



2026

Agency Training: Project Application

May 14, 2026

Agenda

Topic	Presenter
Welcome and Introduction	Jennifer Bligh
Project Application	Jennifer Bligh
Strengthening Your Project Application	Lynn Platteborze
Grant Review	Margaret Wortham
Agency Lessons Learned: The Cibolo Center for Conservation	Brittany Whalen
Wrap up and Q&A	Team

Presentation slides and audio for Agency Training - Part 2 will be posted on the Impact SA Website no later than May 17th.

High Impact Grants

- You are applying for \$100,000 High Impact Grants
- We fund projects in these categories:
 - *New Program*
 - *Expansion of an Existing Program*
 - *Capital Investment or Construction Project*
- 10% of the grant budget (\$10K) will be automatically allocated to Indirect Costs
- Your project must be completed by October 31, 2028

Project Application Criteria in Brief

*See Impact San Antonio website for complete description

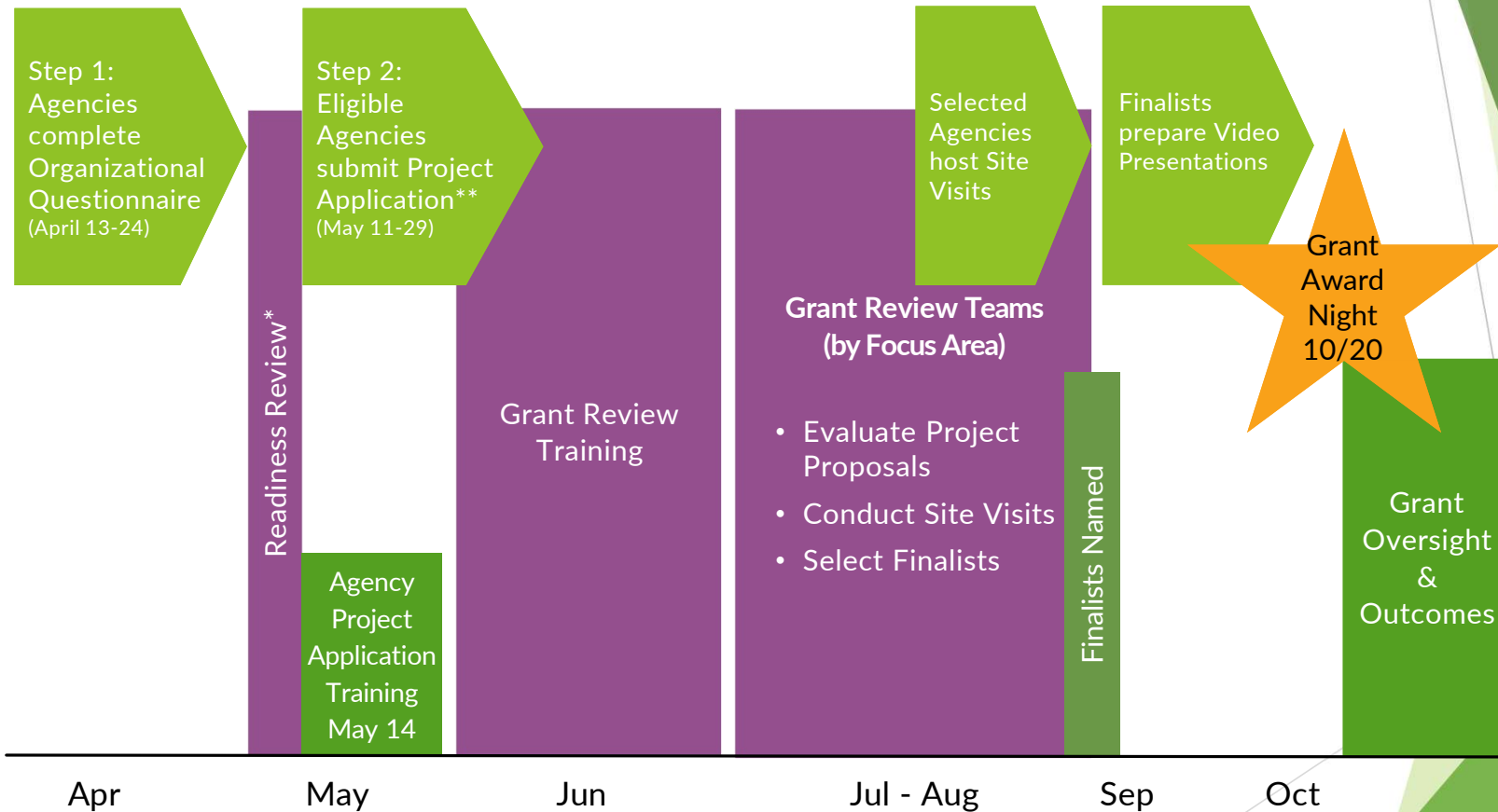
- Project must fit into one of our focus areas and one of our project categories
- Project must primarily serve residents within our 8-county service area
- Project budget requested from Impact SA must be for exactly \$100,000 and completion projected within 2 years
- Project **may not** require belief or participation in religious activities

