Association of Public & Land-grant Universities

Update on Capacity Funding Initiative

Wendy Fink, Associate VP, FANR

Nov. 4, 2025

Presentation Overview

- 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.


University of Alaska


University of Rhode Island


Colorado State University


Kansas State University


University of Connecticut

Capacity Funding Enables

Capacity Funding Enables

Capacity Funding Enables


University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign

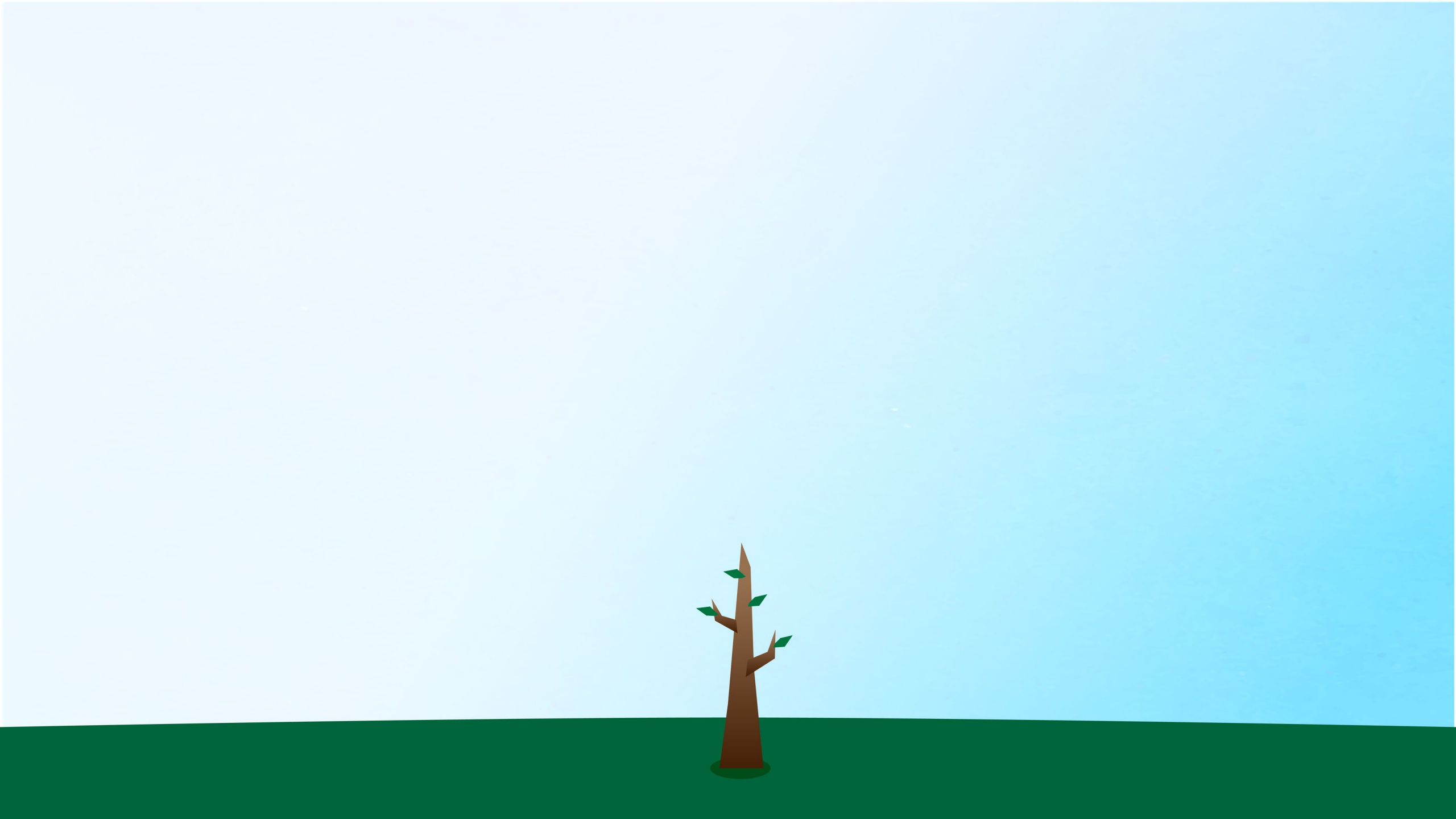
University of Florida

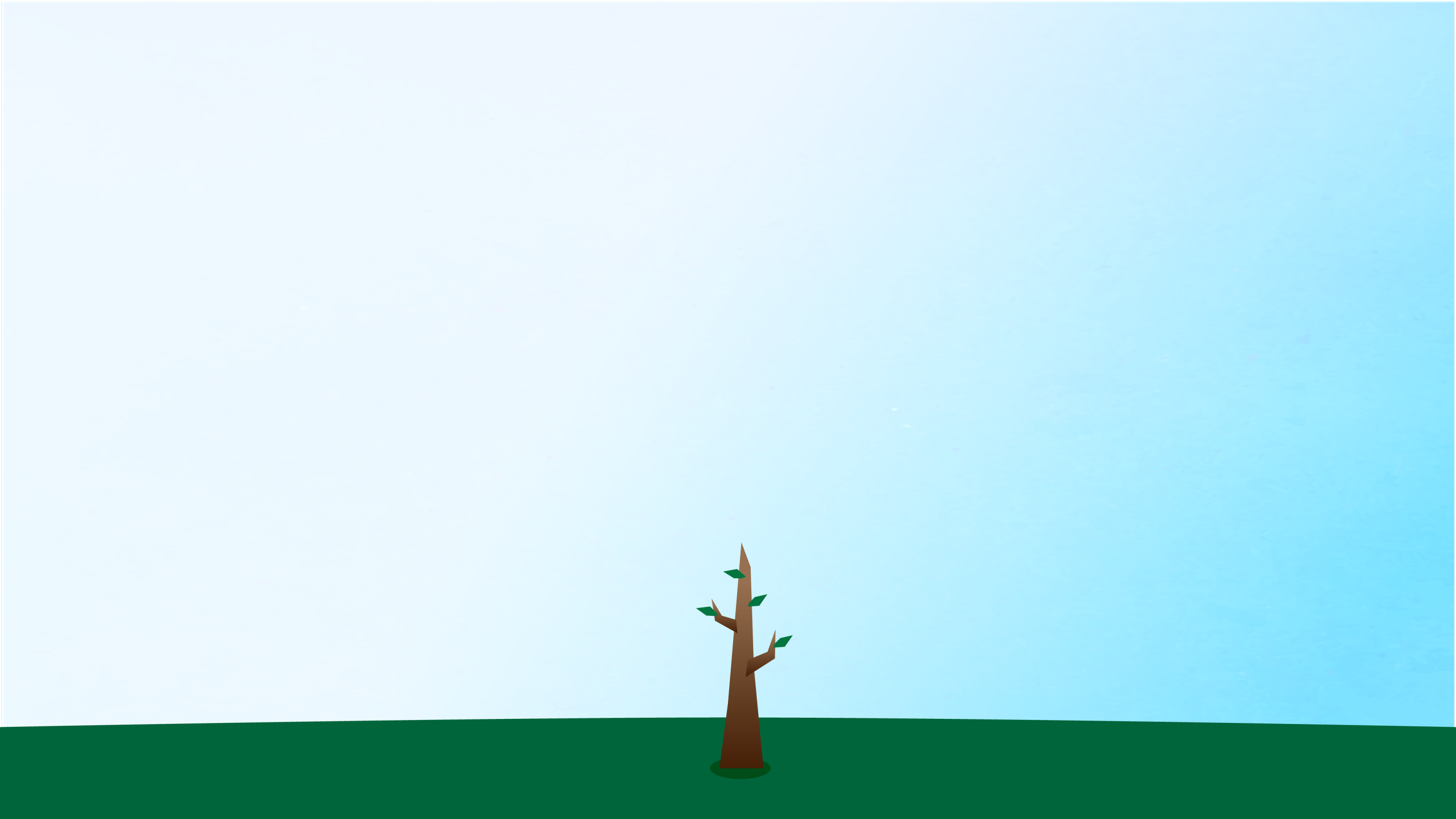

University of Connecticut

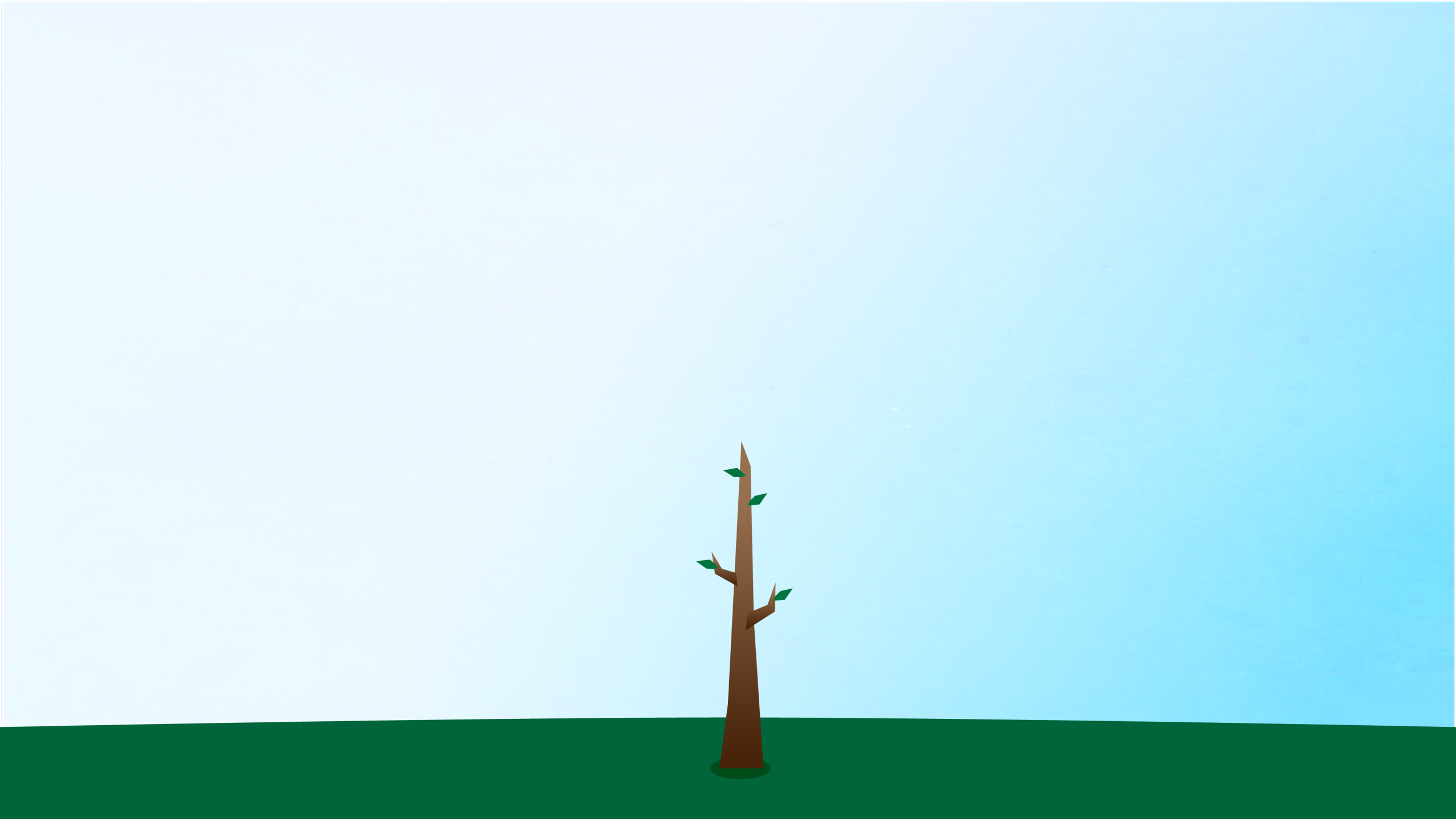

University of Guam

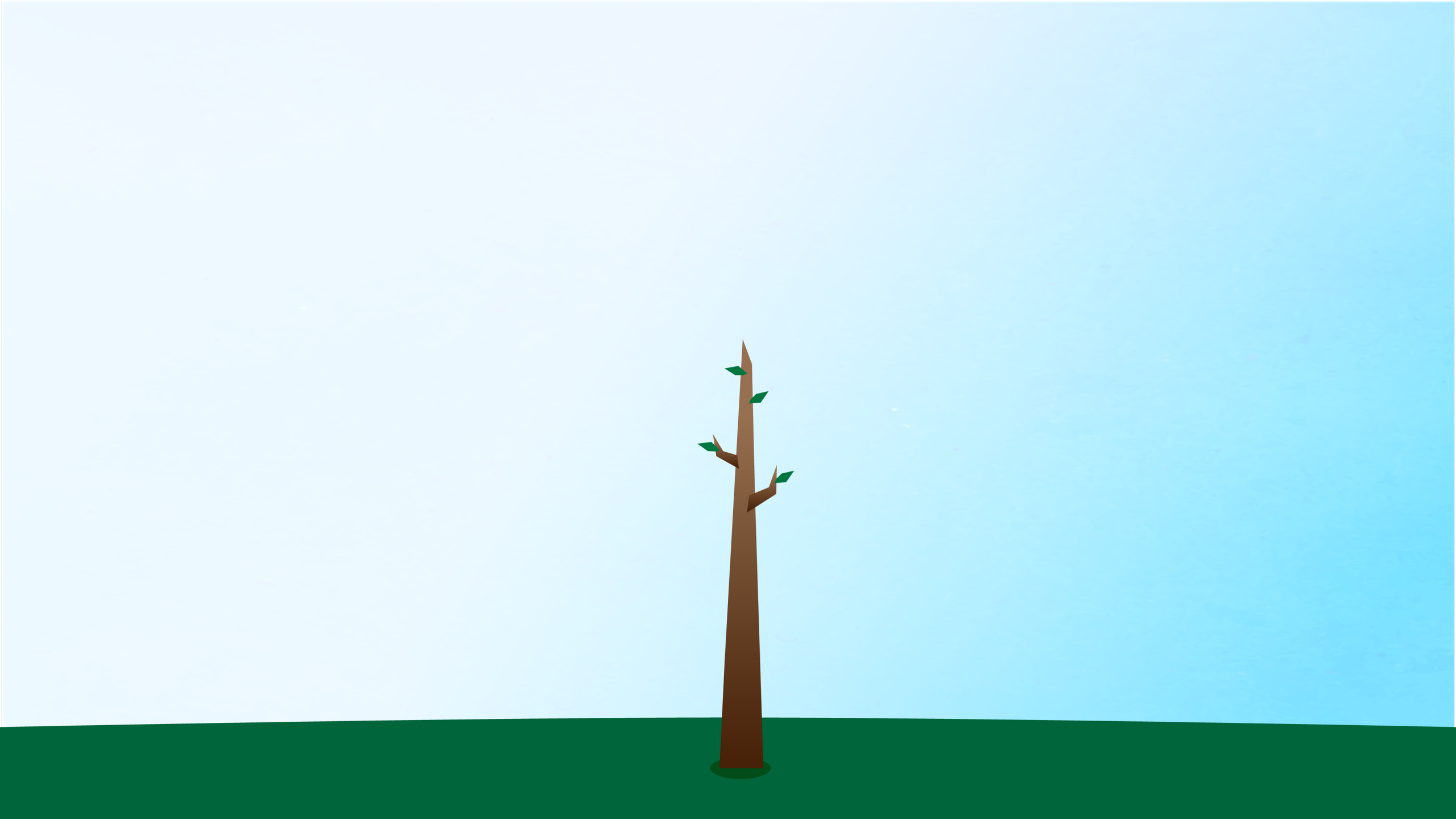

College of Micronesia

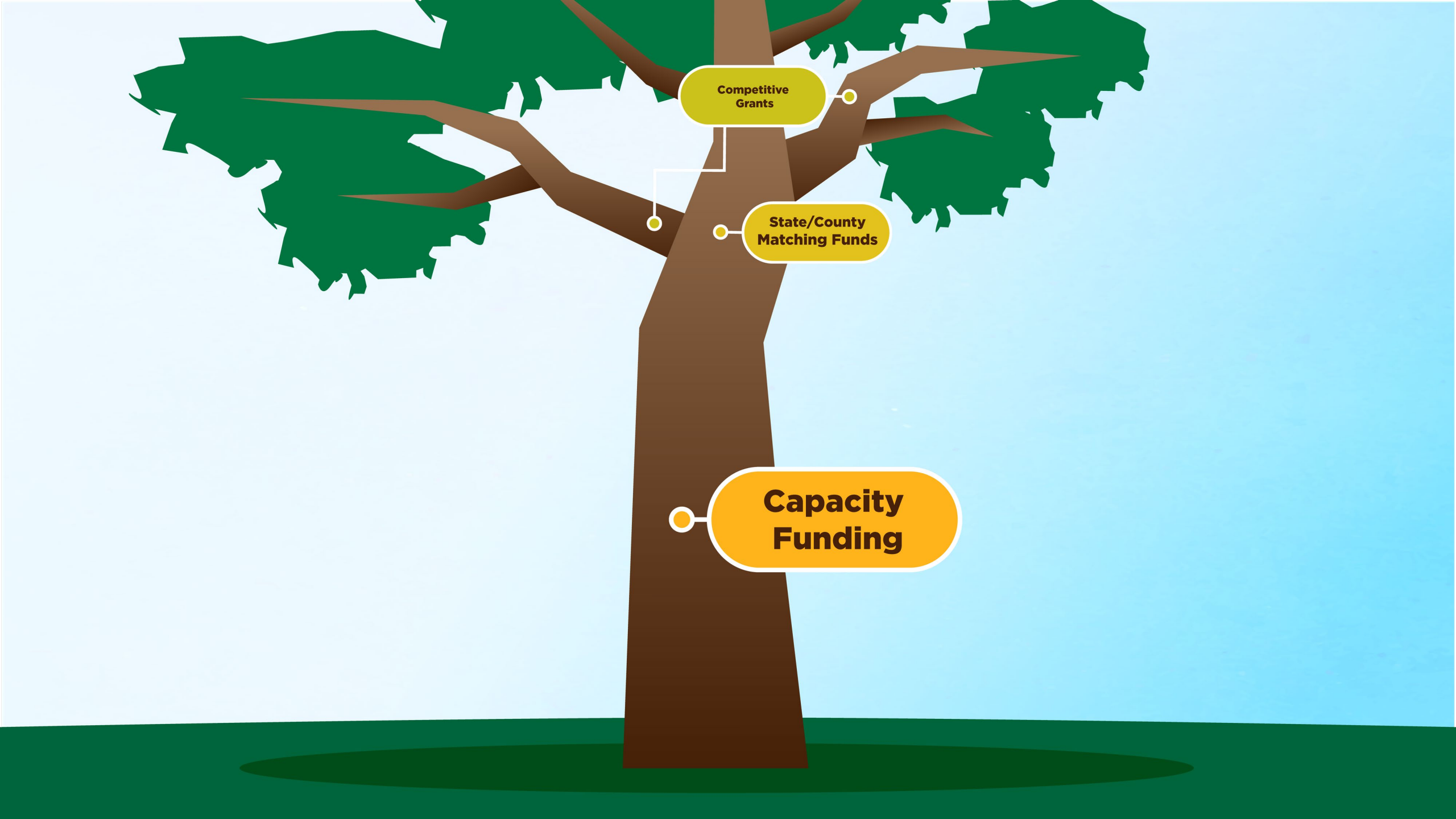
