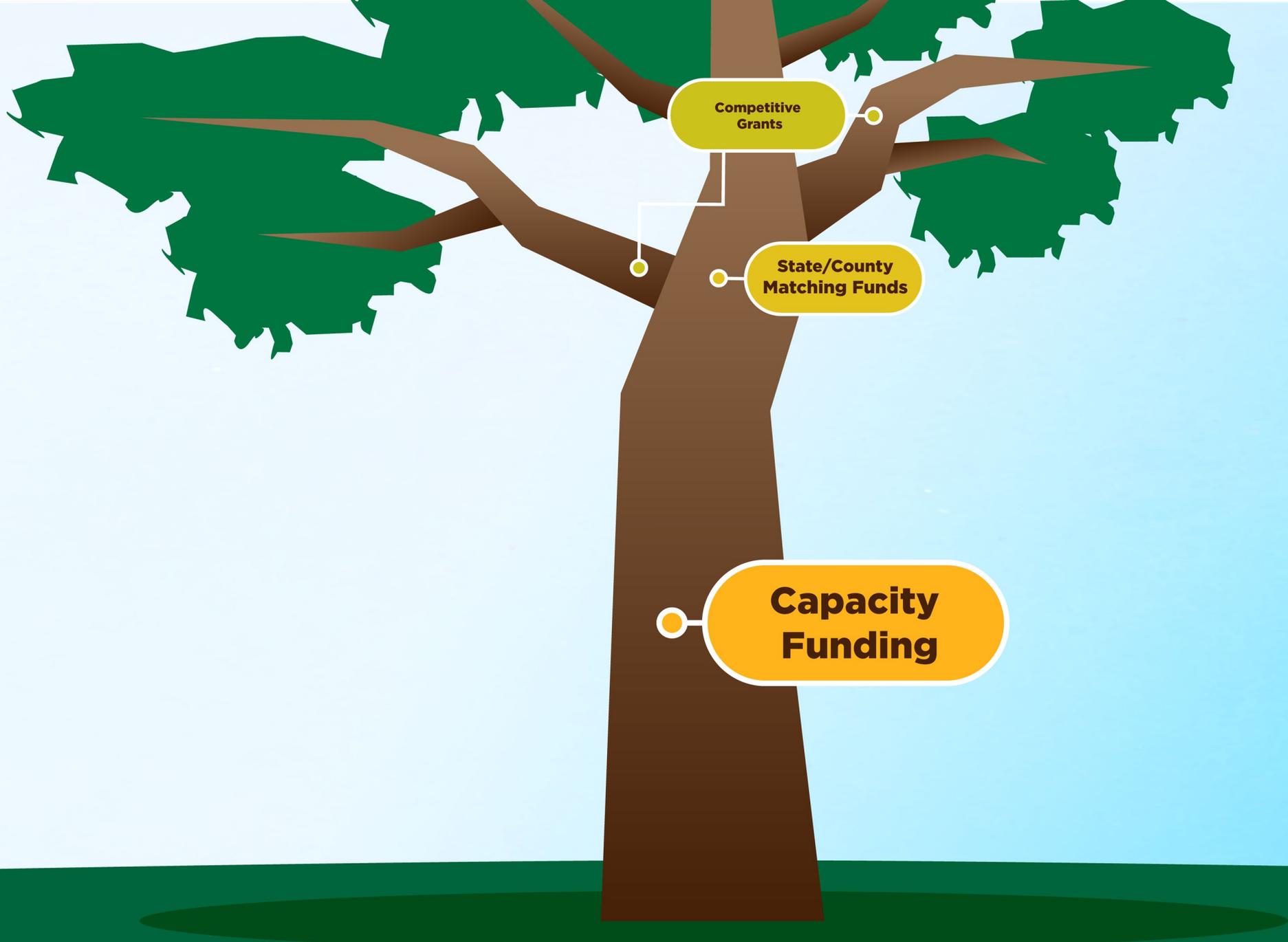
University of California System







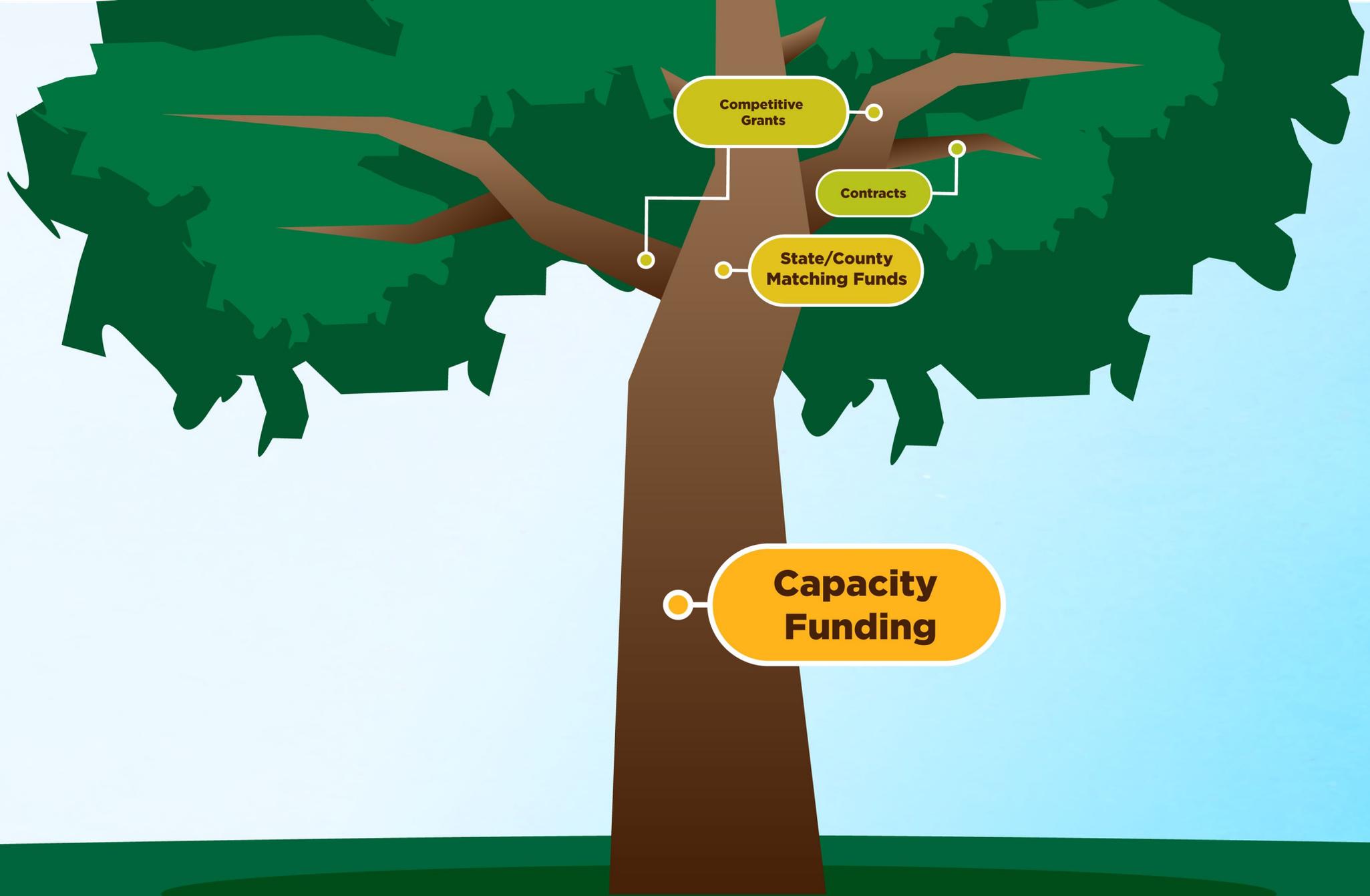




**Competitive Grants**

**State/County Matching Funds**

**Capacity Funding**

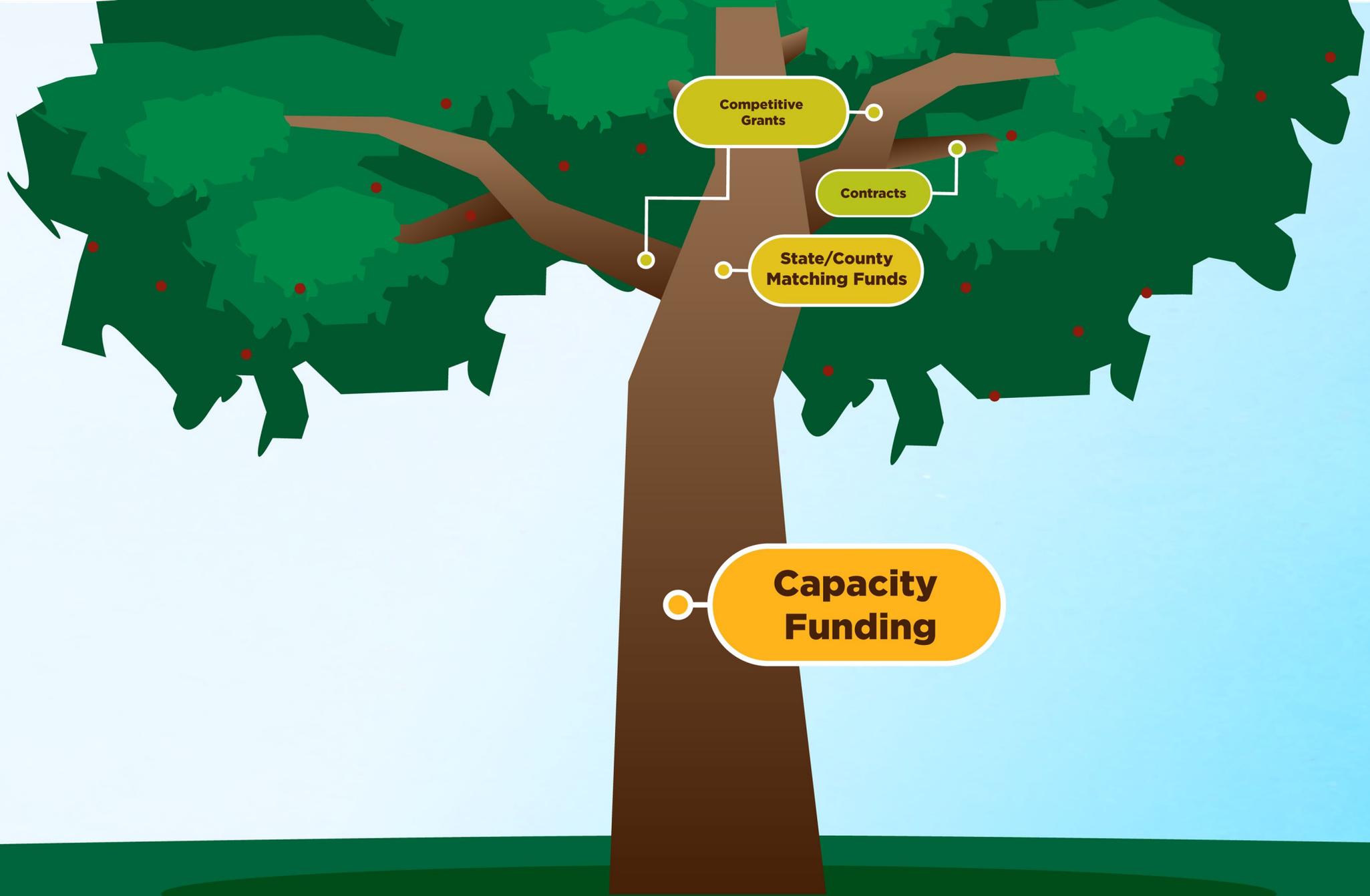


**Competitive Grants**

**Contracts**

**State/County Matching Funds**

**Capacity Funding**

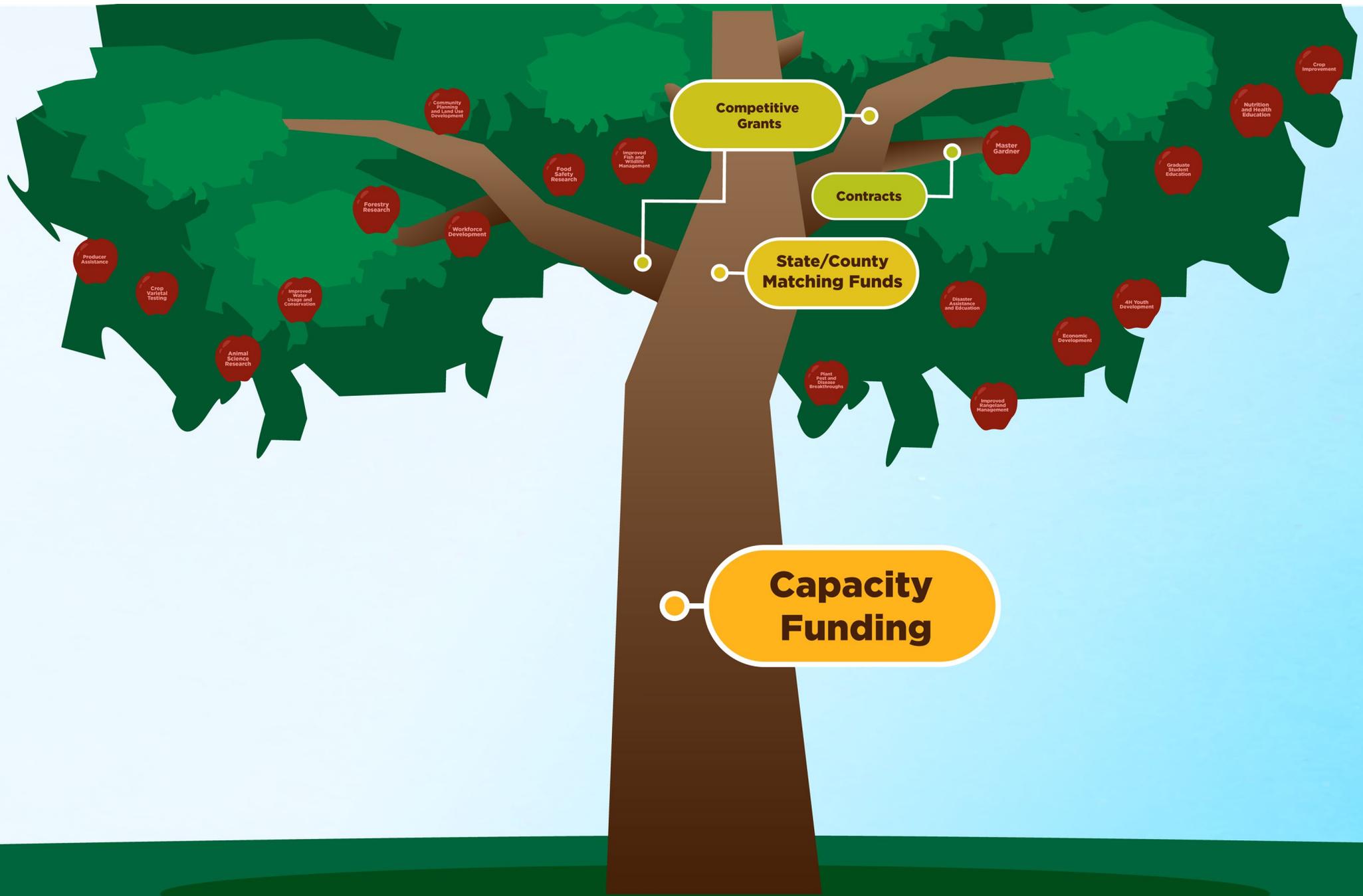


**Competitive Grants**

**Contracts**

**State/County Matching Funds**

**Capacity Funding**





**Producer  
Assistance**

**Crop  
Varietal  
Testing**

**Improved  
Water  
Usage and  
Conservation**

**Animal  
Science  
Research**

**Community  
Planning  
and Land Use  
Development**

**Forestry  
Research**

**Workforce  
Development**

**Food  
Safety  
Research**

**Improved  
Fish and  
Wildlife  
Management**