Project Application Criteria in Brief

*See Impact San Antonio website for complete description

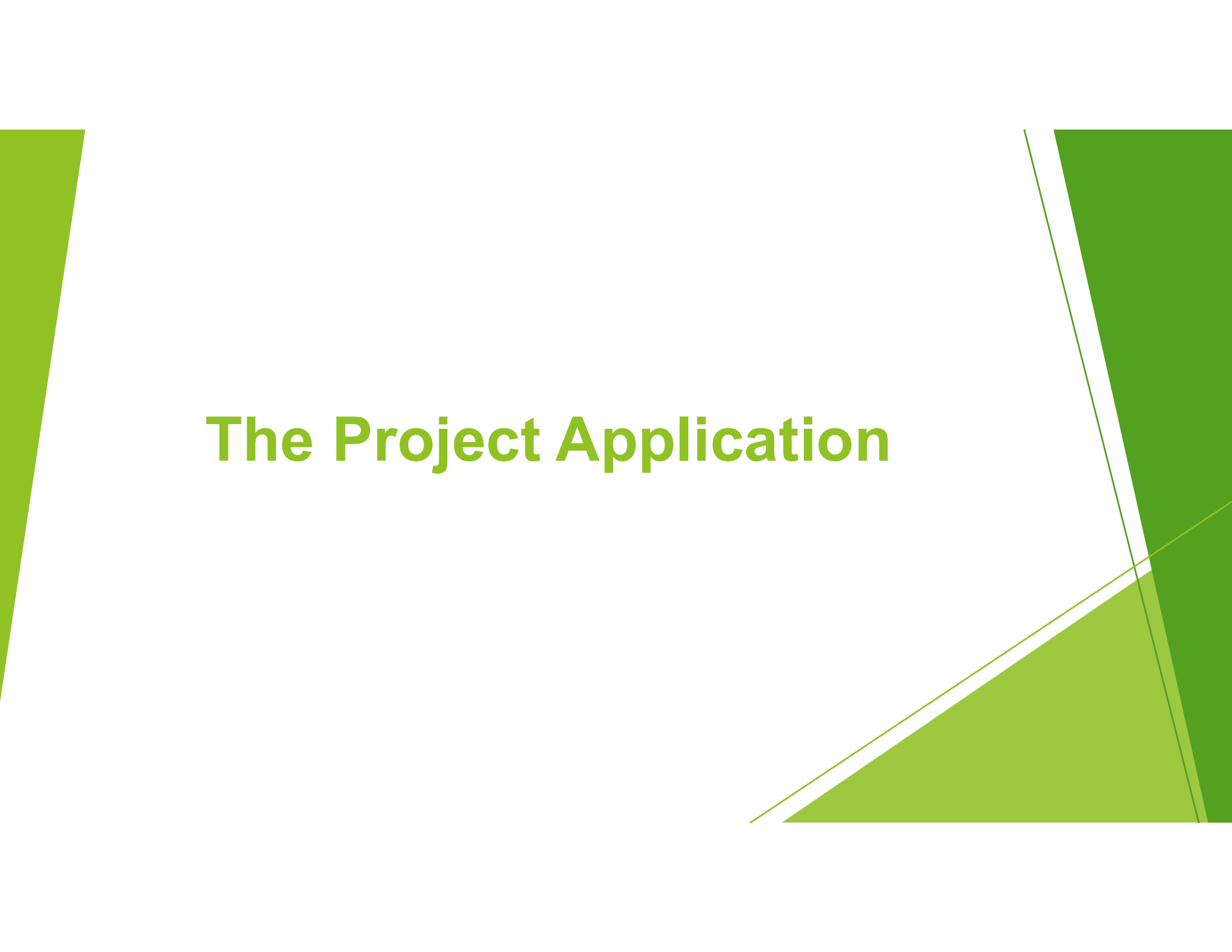
- Project **may not** request funds:
 - for fundraising, marketing, advertising events or sponsorships
 - to repay an existing loan or other financing
 - to support an endowment or provide scholarships
 - that will be redistributed to other organizations or individuals
 - a political purpose
 - for general operating expenses (except for the \$10,000 of the budget that will be automatically allocated for overhead)