University of California System







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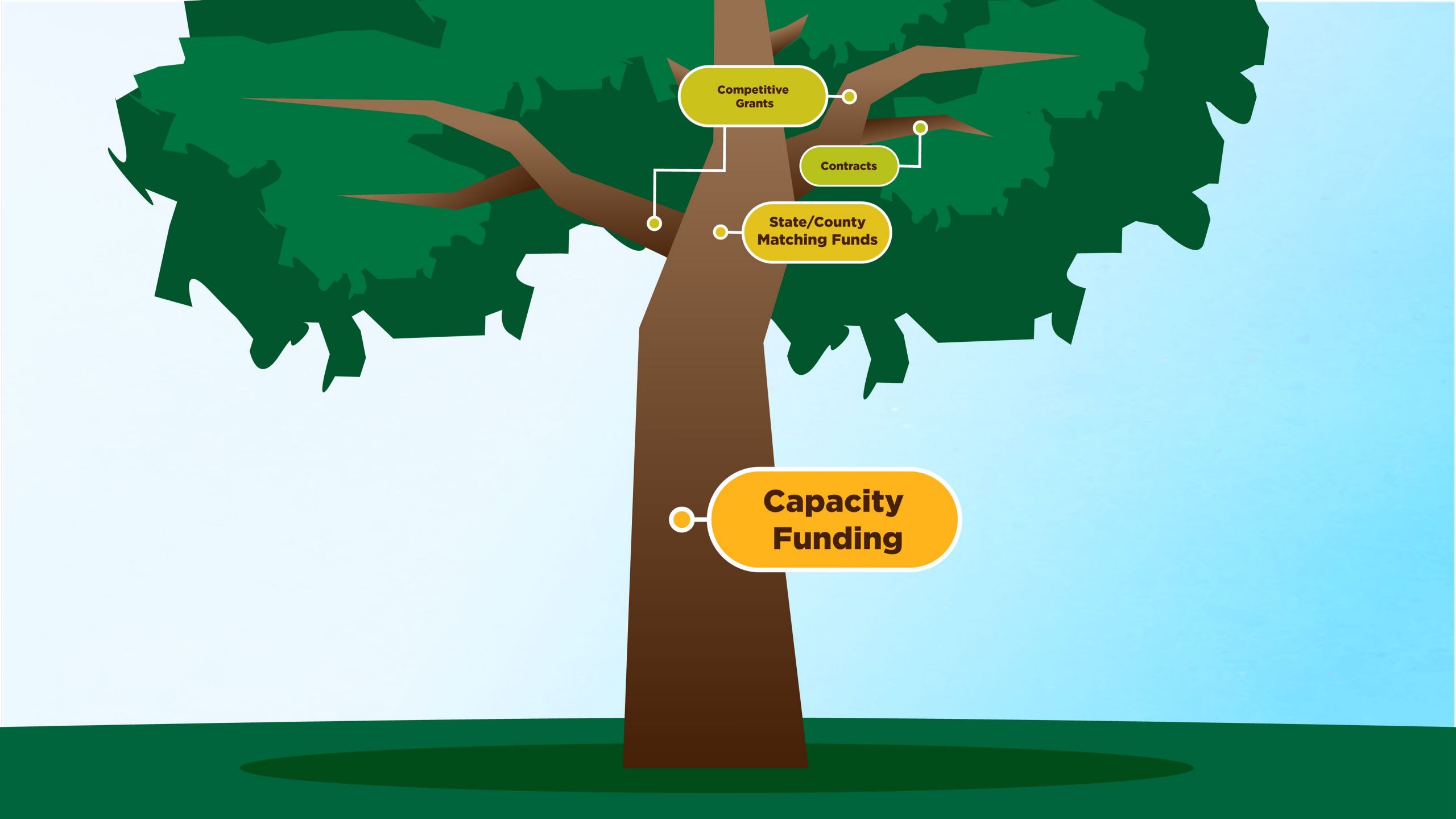
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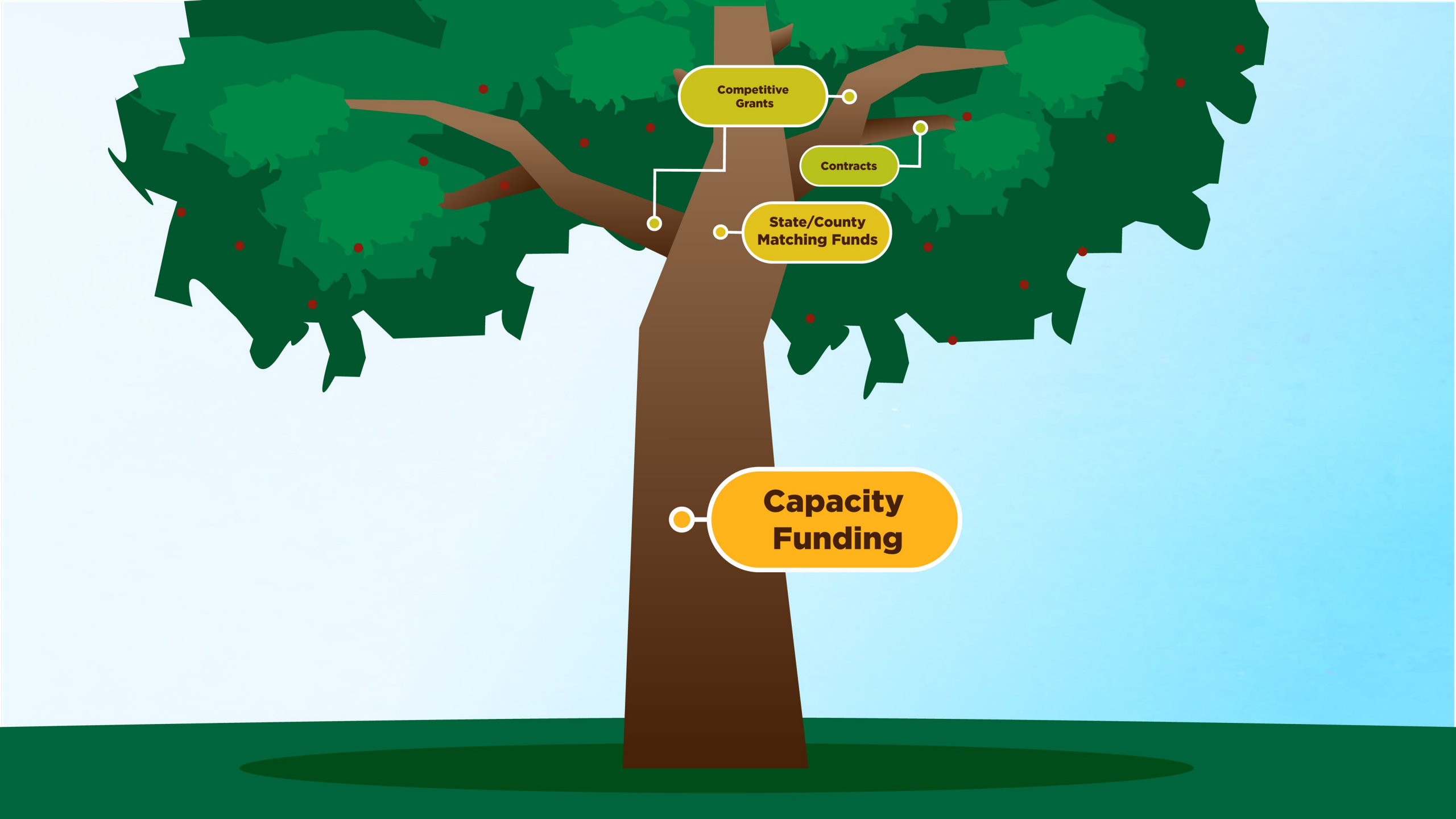
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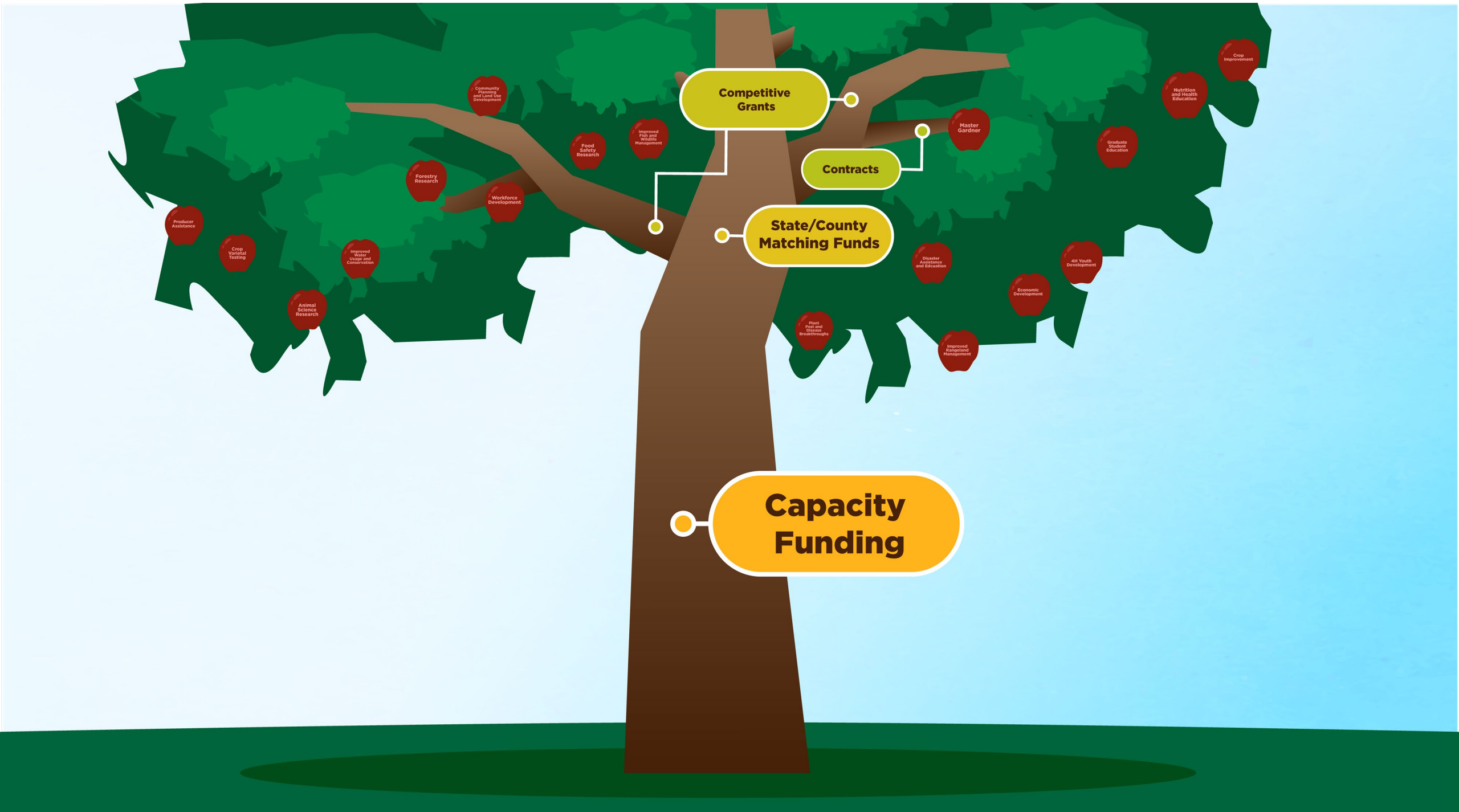
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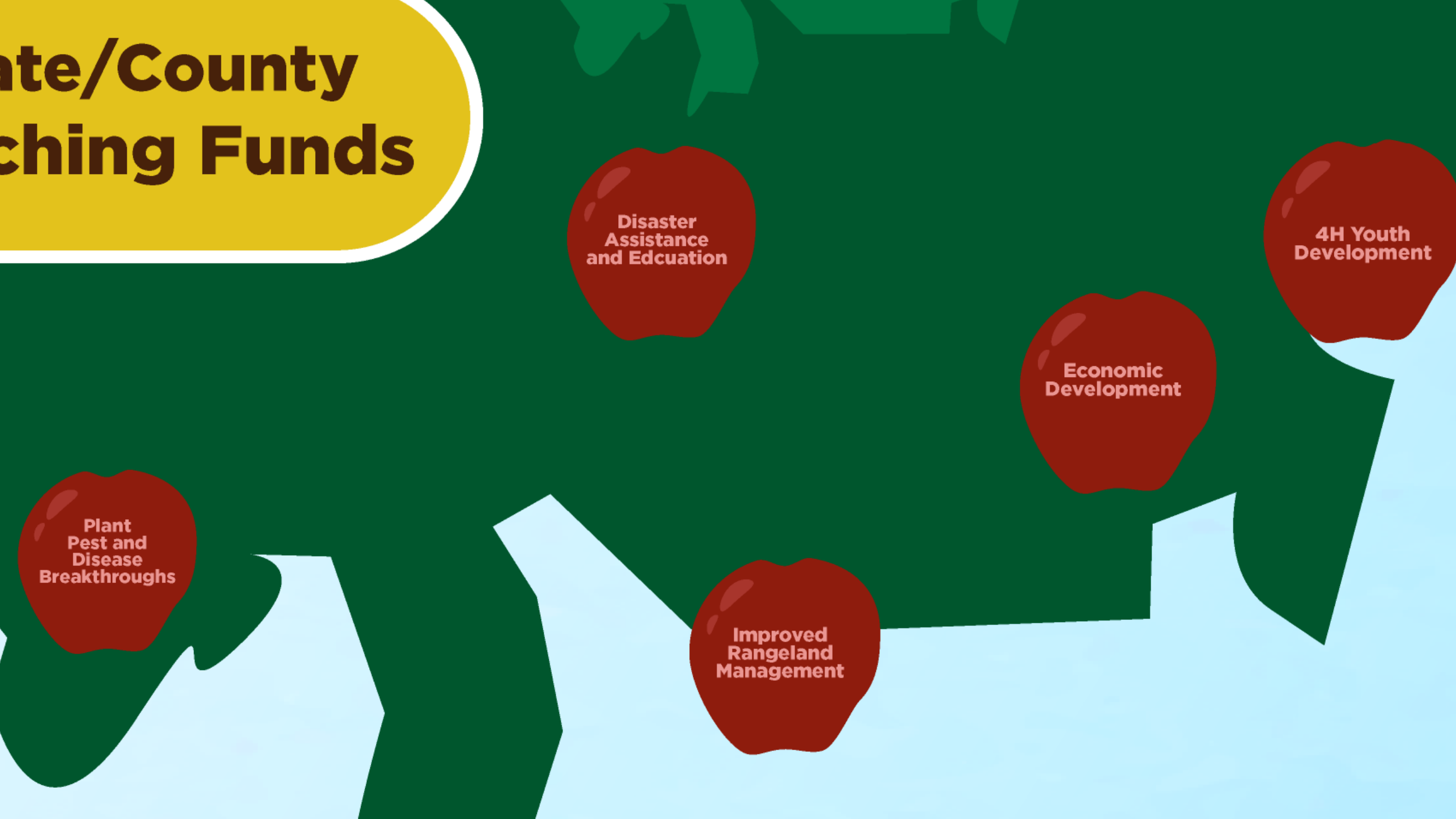