**Master  
Gardner**

**Graduate  
Student  
Education**

**Nutrition  
and Health  
Education**

**Crop  
Improvement**

# State/County Matching Funds

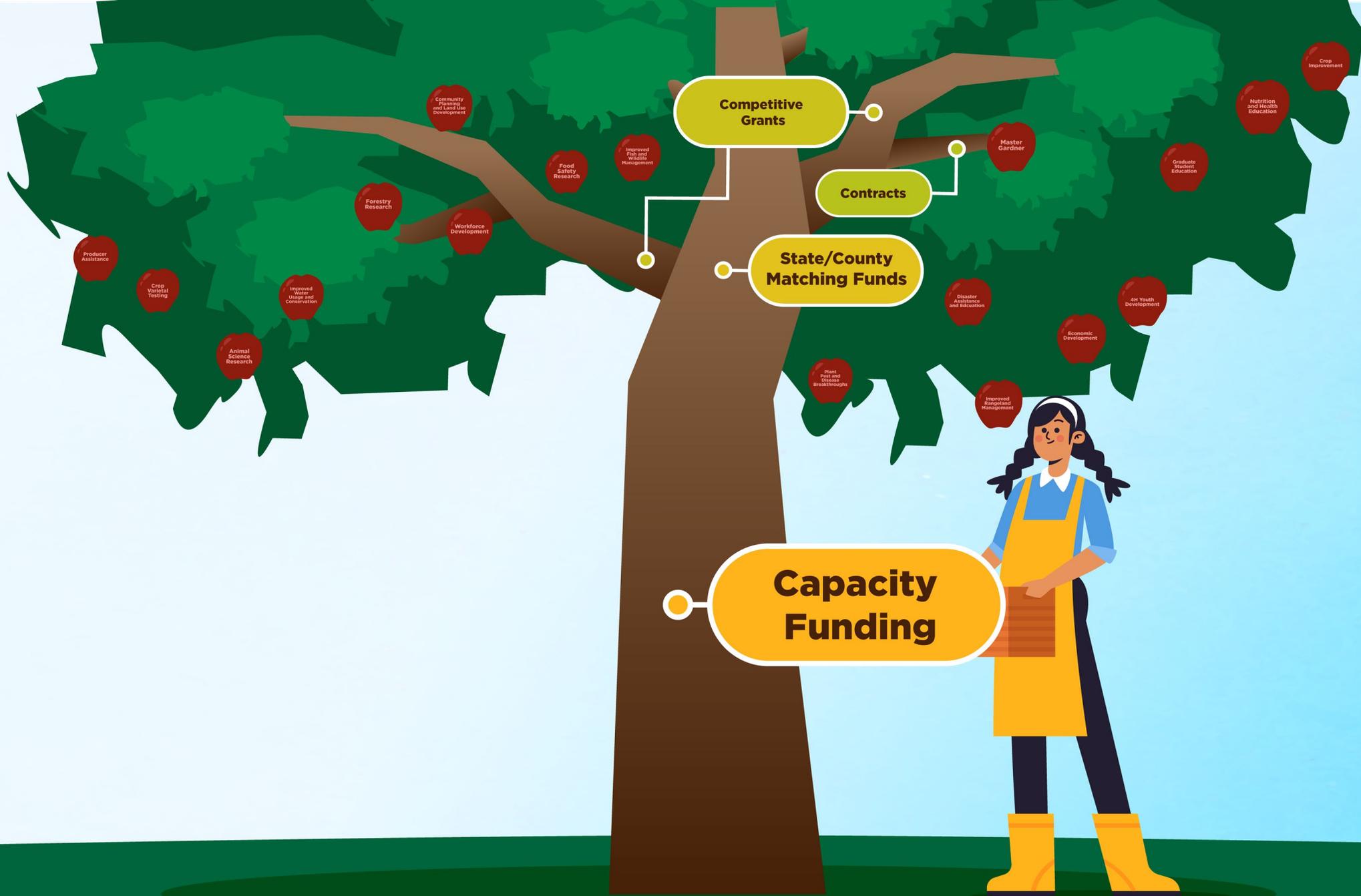
Disaster  
Assistance  
and Education

4H Youth  
Development

Economic  
Development

Plant  
Pest and  
Disease  
Breakthroughs

Improved  
Rangeland  
Management



**Competitive Grants**

**Contracts**

**State/County Matching Funds**

**Capacity Funding**

Producer Assistance

Crop Varietal Testing

Animal Science Research

Improved Water Usage and Conservation

Forestry Research

Community Planning and Land Use Development

Workforce Development

Food Safety Research

Improved Fish and Wildlife Management

Plant Pest and Disease Breakthroughs

Disaster Assistance and Education

Improved Rangeland Management

Master Gardener

