

Rainwater Harvesting Living Laboratory - Progress Report

Email

mosesthompson@arizona.edu

Project Manager Name

Moses Thompson

Requested Metrics

Spring 2025 Metrics:

- 4 CSF UA fellows completed 20+ hours of sustainability training and service
- 56 UA School Garden Workshop Interns participated in 3, 1.5 hour hands-on sustainability training
- 56 UA School Garden Workshop interns who received training provided 3600 hours of K-12 school garden enrichment across the Tucson metro
- Full-scale Sprouts House construction began April 2025 with a target completion date on the renovation of the houses set for September 10, 2025.

Project Accomplishments

Spring Semester 2025, three new CSF fellows were recruited, onboarded and trained. One CSF fellow from Fall 2024 continued with the project, for a total of four, current, active fellows. The fourth fellow emerged organically, as a student who consistently worked to support the project outside of the fellowship, and the student's stipend was taken out of the supply line in the budget. The four CSF fellows have completed over 20 hours of training and service, supporting rainwater harvesting projects across the Tucson Unified School District. CSF fellows also supported 3 workshops for 56 students in the School Garden Workshop course.

Full-scale construction on the house renovations began April 2025, with a target completion date set for September 10, 2025. Upon completion, work will start on sustainability infrastructure including active and passive rainwater harvesting, gardens, greenhouse, and chicken coop.

Next Steps

Fundraising for the project continues as we work to close the funding gap caused by increased construction costs do to tariffs and market instability. Construction on the project will continue

throughout the summer with a project completion date set for September 10, 2025. Weekly meetings are held with the build team including our UA project manager and members of the architectural and construction companies to monitor progress and address challenges in real time.

Upon house renovation completion, rainwater harvesting equipment will be purchased and rainwater capture systems will be installed through workshops with UA School Garden Workshop students and K-12 students at Mansfeld Middle School.

Following project completion, a dedication ceremony for stakeholders will be held. A date has not been set but we are hoping to hold the event in October or November, once winter visitors return and the weather cools down.

Challenges Faced

Challenges for this project seem to be compounding. Chaos in the financial markets driven project costs up, while the financial crisis at the University of Arizona have made the project more difficult to execute. Staffing shortages at UA have made managing finances more difficult. Increased costs in building materials such as steel, concrete, and electronics caused a budget shortfall, and austerity measures at UA halted construction until all funds were raised. Furthermore, instability not only have driven up project costs, it has made fundraising more difficult. There is more competition for philanthropic funds, and there is less funding available. Many philanthropic organizations and individuals are hunkering down to ride out fluctuations in the market.

To address the gap in finance support, we have turned to the College of Social and Behavioral Science for support. Finance officers from the Dean's Office have stepped up to support the project.

To address the halt in construction, we also turned to to College of Social and Behavioral Science for support. Dean's Office leadership met with UA Planning Design and Construction. and convinced them to begin full scale construction despite the funding shortfall. At the same time, School Garden Workshop has doubled it's fundraising efforts and has connected with the Arizona Community Foundation in Maricopa County. School Garden Workshop also continues to write grants to address the shortfall.

Project Support

CSF has been amazing in supporting the roadblocks we have encountered and we are beyond grateful.

Photo Link

Media/Links