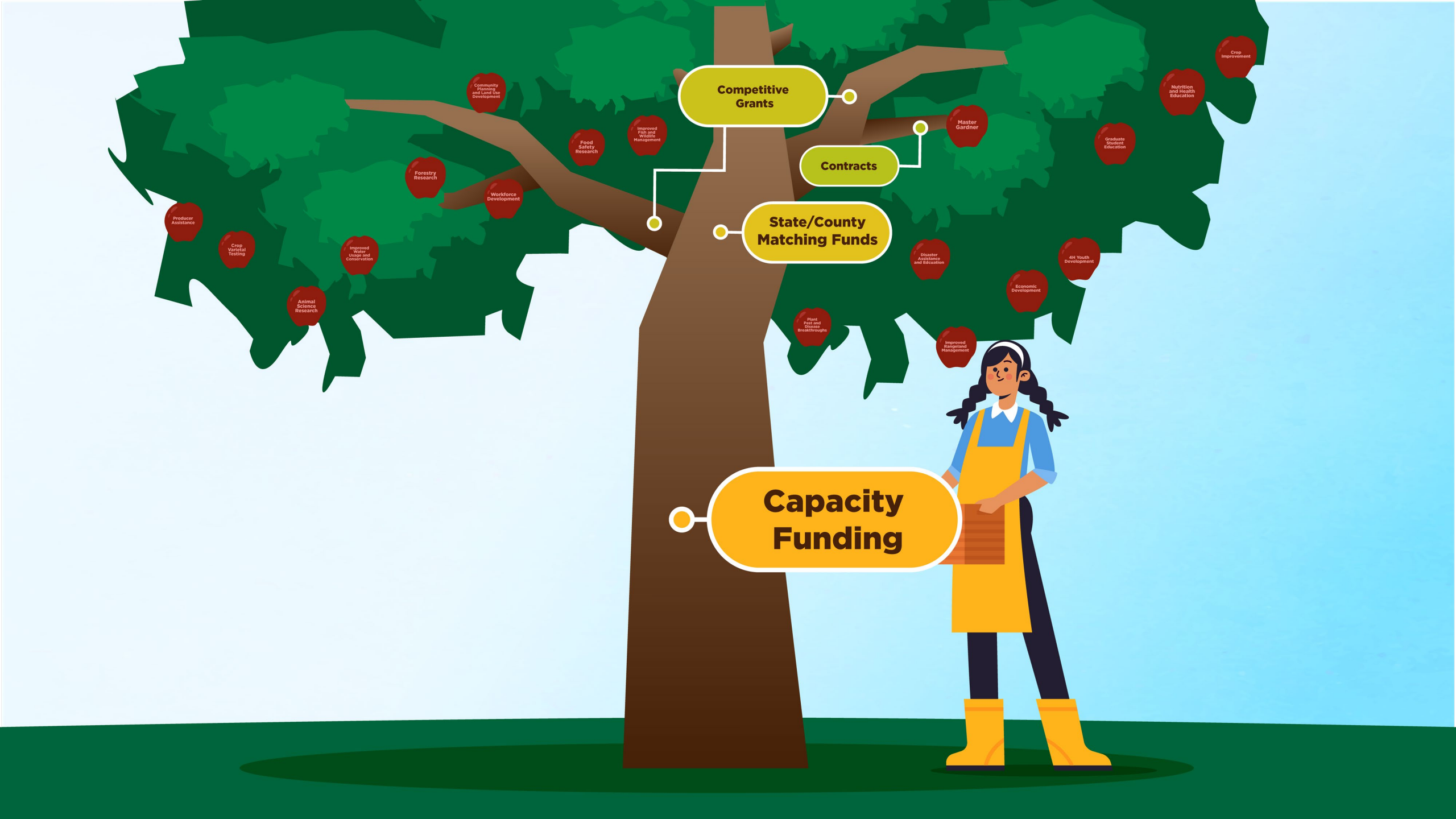
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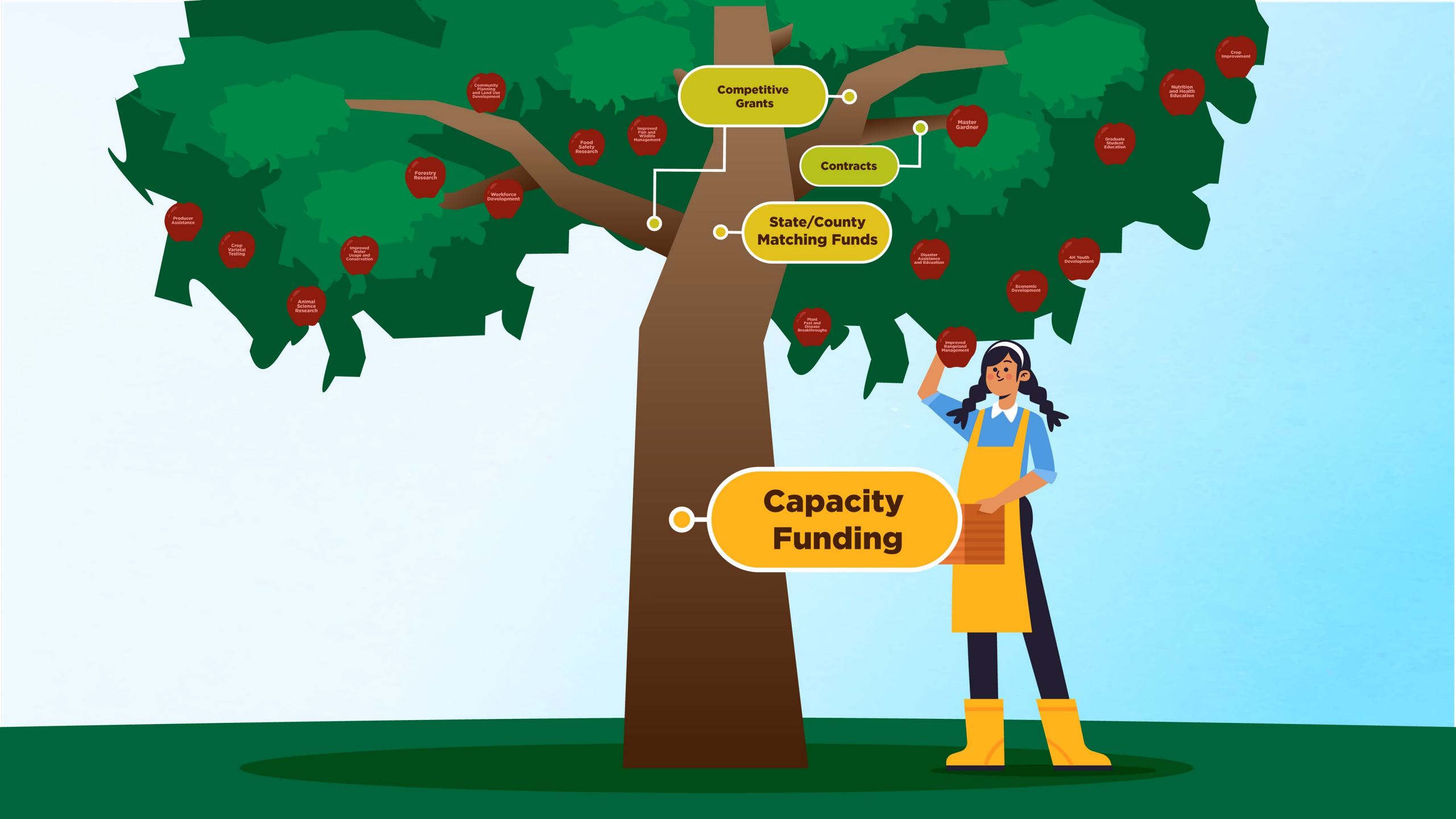
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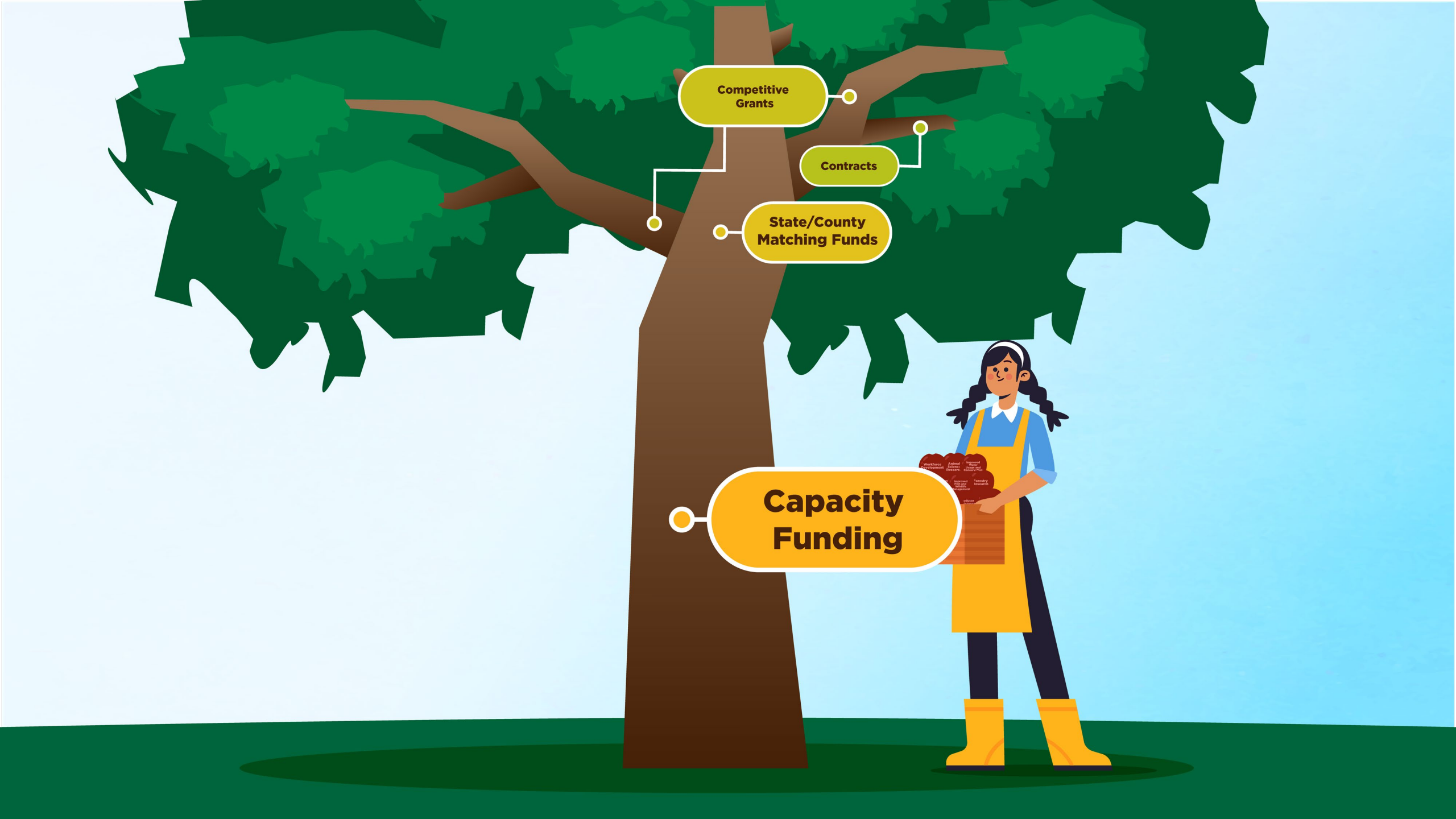
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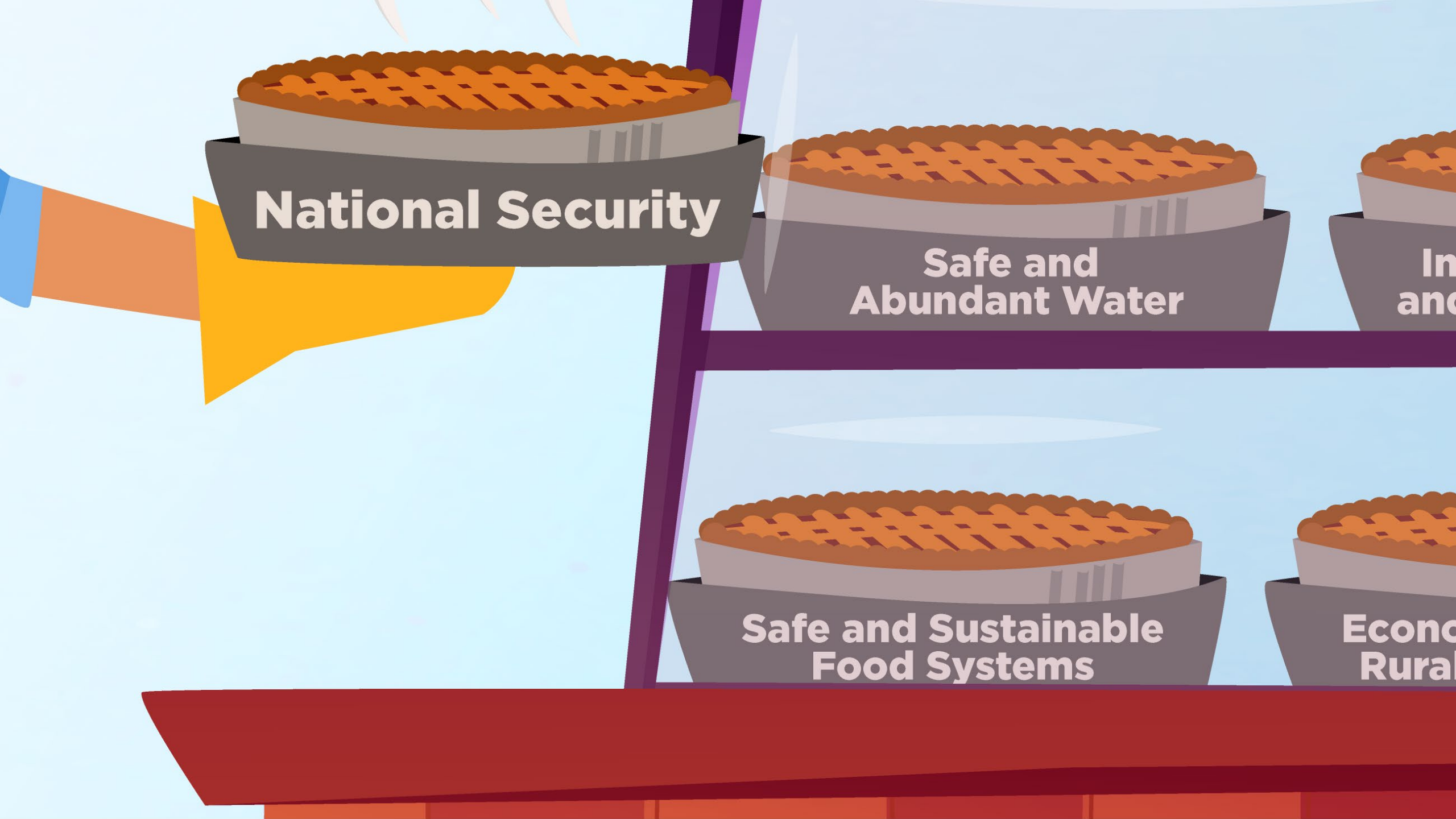