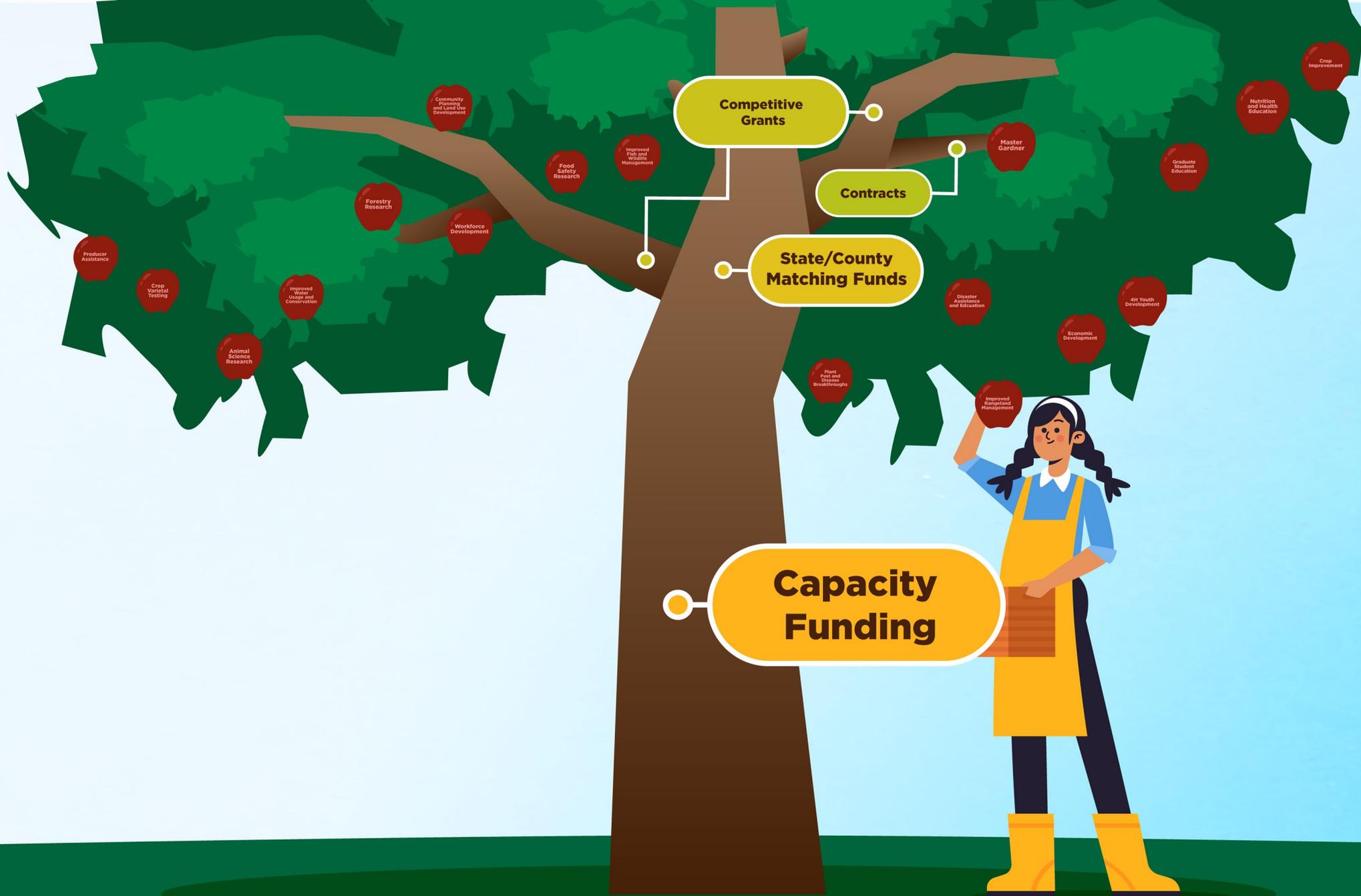
Economic Development

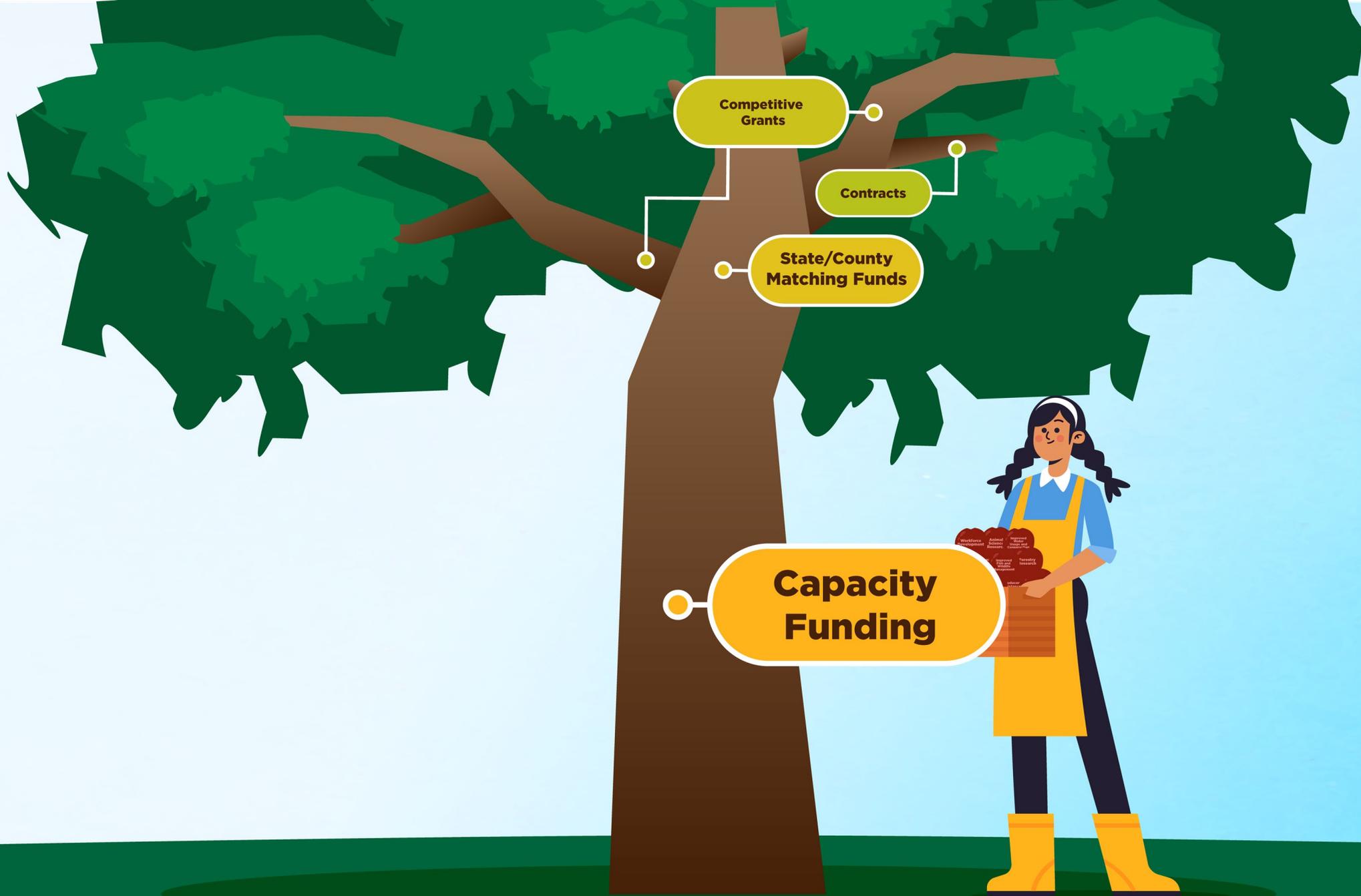
4H Youth Development

Graduate Student Education

Nutrition and Health Education

Crop Improvement



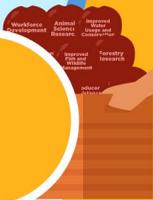


**Competitive Grants**

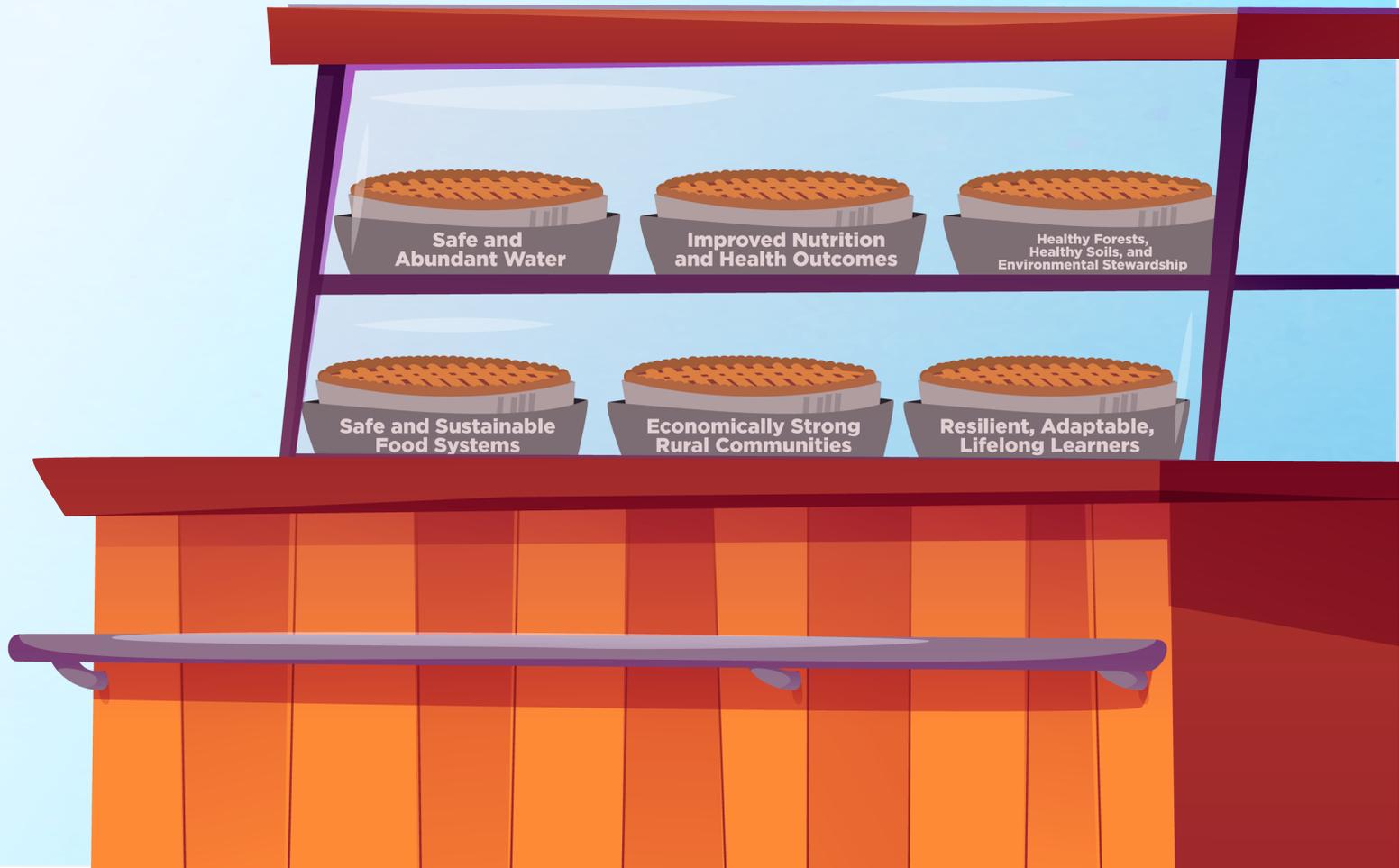
**Contracts**

**State/County Matching Funds**

**Capacity Funding**







**National Security**

**Safe and Abundant Water**

**Improved Nutrition and Health Outcomes**

**Healthy Forests, Healthy Soils, and Environmental Stewardship**

**Safe and Sustainable Food Systems**

**Economically Strong Rural Communities**

**Resilient, Adaptable, Lifelong Learners**



**National Security**

**Safe and Abundant Water**

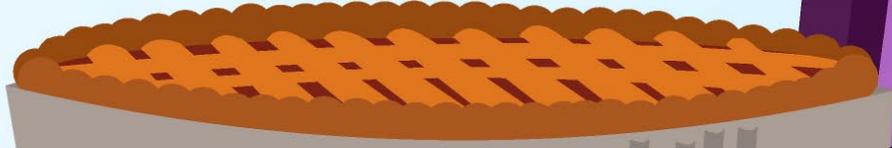
**Improved Nutrition and Health Outcomes**

