



Board Agenda Background

Date: 1/20/2026
To: Board of County Commissioners
Through: County Manager's Office
From: Colton Rohloff County Manager
Subject: Consideration of Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with Colorado State University for Extension County Director Position

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Clear Creek County and Colorado State University (CSU) for the continuation and enhancement of CSU Extension Services in Clear Creek County, including authorization to proceed with filling the Extension County Director position as described in the accompanying position description.

BACKGROUND

Clear Creek County has a long-standing partnership with Colorado State University through the CSU Extension Program, which delivers research-based education, technical assistance, and community programming tailored to local needs. CSU Extension operates under the federal land-grant mission and the Smith-Lever Act, providing counties with access to university expertise in natural resources, youth development, and community resilience.

The proposed MOU renews and formalizes this partnership for a five-year term and establishes the framework for staffing, supervision, fiscal responsibilities, and program delivery within Clear Creek County. A key component of the agreement is the Extension County Director position, which is currently vacant and proposed to be filled following execution of the MOU.

The accompanying position description reflects updated County priorities, including wildfire mitigation, forest health, emergency preparedness coordination, and STEM-focused 4-H youth programming, all of which align with current Board and community objectives.

ANALYSIS

Strategic Alignment with County Needs

The Extension County Director position is specifically designed to address Clear Creek County's high-risk wildland-urban interface conditions. The position emphasizes forest health, wildfire prevention, defensible space education, and community-based mitigation strategies, with direct coordination alongside the Office of Emergency Management and Clear Creek Fire Authority. This alignment strengthens the County's capacity to deliver prevention-focused education and preparedness efforts without creating a new standalone County department.

Operational and Administrative Structure

Under the MOU, CSU retains responsibility for hiring, supervision, and personnel management of the Extension County Director and other CSU-employed Extension staff. This structure allows the County to leverage CSU's academic oversight, training systems, and subject-matter expertise while maintaining local input through participation in the selection process and annual performance feedback.



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Fiscal and Risk Considerations

The MOU is structured as a no-cost agreement, with costs incurred only as specifically identified in the operational addendum and subject to annual BOCC appropriation. The County's financial obligation is limited to its agreed-upon share of salary and benefits, invoiced quarterly, with clear documentation requirements. Importantly, personnel liability, benefits administration, and employment risk for CSU-hired staff remain with CSU, reducing the County's long-term risk exposure.

Programmatic Value

Beyond wildfire mitigation, the position supports expanded STEM-focused 4-H programming in both in-school and after-school settings, connects local priorities to statewide Extension specialists, and enhances grant-seeking and external funding opportunities tied to natural resources and youth development. This integrated approach increases service delivery capacity without duplicating existing county staff functions.

CONCLUSION

Approval of the MOU and authorization to proceed with the Extension County Director position will strengthen Clear Creek County's partnership with CSU, expand access to research-based education and technical expertise, and directly support County priorities related to wildfire mitigation, emergency preparedness, and youth development. The agreement provides a cost-effective, low-risk mechanism to enhance service delivery while maintaining Board oversight and annual budget control.

FISCAL IMPACT

The County's fiscal impact is limited to an annual contribution of \$17,085 for calendar year 2026 toward the Extension County Director position, reimbursed quarterly to CSU. Funding is subject to annual BOCC appropriation, and there is no obligation to fund the full salary or benefits of the position. All employment administration, benefits, and personnel liability remain with CSU.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Memorandum of Understanding between Clear Creek County and Colorado State University
2. CSU Extension County Director Position Description