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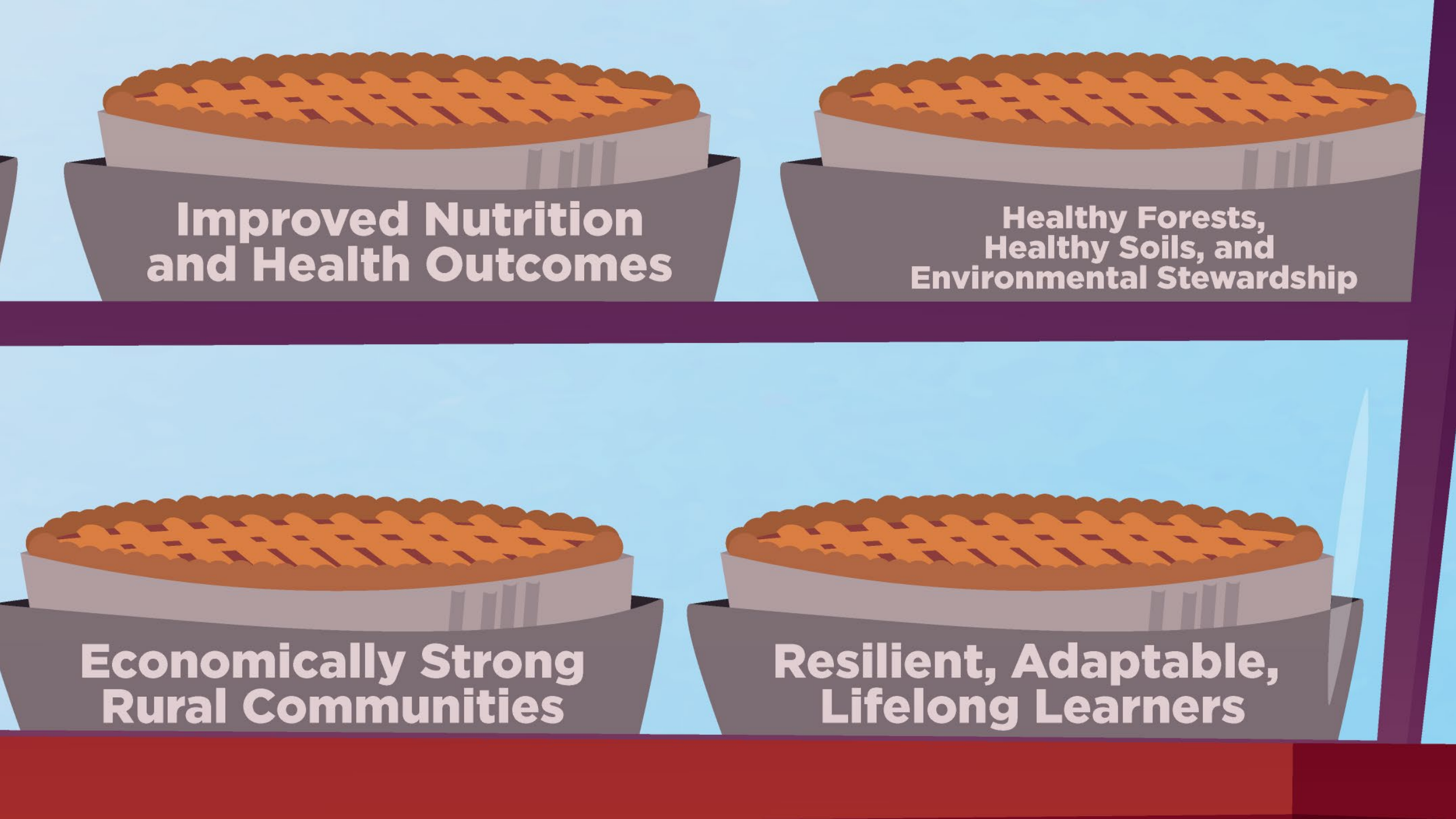
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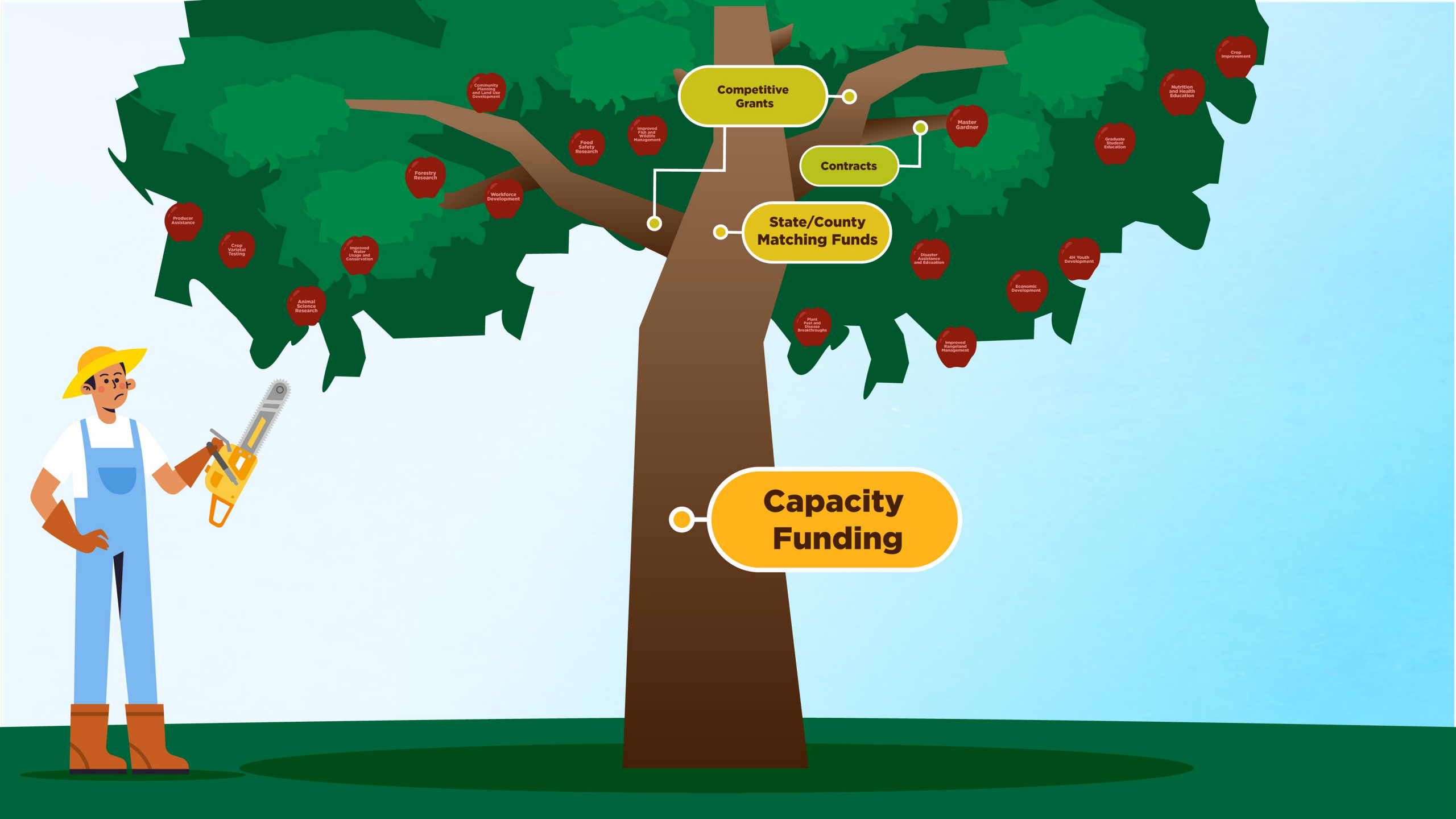
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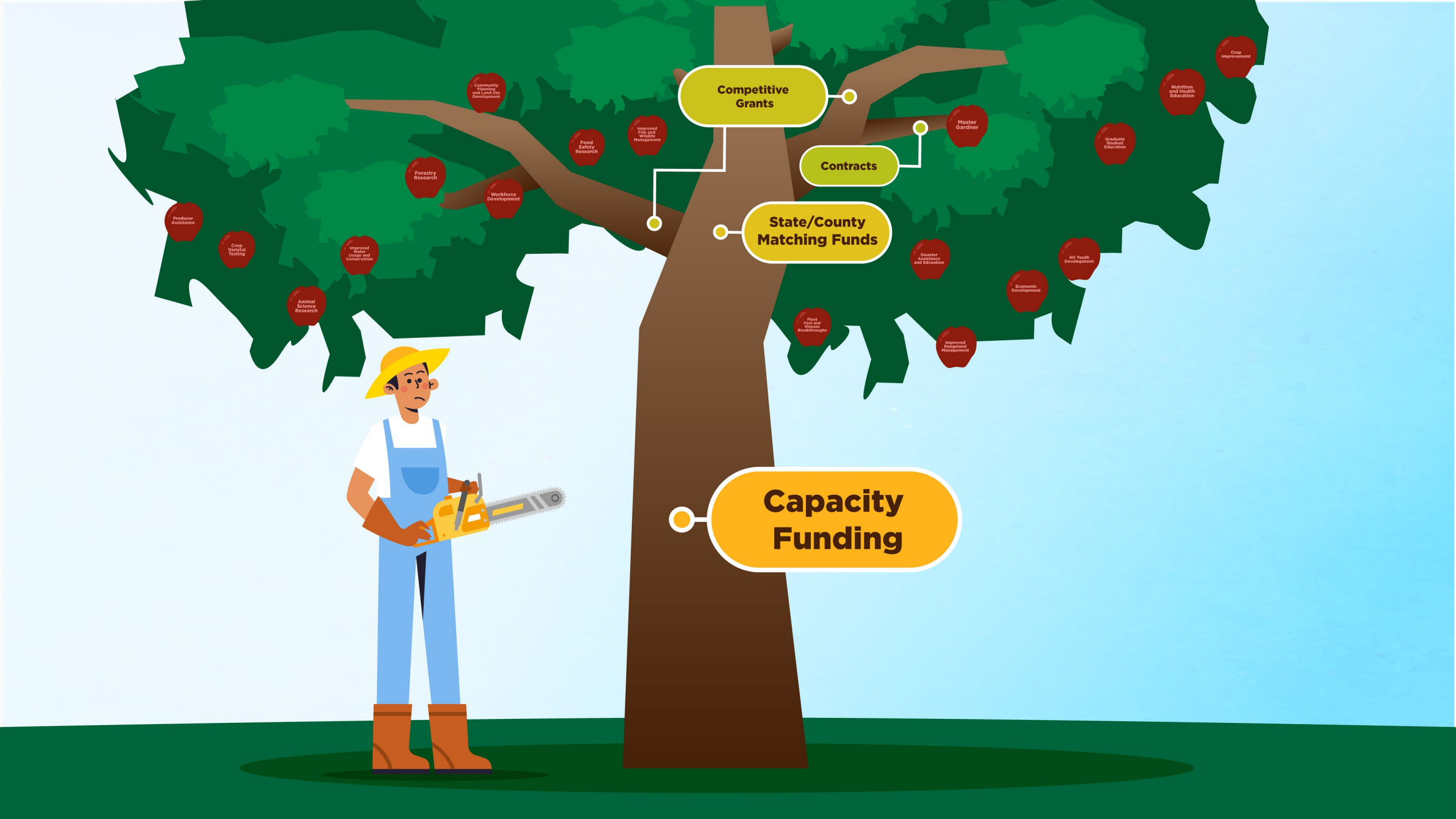
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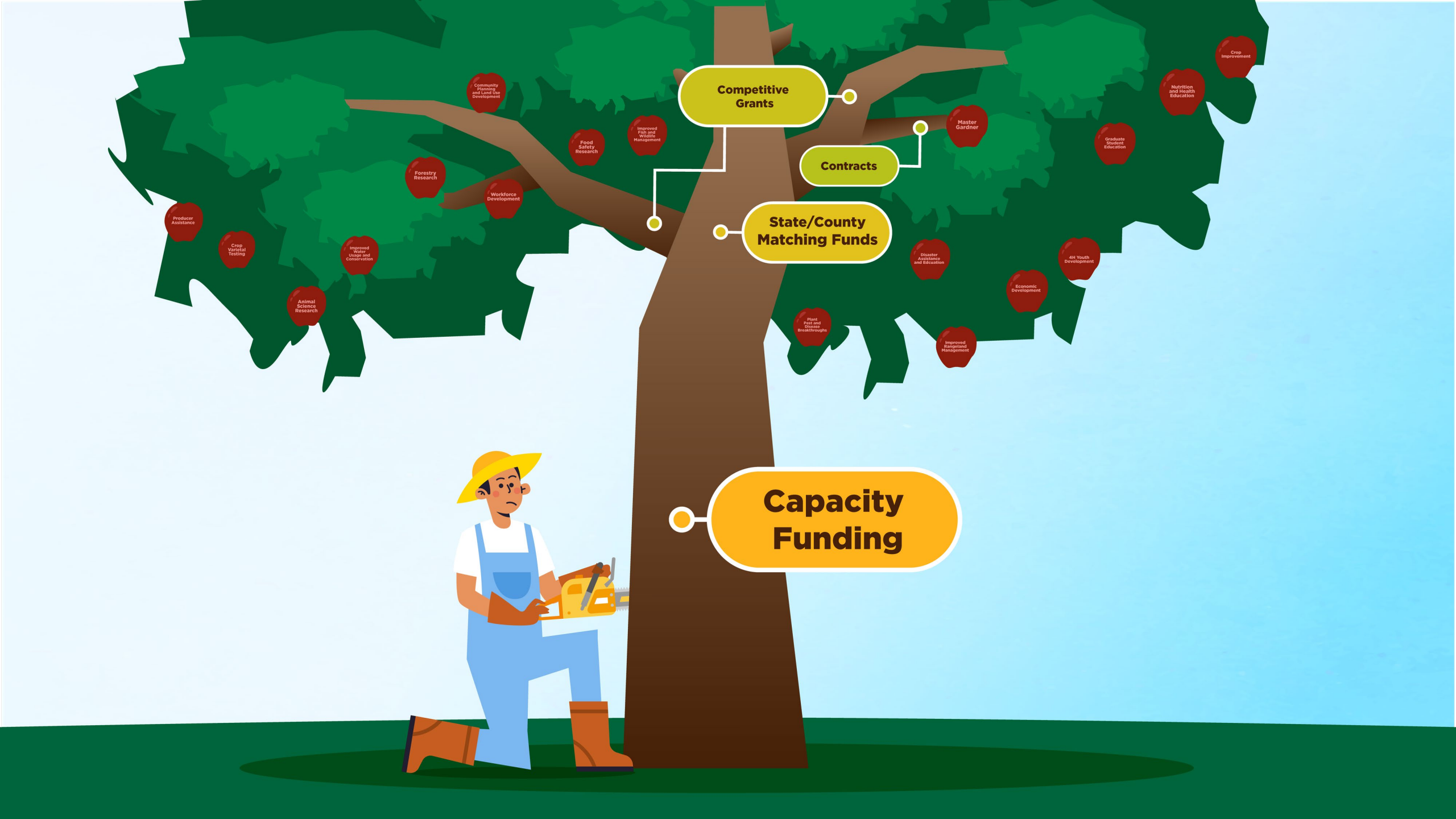