**Healthy Forests, Healthy Soils, and Environmental Stewardship**

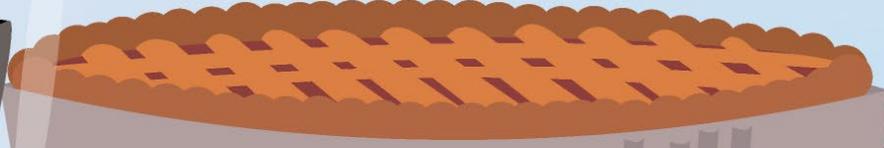
**Safe and Sustainable Food Systems**

**Economically Strong Rural Communities**

**Resilient, Adaptable, Lifelong Learners**



**National Security**



**Safe and  
Abundant Water**



**In  
and**



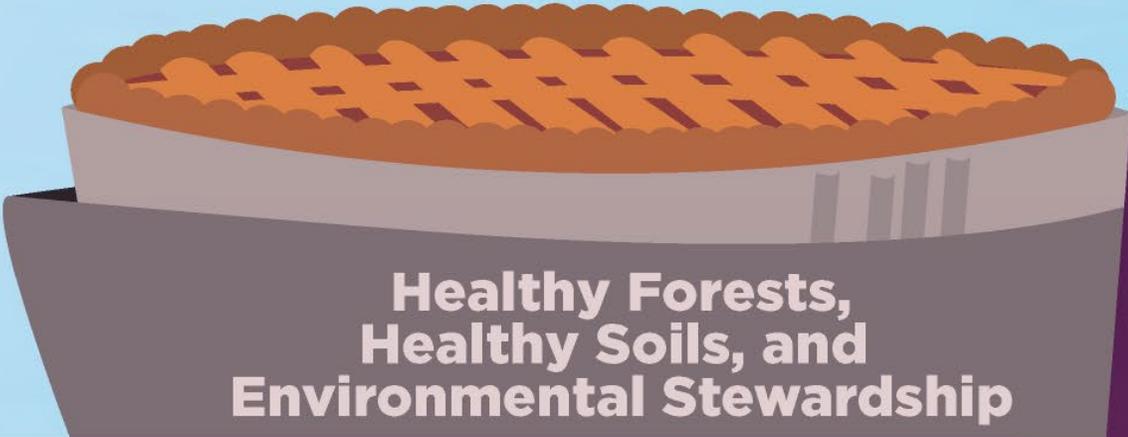
**Safe and Sustainable  
Food Systems**



**Economic  
Rural**

A pie with a woven lattice top sits in a grey tin. The tin is placed on a dark purple shelf against a light blue background.

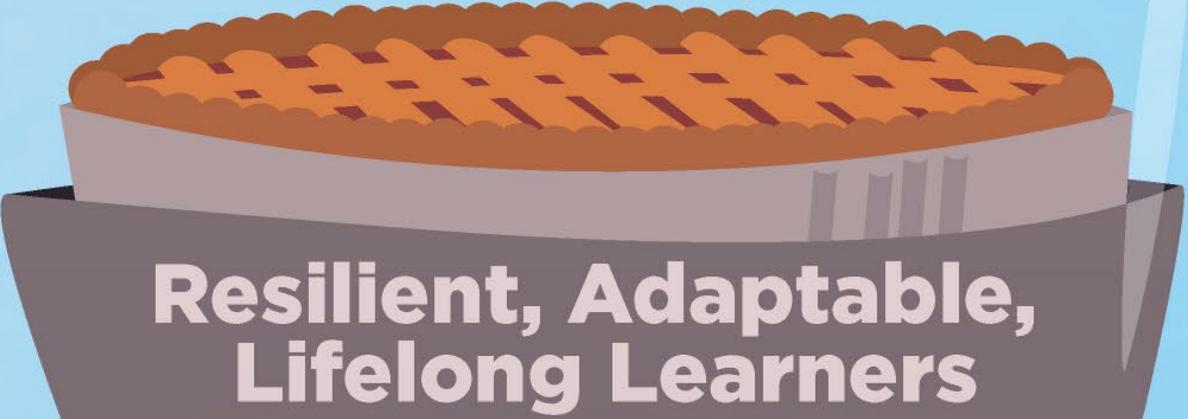
**Improved Nutrition  
and Health Outcomes**

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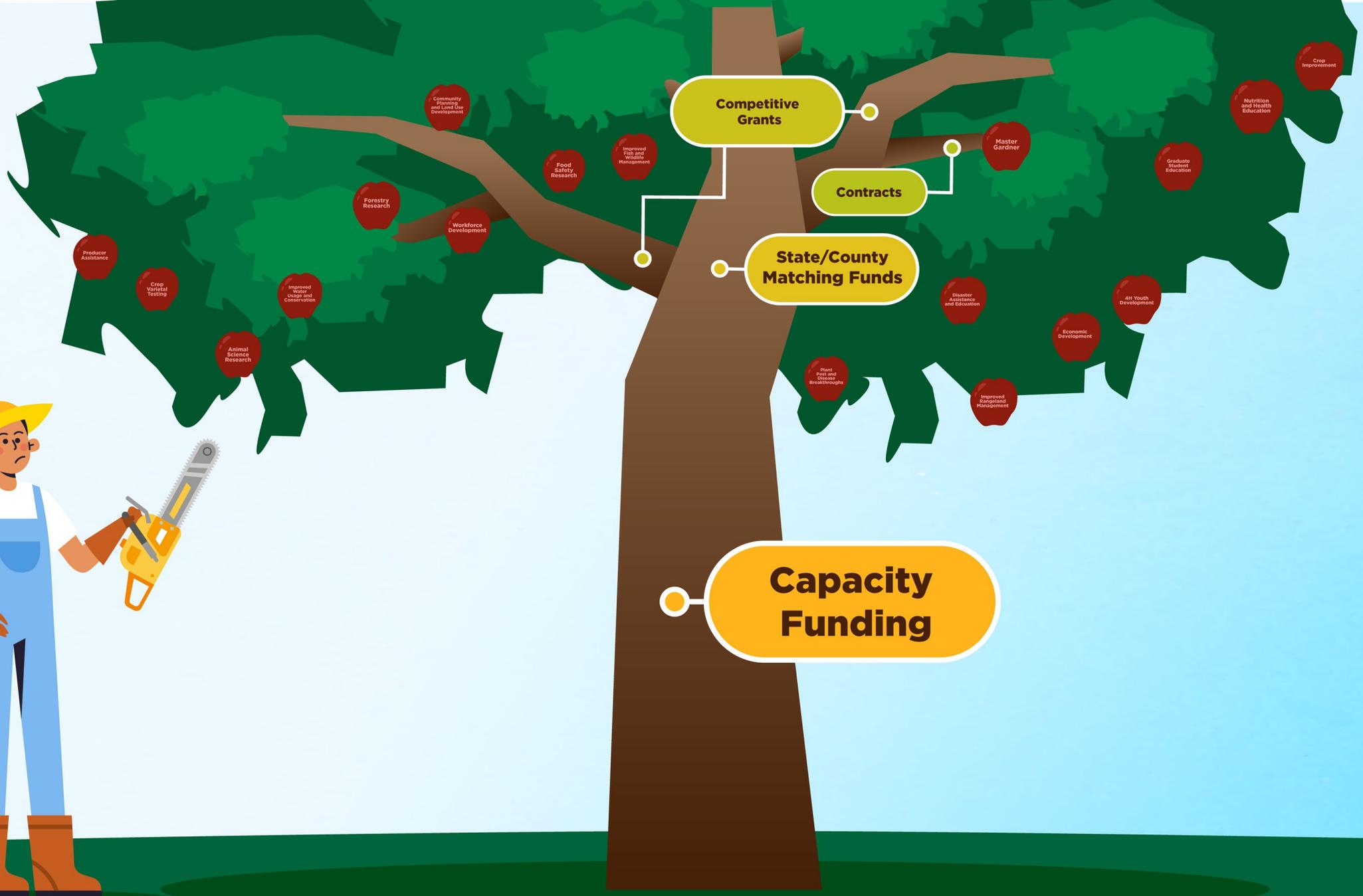
**Healthy Forests,  
Healthy Soils, and  
Environmental Stewardship**

A pie with a woven lattice top sits in a grey tin. The tin is placed on a dark purple shelf against a light blue background.

**Economically Strong  
Rural Communities**

A pie with a woven lattice top sits in a grey tin. The tin is placed on a dark purple shelf against a light blue background.