2026 Grant Timeline



*Readiness Review includes screening for compliance with Applicant Grant Criteria

**Project Applications will be screened for compliance with Project Grant Criteria prior to releasing to Grant Review

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The Project Application

Project Application

- Project Application focuses on **project details** and **impact**
- **You choose** the Focus Area
- **Answer the Grant Criteria Questions first** to ensure your project meets our criteria
 - **You will not see the substantive questions on the Project Application until you complete all Grant Criteria Questions with answers that indicate your Project will meet our criteria**
- Complete and compliant applications submitted before the deadline will proceed to Grant Review

High Impact Grant Awards

- Grantees have **two years** to complete projects
- Grantees will not be eligible to apply again for **three years** (2030)
- Funds are awarded for the **specific project** detailed in the Project Application (our grants are *not* unrestricted)
- Funds are paid out over the course of the project
 - 10% (\$10,000) indirect cost amount is paid after grant agreement signed
 - Remainder of the \$100,000 grant is paid on a reimbursement basis with required documentation

Project Budget

- Download the Project Budget Worksheet provided for calculations and to ensure that your budget balances
- Indicate whether your overall project budget is **exactly** \$100,000 or **greater than** \$100,000
 - You will not see either worksheet until you answer the question in the form
- Input the budget and explanations directly into the application in Foundant using the tables provided
 - Projects greater than \$100,000 will have columns to address additional funding and expenses

Project Budget

Indirect Costs

- **\$10,000** automatically allocated for indirect costs, AKA “Overhead”
- No explanation is required for indirect costs

Direct Costs

- **\$90,000** of project expenses must be allocated across the following categories:
 - Agency personnel – (employees)
 - Construction costs
 - Consultants and professional fees
 - Program supplies and expenses
 - Vehicles/equipment/ furnishings and related expenses

Project Application Technical Review

Result	Move to Grant Review?
Project does not meet Grant Project Criteria and/or Project Budget does not balance	No
Project meets Grant Project Criteria and there are no issues with Project Budget	Yes

By June 8, agencies will receive an email notification as to whether application is moving on to Grant Review.

The background features abstract green geometric shapes. On the left, a solid green trapezoid points towards the center. On the right, a complex arrangement of overlapping translucent green triangles and polygons creates a layered, dynamic effect. The central text is positioned between these two main graphic elements.

Keys to an Effective Project Application

High Impact Grants Defined

- ▶ Address a **critical need** in one or more of the five focus areas
- ▶ Improve the **quality of life** for people in our Service Area*
- ▶ Benefit either a **large population**, or a **smaller population in a major way**
- ▶ Result in an **innovative approach** to address a critical problem or **expand** on an already **existing** successful approach
- ▶ Result in **compelling** and **measurable** outcomes

**Service Area is Bexar, Atascosa, Bandera, Comal, Guadalupe, Kendall, Medina and Wilson Counties*

General Tips

- Answer questions **directly** without using **jargon**
- Clearly state the **critical problem or need** being addressed
- Be **specific** about how the funds will be used to **expand or improve your services**
- Explain your project's **impact** on people served in our community
- Detail the intended **outcomes** and **evaluation plan** of your project in **SMART** terms

Choosing a Focus Area

- Choice of focus area should make sense to the team reviewing the project application
- The primary mission of the agency and project focus area may be different
- Be sure the project itself, the need the project addresses and the outcomes all make sense in that focus area



ARTS &
CULTURE



EDUCATION



ENVIRONMENT/
RECREATION/
PRESERVATION



FAMILY



HEALTH &
WELLNESS

Nature of Project

- Decide which category best describes the nature of your project:
 - New Program
 - Expansion of an Existing Program
 - Capital Investment or Construction Project
- Application questions will be tailored based on the type of project you select



New Program

- Is this New Program innovative and intriguing?
- How does it address a critical unmet need for your clients or the community at large?
- Why is your agency best positioned to deliver on this program?
- What support or evidence can you provide that your New Program will be successful?