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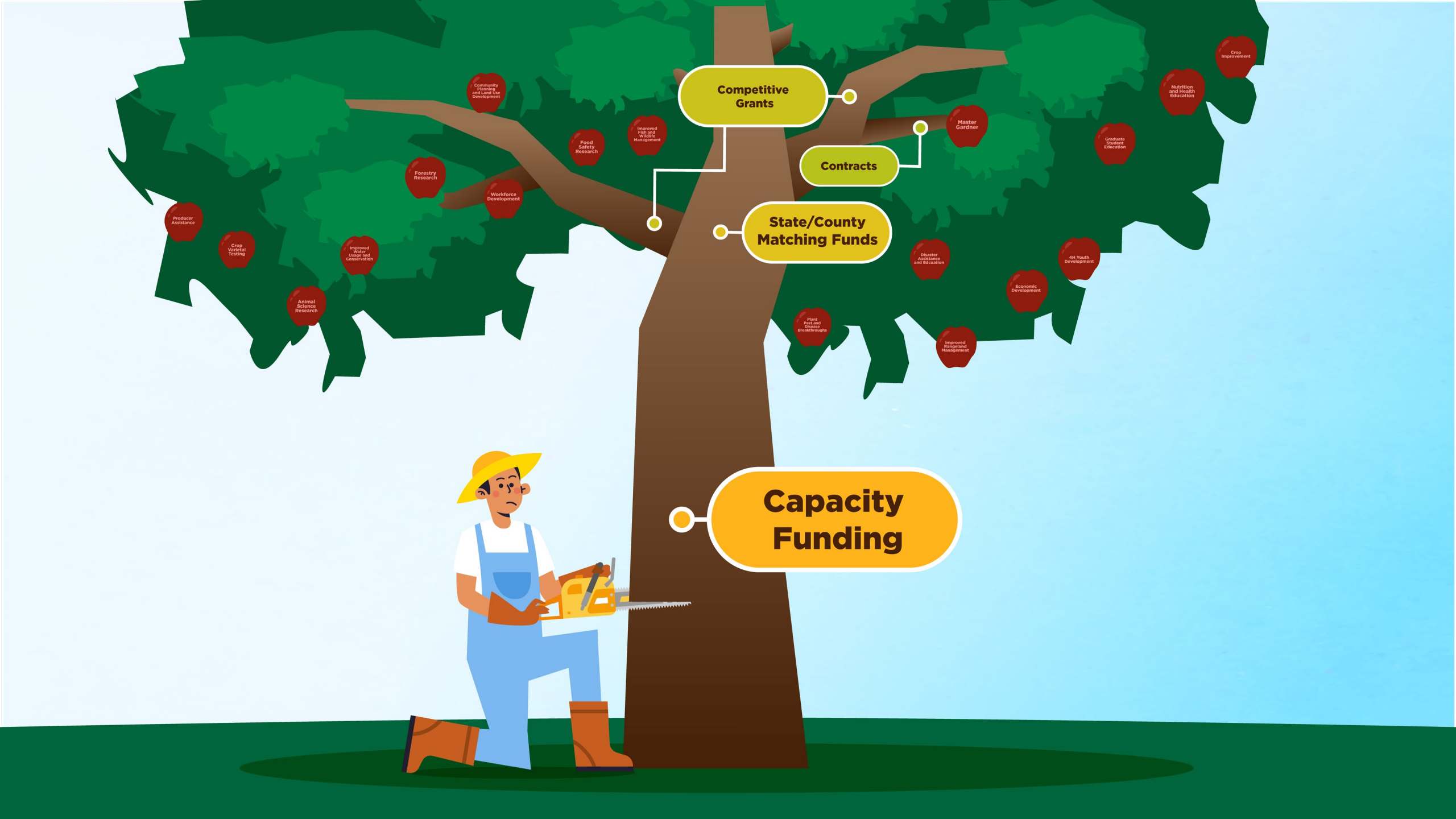
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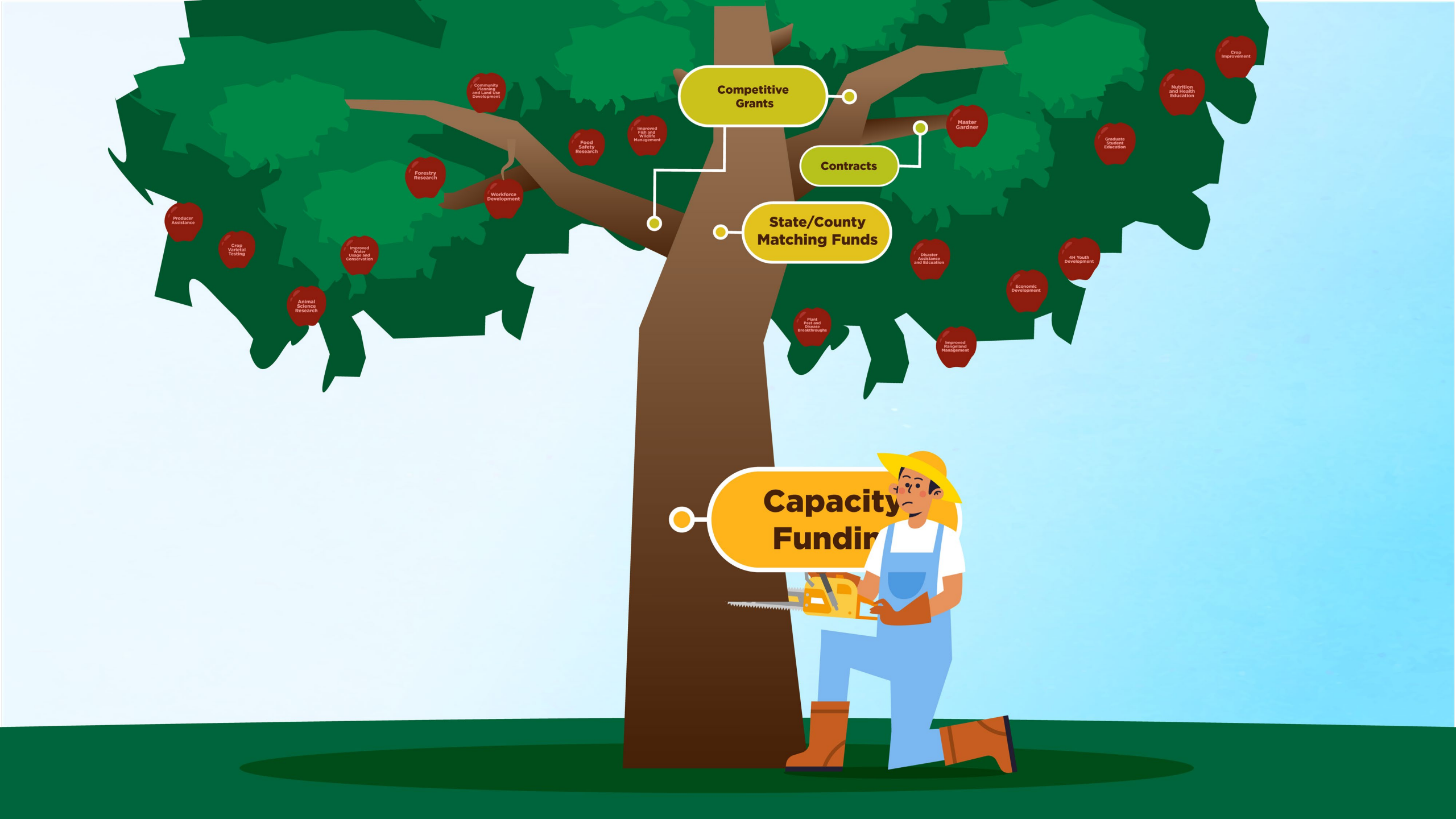
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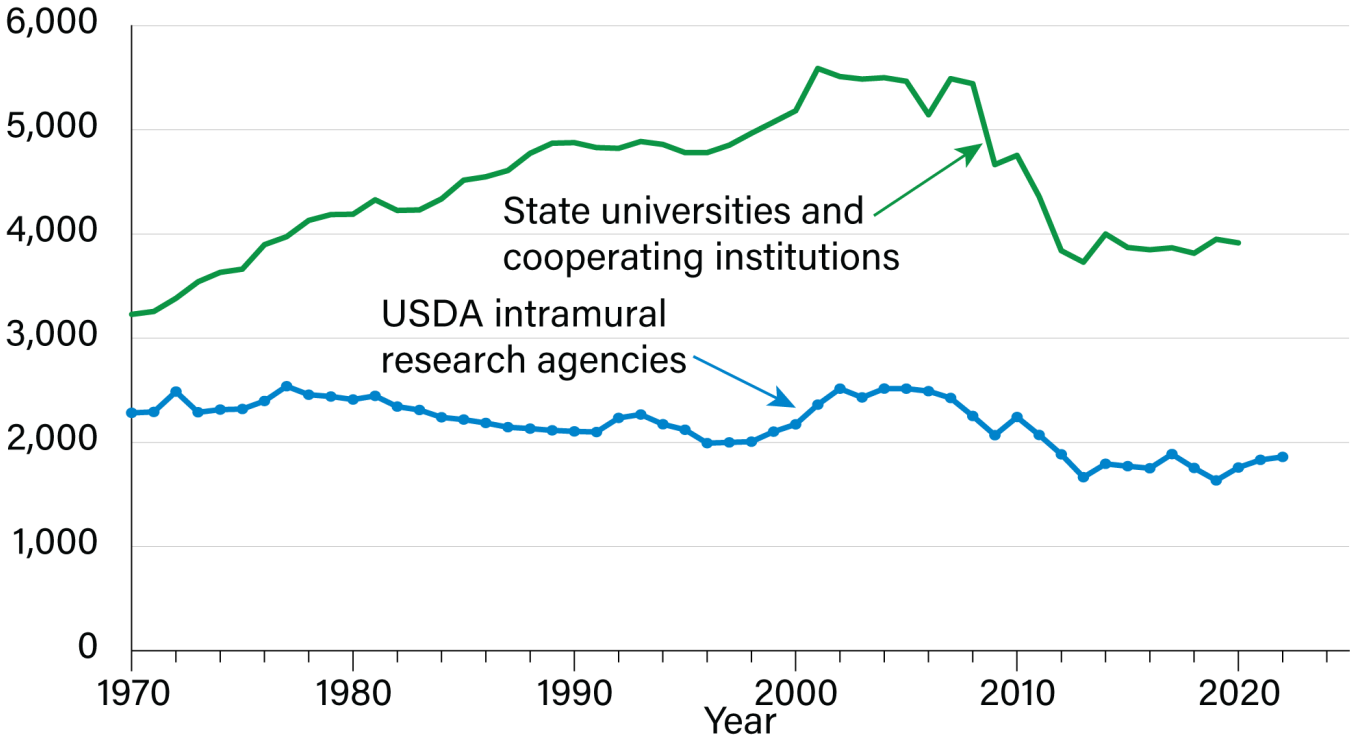
Critical Federal R&D is Falling