**Resilient, Adaptable,  
Lifelong Learners**



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Crop Varietal Testing

Animal Science Research

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Community Planning and Land Use Development

Workforce Development

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Plant Pest and Disease Breakthroughs

Disaster Assistance and Education

Improved Rangeland Management

Master Gardener

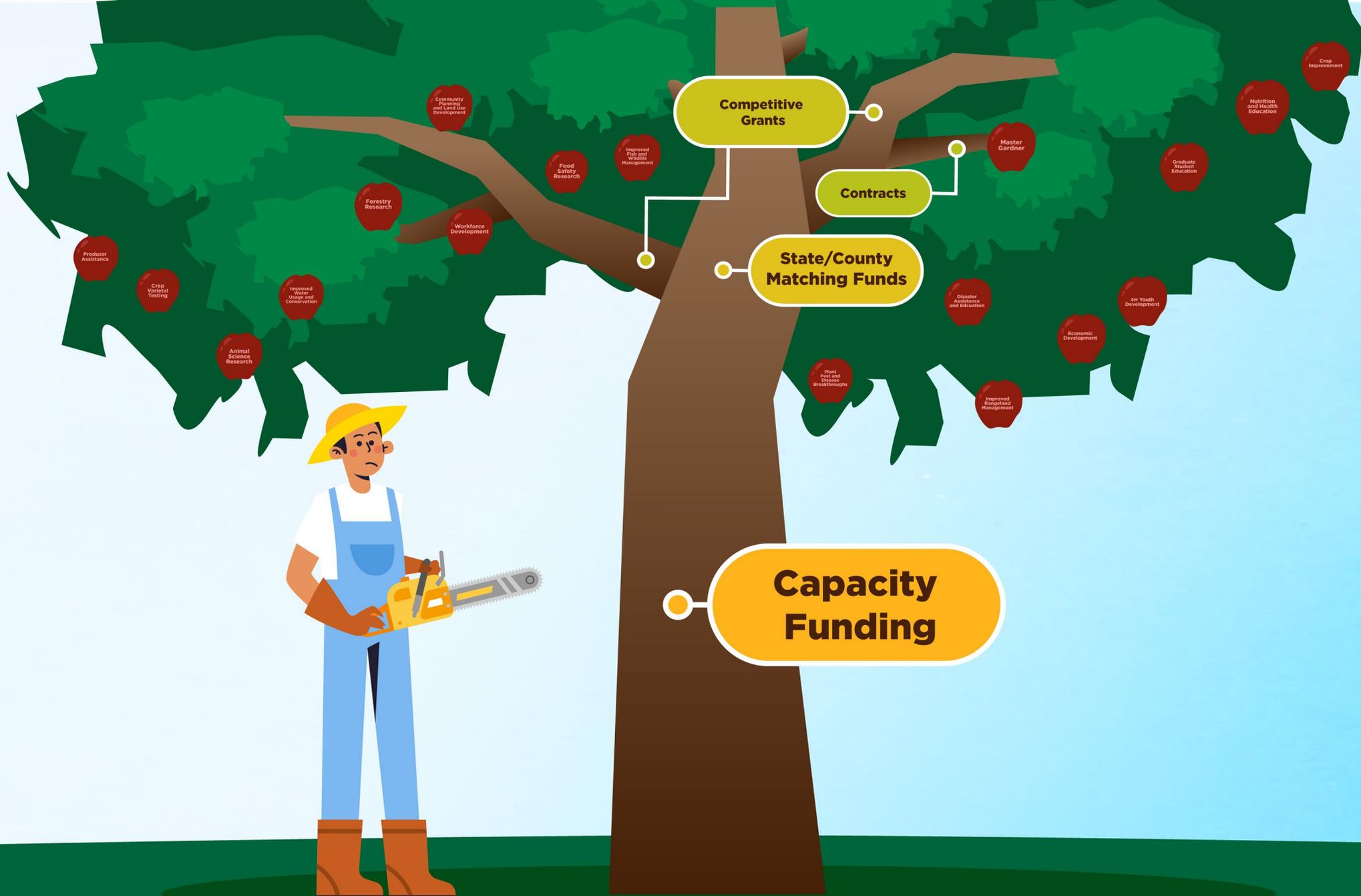
Graduate Student Education

4H Youth Development

Economic Development

Nutrition and Health Education

Crop Improvement



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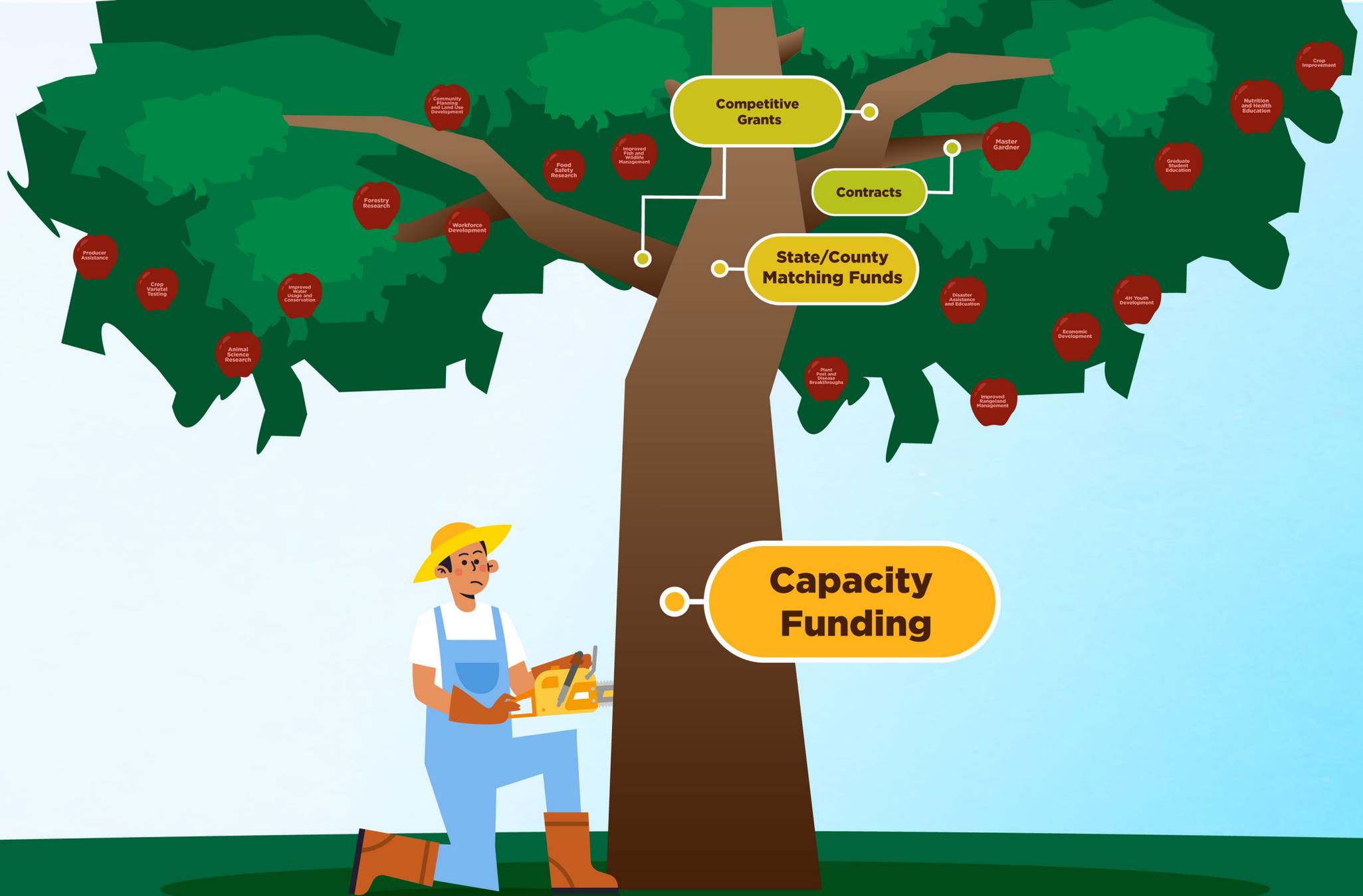
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Graduate Student Education