Expand Existing Program

- How can you demonstrate the success of your existing program?
- How, specifically, will you use funds to expand this program?
- What support or evidence can you provide that your Expanded Program will be successful?
- How can you ensure that you don't overextend yourself?
- What challenges do you anticipate with this expansion?
How will you address these?



Capital Investment or Construction Project

- How will the Capital Project enhance your Agency's ability to provide services to clients?
- How will this Capital Project . . .
 - Enhance delivery of critical services?
 - OR
 - Negatively impact clients if it is not funded?
- What support or evidence can you provide that you can successfully implement this Capital Project?
- If this Capital Project is part of a larger initiative, would you be able to complete it even if the bigger project is delayed?

Project Budget Narrative

- Use the project budget narrative to help tell your story
- If your overall project exceeds \$100,000, show how Impact SA's grant will fund a critical or core piece of a larger project
- Be sure to clearly describe how the overall project will be funded. Explain what funding is already in place and the plan to secure any remaining funding



Project Outcomes and Evaluation

- Have clear, strong outcomes and an evaluation plan in the SMART framework



Outcomes and Evaluation- Continued

Weaker Response	Stronger Response
Will be able to serve more clients due to additional facilities	Will serve 1000, or 30% more clients seeking job training by 2028 measured by program completions
Children in program will demonstrate improved school readiness	70% of clients will demonstrate school readiness as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
New kitchen project will be complete on time and on budget by December 2027	Completion of new kitchen will enable 200 more meals to be served every day to seniors. Clients report 30% less loneliness as a results of coming to center for meals

Grant Review



Grant Review Teams

- Five Teams – one per focus area
 - 10 - 15 members each
- Responsibilities:
 - Follow the Grant Review process
 - Fairly and thoroughly evaluate applications
 - Participate fully in discussions and voting
 - Maintain confidentiality of process and applicant information; disclose potential conflicts
 - **Select best possible finalists** to present projects for member vote

Four Step Process

1. Initial Review
2. Deep Dive
3. Site Visits
4. Finalist Selection



Tips for a Successful Site Visit

- Make the most of this opportunity to bring your project to life for the Grant Review Team
- Focus on the Project, not your overall operations
- Why your project is needed, and how it will benefit the community
- Choose presenters who can best make the case for your project in a concise, credible and compelling way – staff, board members or clients
- Anticipate and be prepared to answer questions



Conflict of Interest and Disclosure

- Safeguarding your Agency information is of paramount importance to us
- Maintaining confidentiality is emphasized in training and throughout the review process
- Members involved in reviewing applications must first sign a Confidentiality Agreement



Agencies Lessons Learned

Brittany Whalen

The Cibolo Center for Conservation

Finalists and Grant Awards

- Finalists will be notified in late August and invited to an in-person training on September 2nd at 10am
- Finalists present their projects to the Impact SA membership through a short video and project summary (taken directly from the application)
- Members vote online in advance of Grant Award Night to decide High Impact Grants (\$100,000)
- Grant recipients announced during Grant Award Night event

2026 Key Dates

Date	Action
Monday, May 11th 8AM	Project Application (Step 2) submission window opens
Monday, May 17th	Agency Training – Part 2 Webinar Posted to Impact SA website
Friday, May 29th 2PM	Deadline to submit Project Application
July – August	Grant Review Process – including Site Visits
Late August	2026 Finalists announced
Wednesday, Sept 2nd 10 AM	Finalists Training Session
Tuesday, Oct 20th	GRANT AWARD NIGHT

Contact Information

If you have questions, email:
grantinfo@impactsanantonio.org

We have no paid staff and are all volunteers.

**We will attempt to respond to inquiries within
3-4 business days outside the submission windows,
and 1-2 business days during the windows.**

*Do not email the general email address on our website
or leave a phone message.*

This will delay your message reaching the Agencies & Applications team.

Q&A Panel

- **Jennifer Bligh** and **Lynn Platteborze**, Co-Chairs
Agencies and Applications
- **Margaret Wortham**, Co-Chair Grant Review
- **Claudia Hura**, Co-Chair Grant Oversight and
Outcomes
- **Brittany Whalen**, Chief Development Officer, The
Cibolo Center for Conservation
- **Michelle Scherer**, Moderator



THANK YOU!