Public agricultural and food research and development expenditures by USDA intramural research agencies and State universities and cooperating institutions

Million U.S. dollars (in 2022 constant dollars)

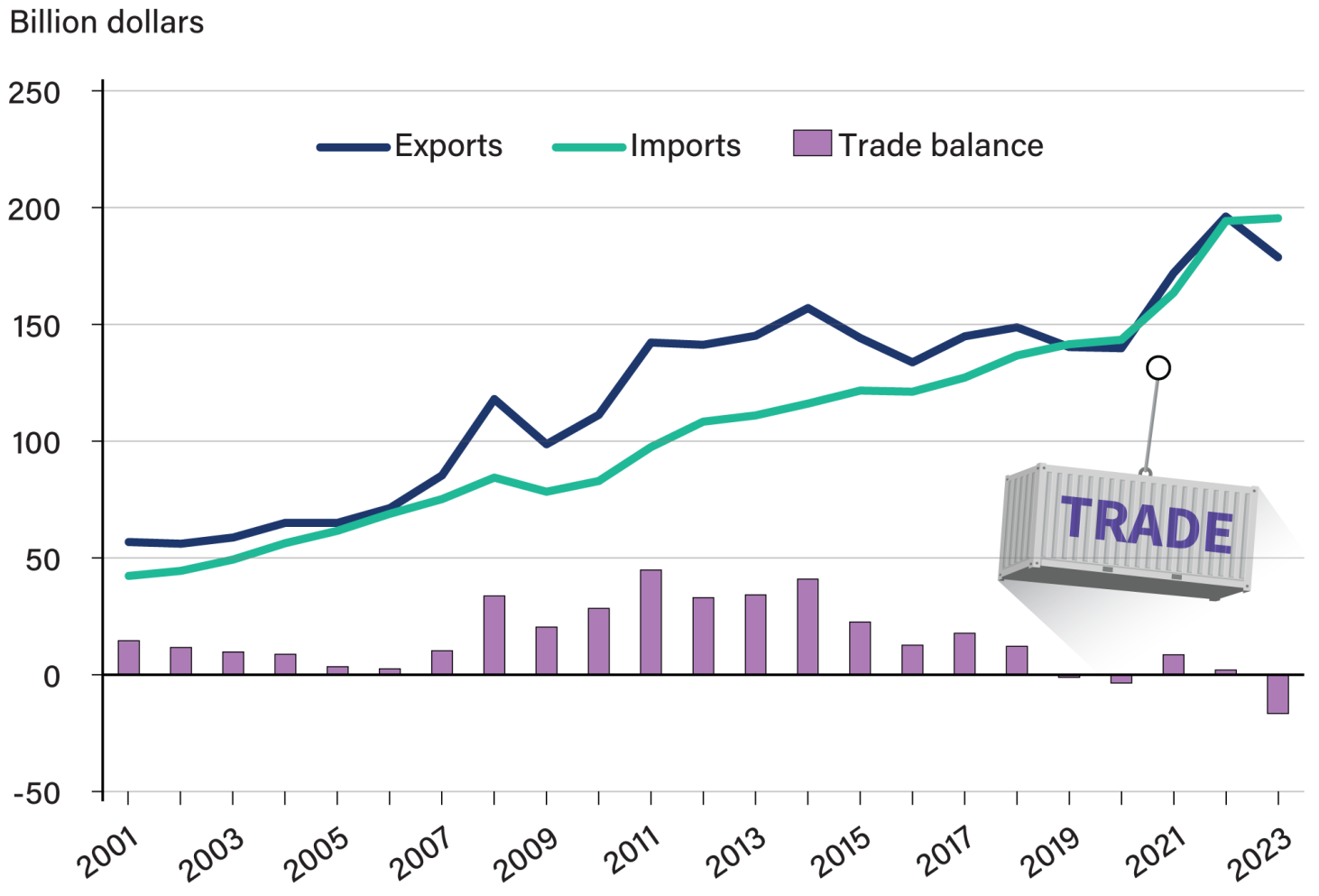


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service.

The US Now Imports More Food than It Exports

U.S. agricultural trade, fiscal years 2001–23

USDA Economic Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Note: Values are not adjusted for inflation. The trade balance is equal to the value of exports minus the value of imports. When the balance is negative, imports exceed exports.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

CHARTS of NOTE

Self-Sufficiency In Food Production

- 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

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

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:
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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

Phase I Capacity Task Force Members

1. Dennis Becker, University of Idaho
2. Rich Bonanno, North Carolina State University
3. Bev Durgan, University of Minnesota*
4. Wendy Fink, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
5. Stephan Goetz, Pennsylvania State University and The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
6. Jason Henderson, Iowa State University
7. Bill Hoffman, ECOP, National Cooperative Extension
8. Moses T. Kairo, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore
9. Bridget Krieger, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC
10. Steve Lommel, North Carolina State University
11. Ray McKinnie, North Carolina A&T University
12. Andrea Putman, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
13. Stacey Stearns, University of Connecticut
14. Robin Shepard, North Central Cooperative Extension Association
15. Doug Steele, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
16. George Smith, Michigan State University*
17. Elizabeth Stulberg, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC
18. Tom Thompson, Virginia Tech
19. Jeanette Thurston, agInnovation North Central
20. Malcolm Warbrick, Pennsylvania State University

*Co-Chairs

Key Takeaways

1. Cuts to capacity funding endanger US National Security.
2. Capacity funds increase research competitiveness and Extension's reach.
3. Capacity funding supports programs that drive workforce and community development.
4. Federal capacity funds are the foundation of the land-grant university research and Extension.

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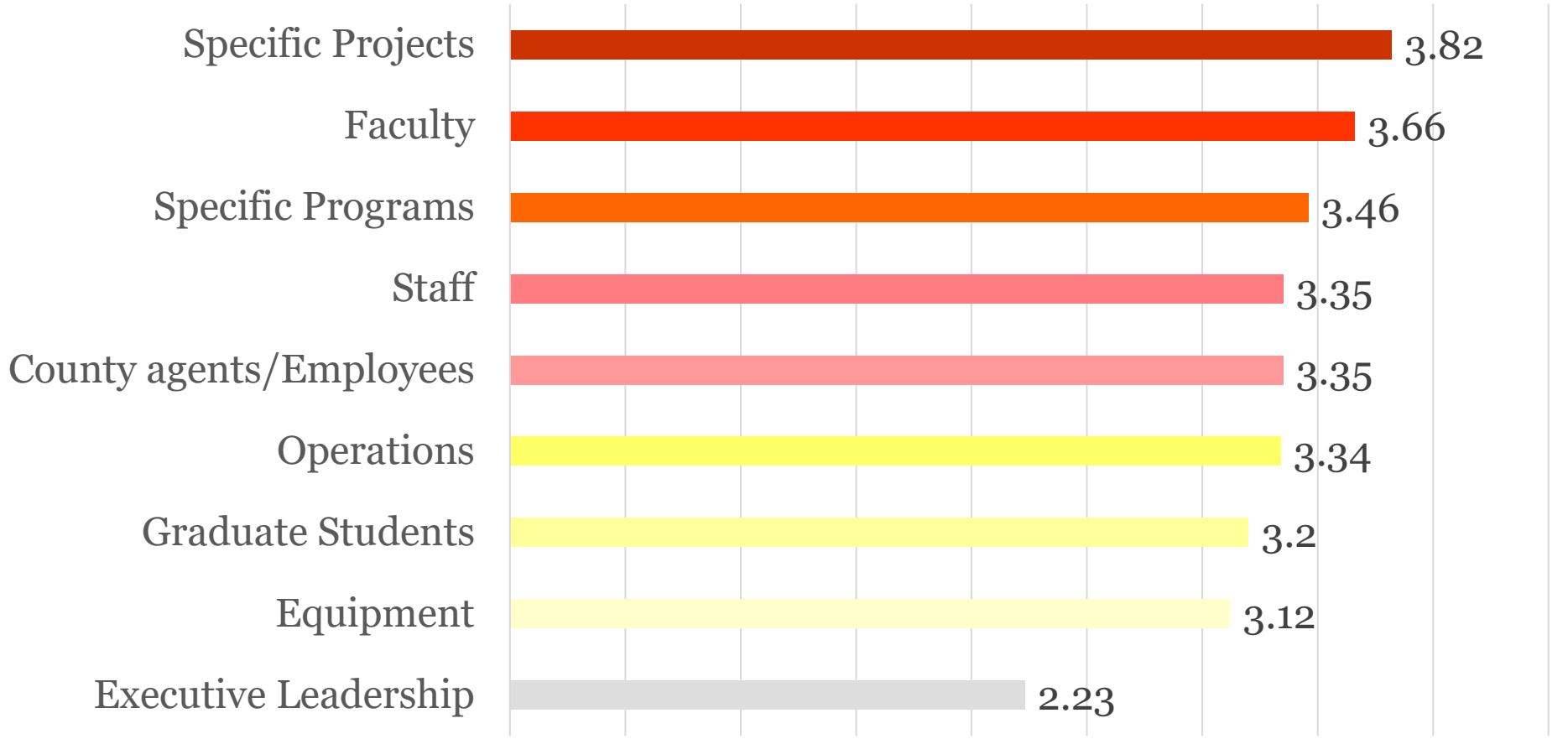
Key Takeaway #1: Cuts to Capacity Funding Endanger US National Security