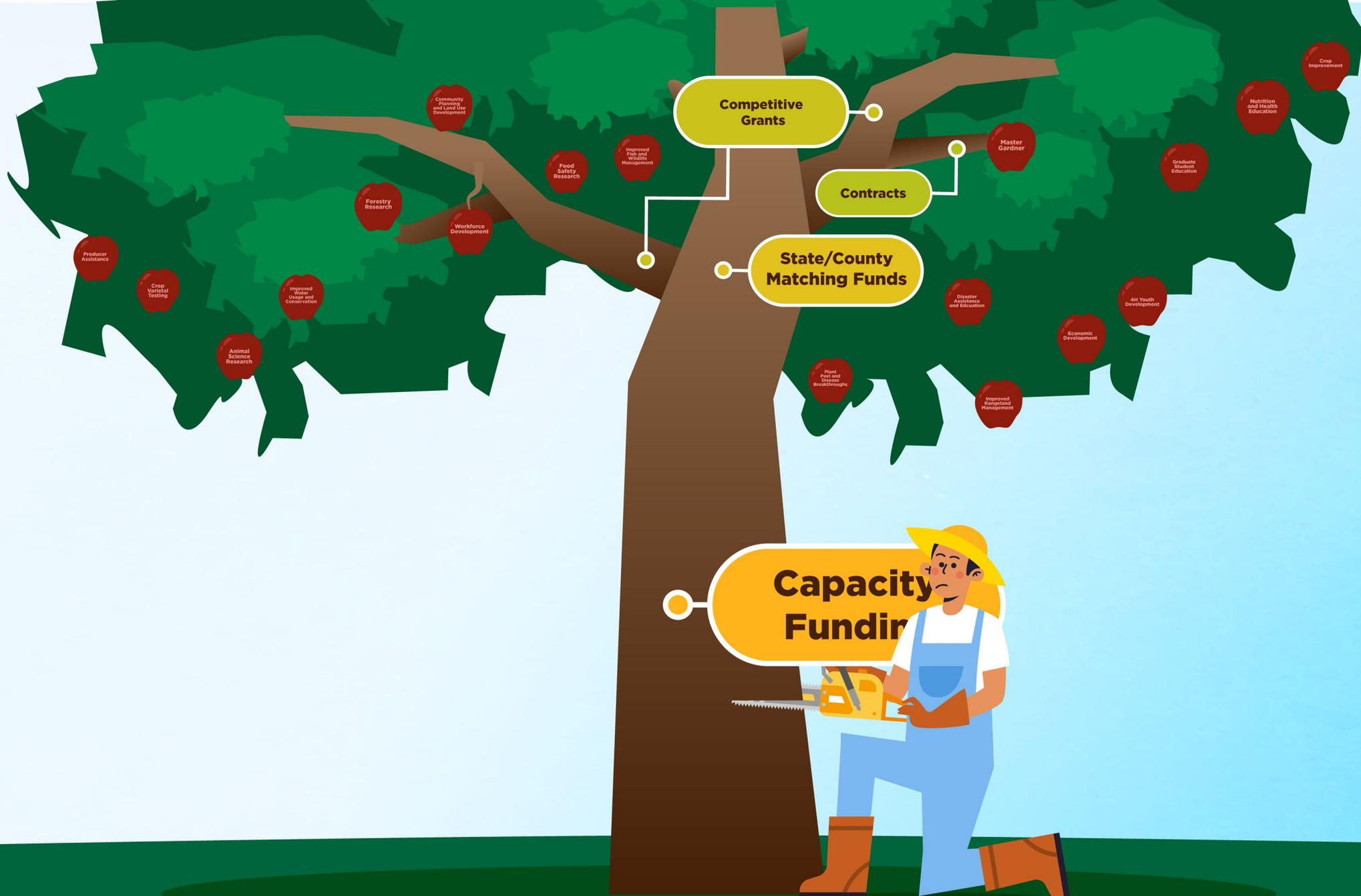
Master Gardener

Nutrition and Health Education

Crop Improvement









Forest Research

Forest Research

Forest Research

Forest Research

Forest Research

Workforce Development

Forest Research

Forest Research

Core Training

Economic Development

Forest Research

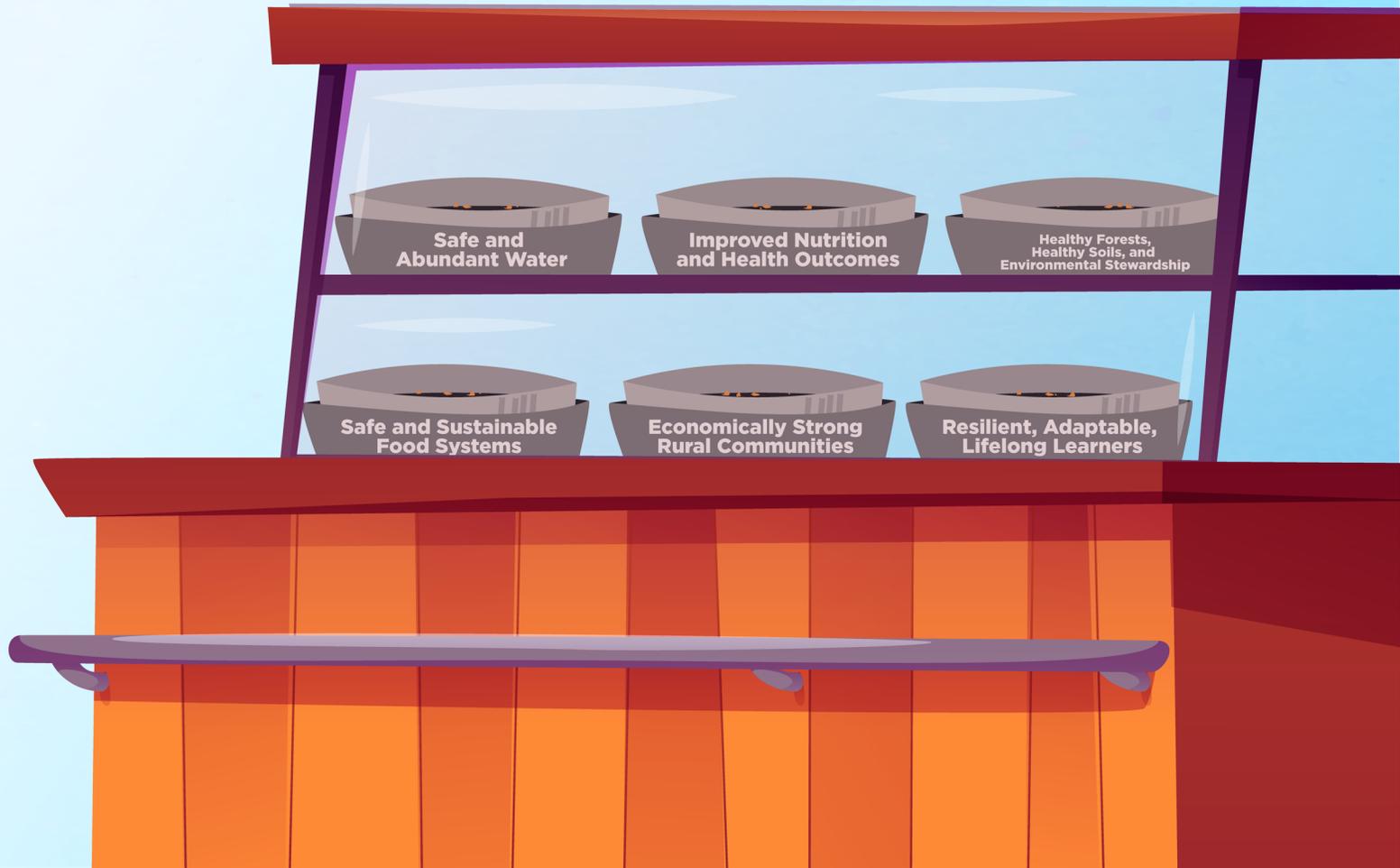
Forestry Management

Forest Research

Forest Research

Plant Pest and Disease Breakthrough

Forest Research



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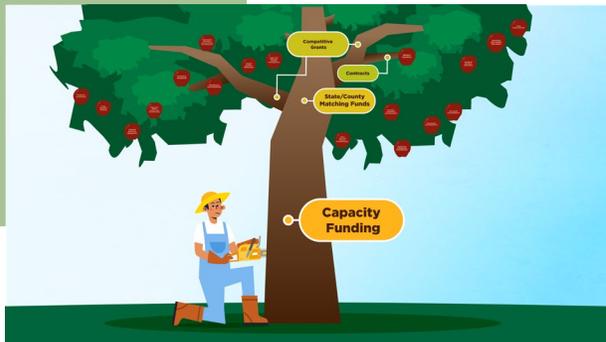
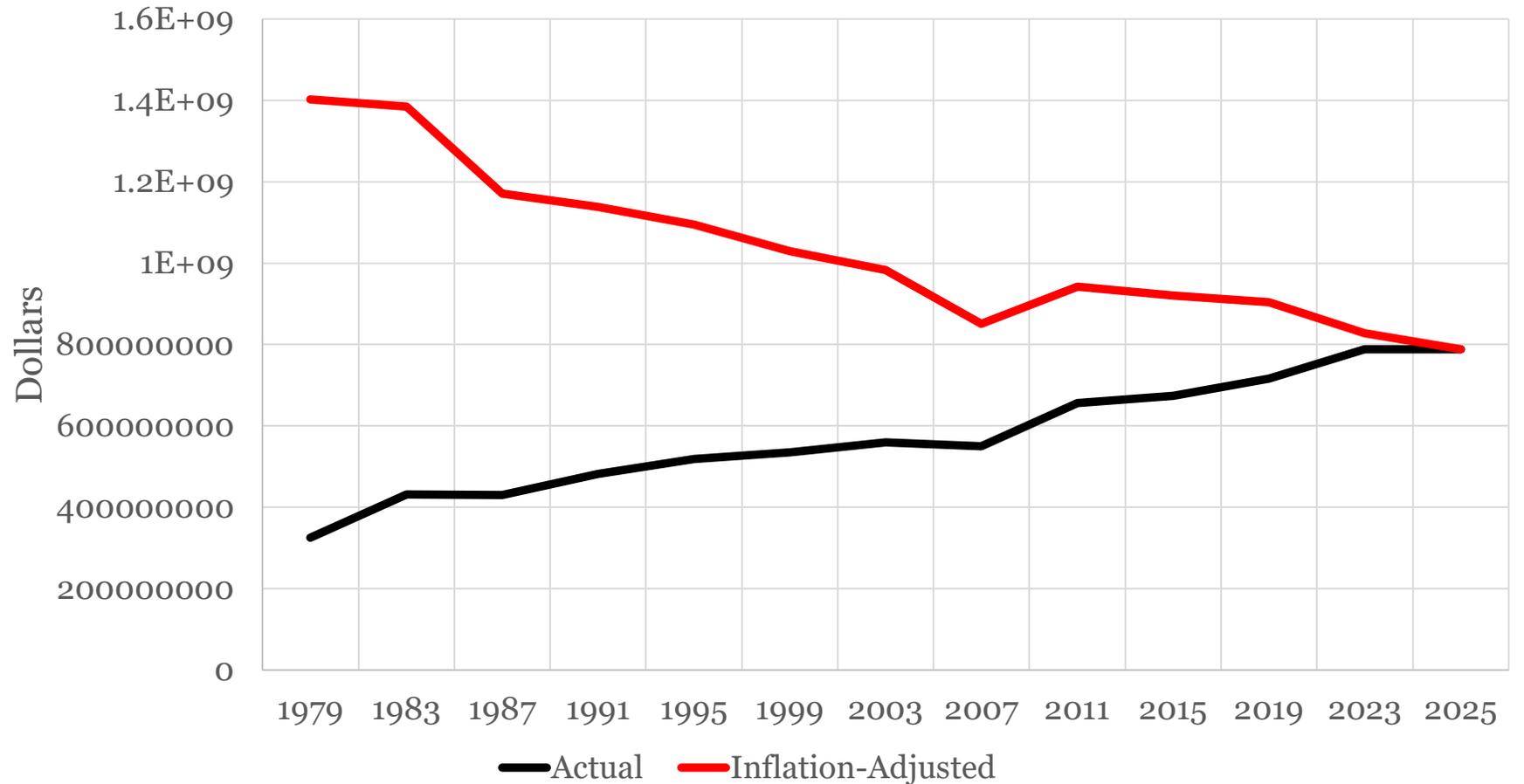
**Safe and Sustainable Food Systems**

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# Capacity Funding Has Fallen

Federal Capacity Funding in Actual and Inflation-Adjusted Dollars for Fiscal Years 1979-2025



# Self-Sufficiency In Food Production

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- **Fruits**
- **Vegetables**
- **Fish**
- **Meat**
- **Starchy Staples**
- **Legumes, Nuts, and Seeds**
- **Dairy**

Stehl, J., Vonderschmidt, A., Vollmer, S. et al. Gap between national food production and food-based dietary guidance highlights lack of national self-sufficiency. *Nat Food* 6, 571–576 (2025).  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-025-01173-4>

# Self-Sufficiency In Food Production

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## China

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Fish
- Meat
- Starchy Staples
- Legumes, Nuts, and Seeds
- Dairy

## United States

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Fish
- Meat
- Starchy Staples
- Legumes, Nuts, and Seeds
- Dairy

Stehl, J., Vonderschmidt, A., Vollmer, S. et al. Gap between national food production and food-based dietary guidance highlights lack of national self-sufficiency. *Nat Food* 6, 571–576 (2025).  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-025-01173-4>