Most Vulnerable to Cuts in Capacity Funds



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

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

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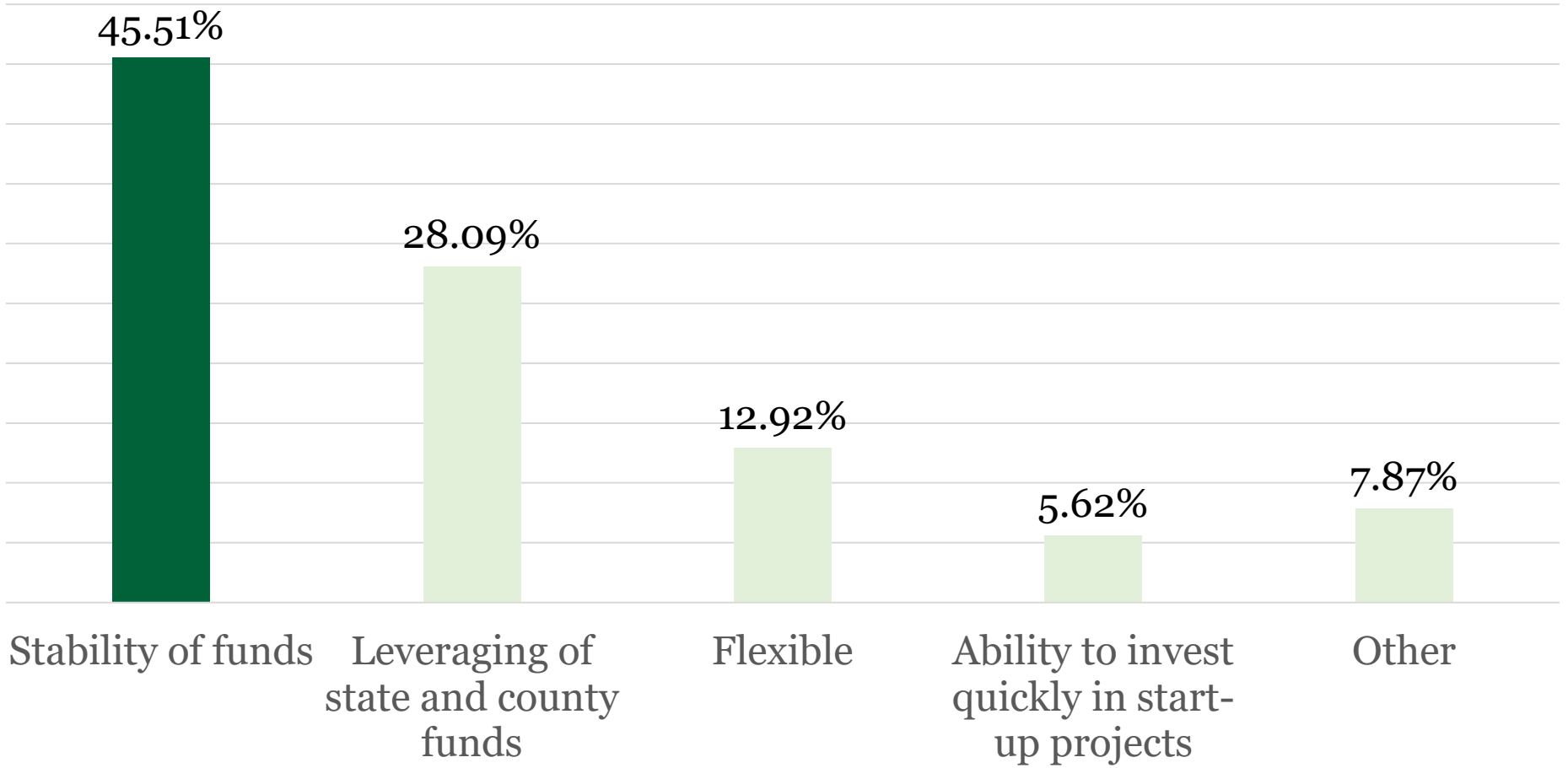

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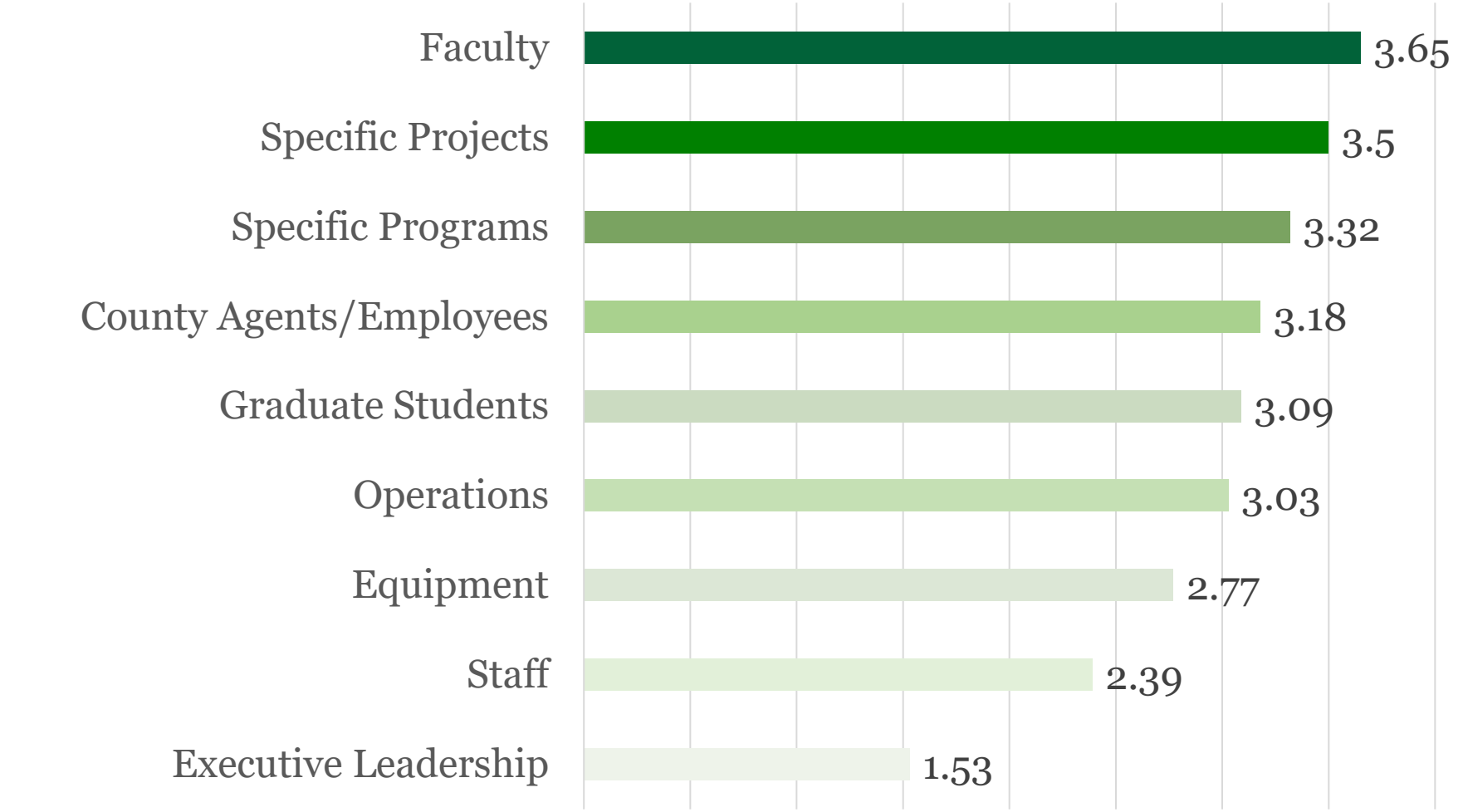
Key Takeaway #3 - Capacity Funding Supports Programs that Drive Workforce and Community Development

What Would Be Expanded If Capacity Funds Increased?



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

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

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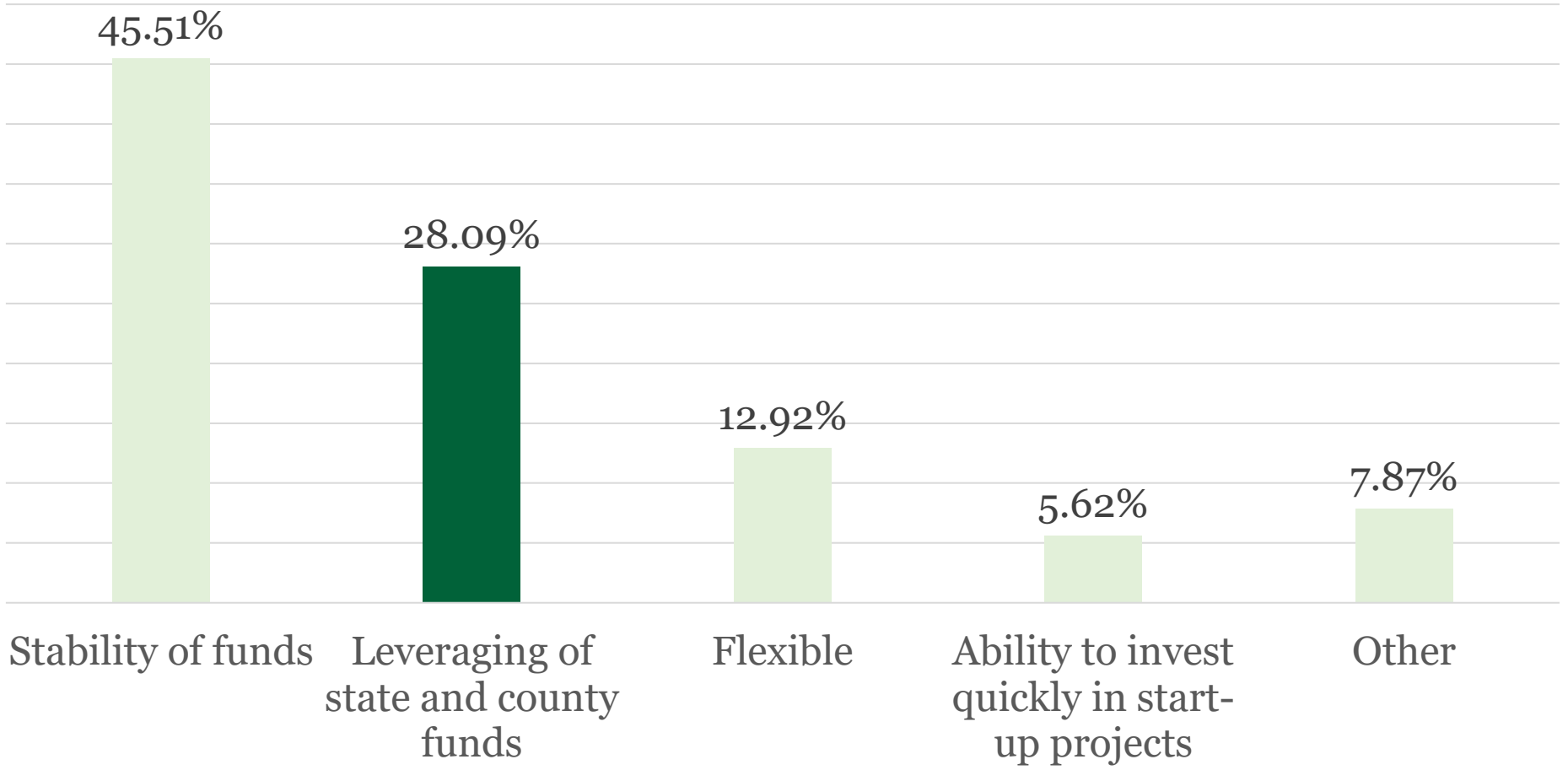

What Can You Do to Help with This Effort?

- 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
- Coalition partners

An Internal-Looking Example of Loss

- 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

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Thank you

Questions?