# Capacity Initiative Phases



## Phase

# 1

2024-25

- Survey of institutions receiving capacity funding to determine:
  - How capacity funding is used across the system
  - Value of capacity funding to institutions
  - Where vulnerabilities exist for cuts and what the result of those cuts might be
  - What would be expanded if more capacity dollars were given

# Capacity Initiative Phases



## Phase 2

Dec. 2025-  
July 2026

- Economic analysis of the impact of capacity-funded programs/projects
- Return on Investment

# Capacity Initiative Phases



## Phase 3

July 2026-  
Feb 2027

- Implementation
  - Developing the FY28 “Ask”
  - Developing Advocacy Messaging
  - Working with CARET, sections, university government affairs representatives, and coalition partners to prepare for advocacy

# Capacity Initiative Phases



## Phase 1

- Survey of institutions receiving capacity funding to determine:
  - How capacity funding is used across the system
  - Value of capacity funding to institutions
  - Where vulnerabilities exist for cuts and what the result of those cuts might be
  - What would be expanded if more capacity dollars were given

# Methodology



- **Hired Tripp Umbach to conduct Phase I and II of this study**
- **Task Force of 18 individuals representing 1862 and 1890 research, Extension, natural resources, international agriculture, federal relations, and communications**
- **Survey fielded in Fall of 2024**
  - **97% of capacity-funded institutions responded**
- **Analysis by Tripp Umbach in Fall 24/Winter 25**
- **Draft report summer of 2025**

# Key Takeaways

---



- 1. Stable federal support from capacity funding secures a future for national security, agricultural profitability, community resilience, positive youth development and health and nutrition programming built on science.**
- 2. Foundational funding ensures continuity in research and Cooperative Extension, enables long-term projects, and builds the critical expertise required to address complex, emerging challenges.**
- 3. Federal capacity funds are highly leveraged through state, local, and external investments, multiplying the impact of federal dollars.**
- 4. Increased investment safeguards the future by advancing high-impact research, building a skilled workforce, and catalyzing community and economic growth.**

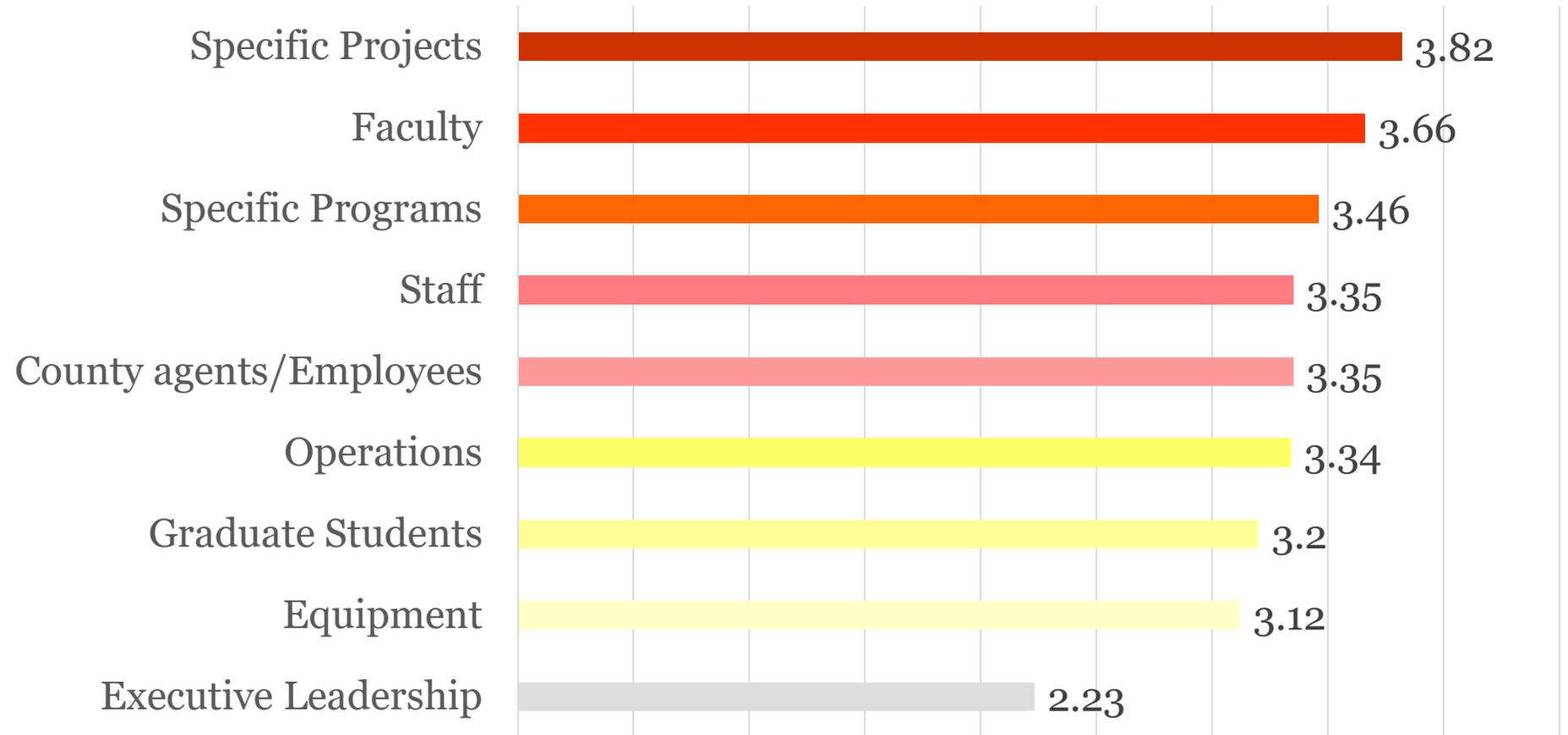


## Key Takeaway #1:

Stable federal support from capacity funding secures a future for national security, agricultural profitability, community resilience, positive youth development and health and nutrition programming built on science.



# Most Vulnerable to Cuts in Capacity Funds

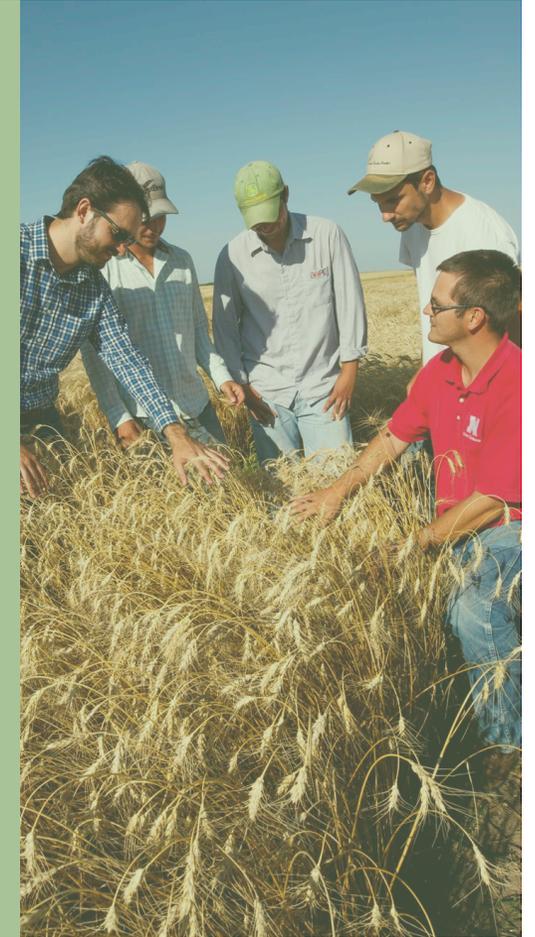


Weighted Average, Scale 1-5, where 5 is “very vulnerable”

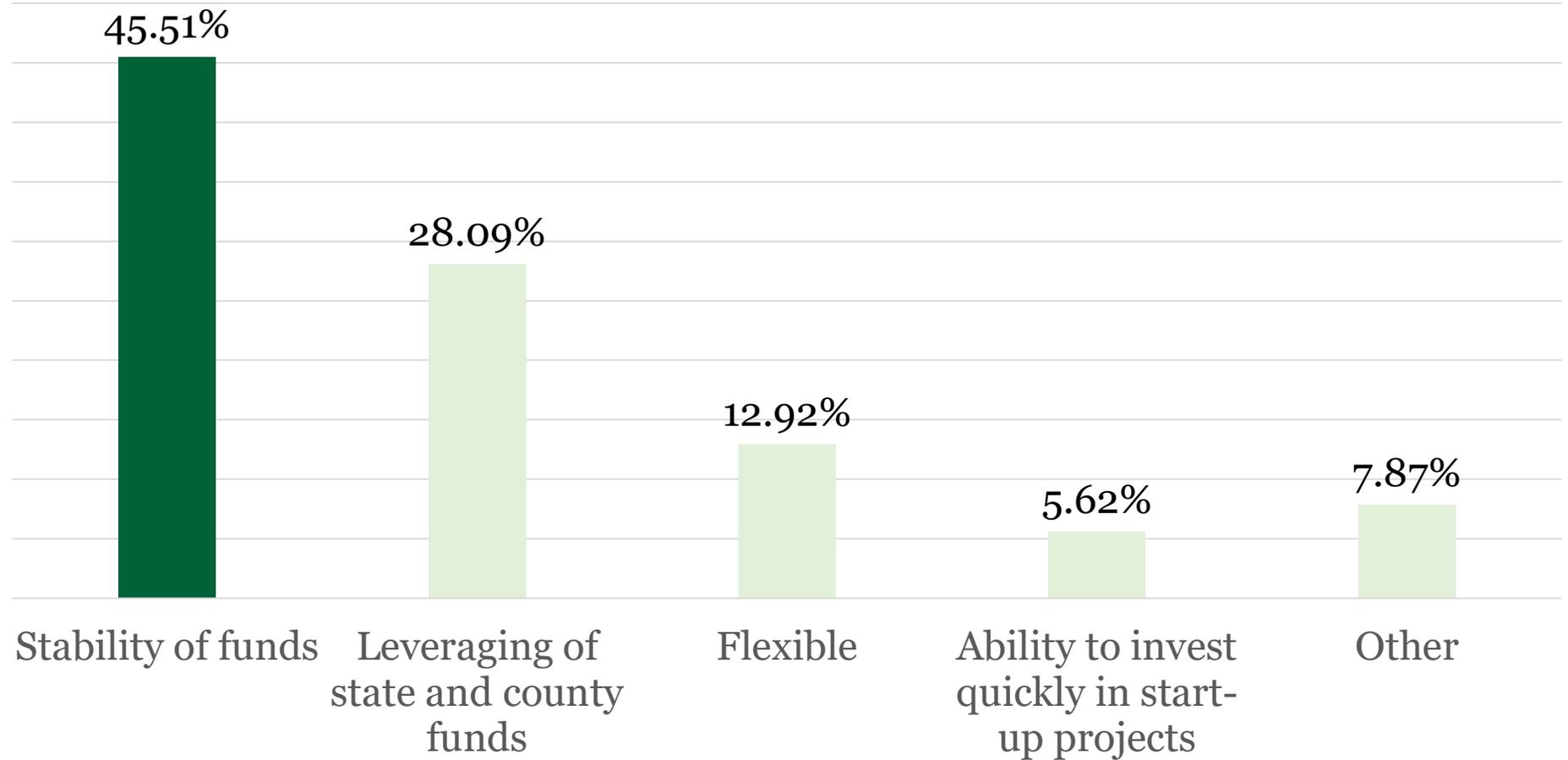


## Key Takeaway #2:

Foundational funding ensures continuity in research and Cooperative Extension, enables long-term projects, and builds the critical expertise required to address complex, emerging challenges.



# Key Takeaway #2 - Capacity Funds Increase Research Competitiveness and Extension's Reach

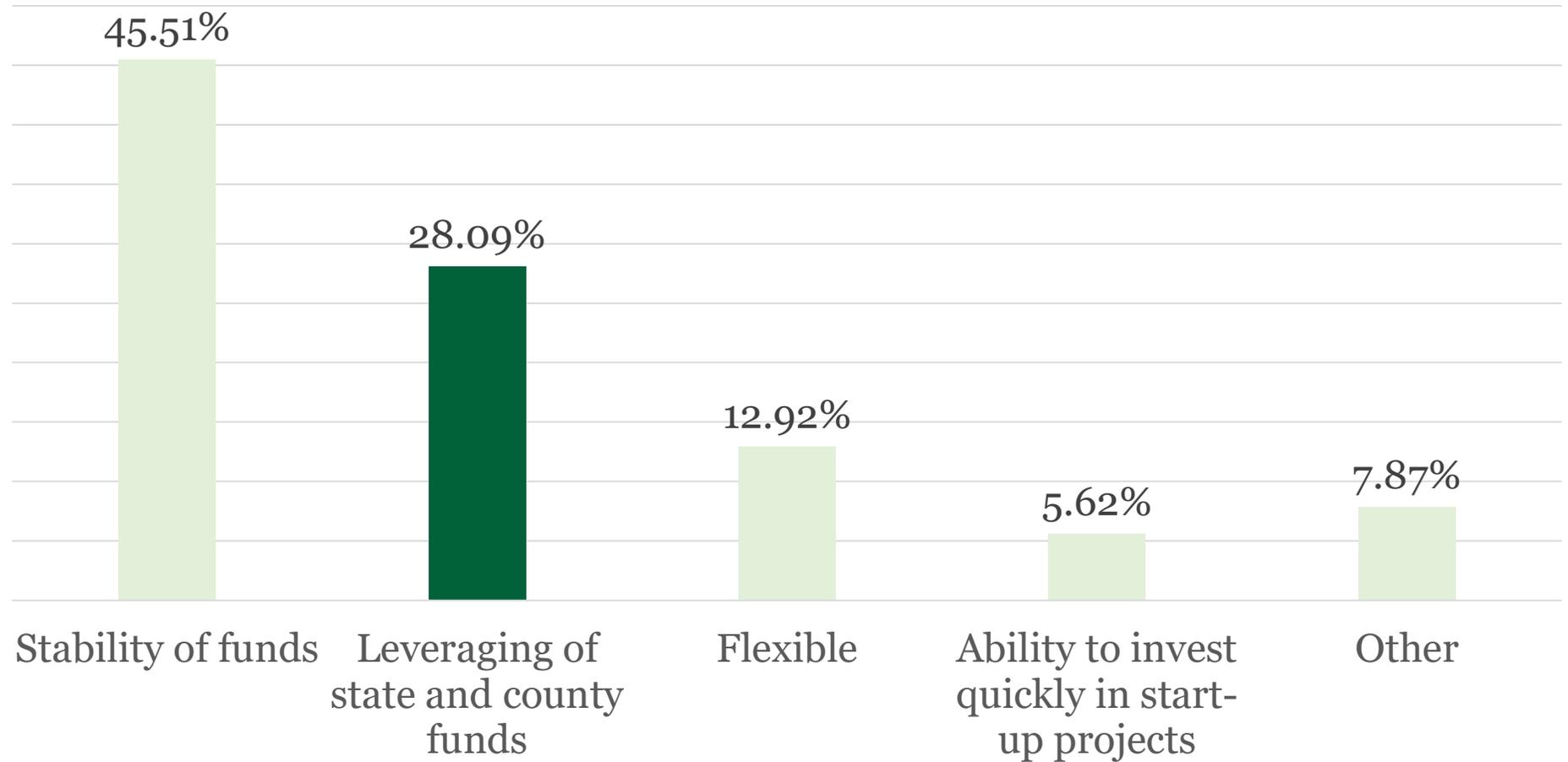


## Key Takeaway #3:

Federal capacity funds are highly leveraged through state, local, and external investments, multiplying the impact of federal dollars.



# Key Takeaway # 4 - Federal Capacity Funds are the Foundation in the University Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Extension and Research Enterprise

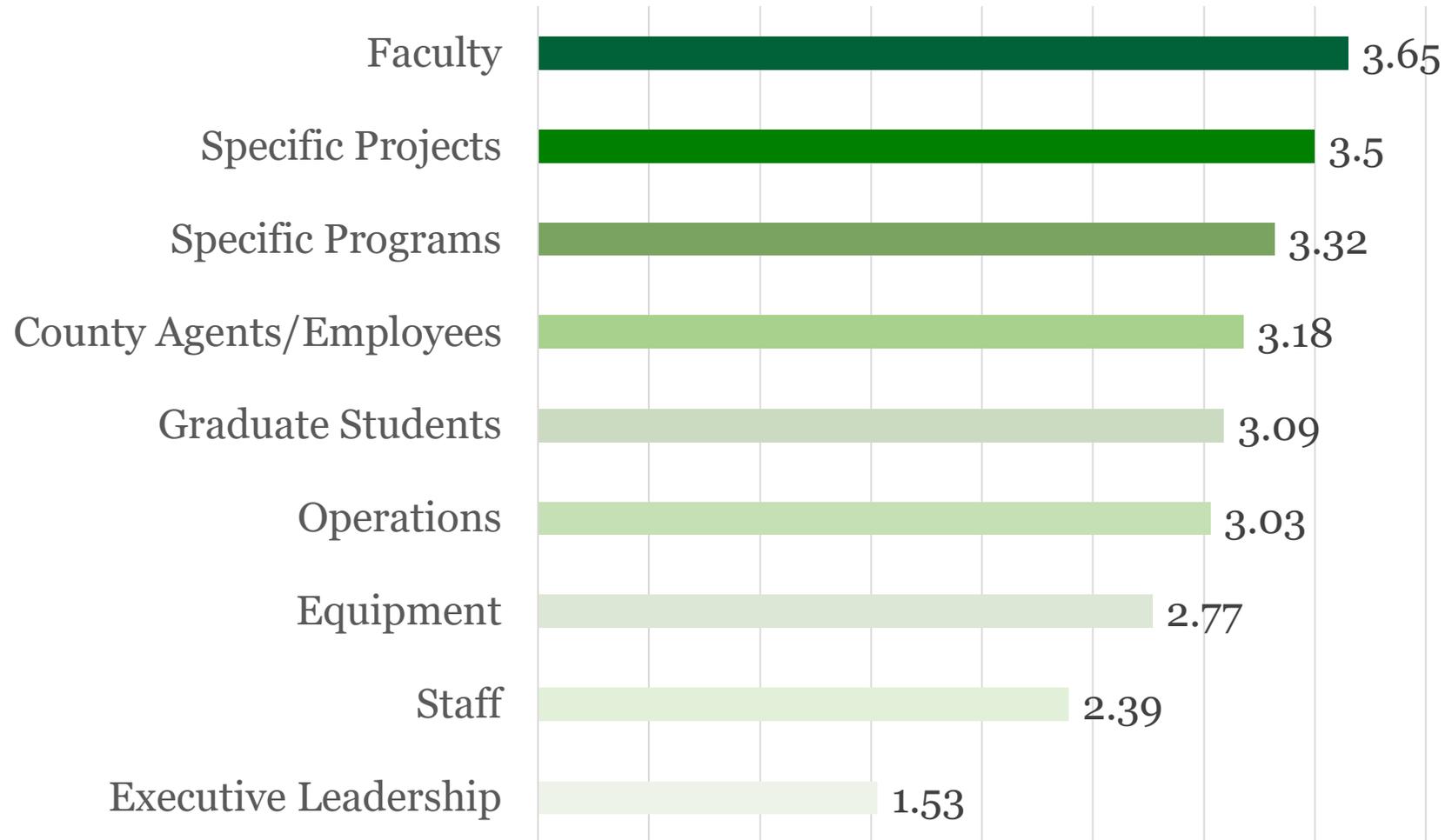


## Key Takeaway # 4:

Increased investment safeguards the future by advancing high-impact research, building a skilled workforce, and catalyzing community and economic growth.



# What Would Be Expanded If Capacity Funds Increased?



Weighted Average, Scale 1-5, where 1 is “no increase” and 5 is “significant increase”



# What Can You Do to Help with This Effort?

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- **Phase II of the Capacity Initiative – Economic Impact and Return on Investment**
  - Look for new survey early next year
  - Send past studies to [wfink@aplu.org](mailto:wfink@aplu.org)
- **Coalition partners**

# An Internal-Looking Example of Loss

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- MAFES salary budgeted on Hatch funding directly for FY26 is \$3,608,677 = more than 40 faculty/staff positions, many split with College (academic) and/or Extension funding sources
- \$700,000+ in support for MAFES Graduate Research Assistantships (50+ students)
- \$900,000+ in MAFES Strategic Research Institute
- MAFES Equipment program for technical lab equipment comes from Hatch, which also impacts start-up funding.
- Total loss would be **\$5,108,677 budget cut**

# Messaging Shout Out



College of Agricultural,  
Consumer &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**PUBLISHED:**  
Oct. 27, 2025

## ACES NEWS

Research

### The 1887 law that powers modern agricultural science

Lauren Quinn

**URBANA, Ill.** — Agricultural innovation requires more than ideas — it demands acres of land, barns full of livestock, fleets of equipment, and teams of specialists



the public to ensure federal Hatch dollars invest in discoveries that truly make a difference.”

<https://aces/illinois.edu/news/1887-law-powers-modern-agricultural-science>



ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC &  
LAND-GRANT  
UNIVERSITIES

# Thank you

Questions?

