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# **CAPSTONE STUDENT QUICK FACTS**

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Masters of the Environment  
University of Colorado **Boulder**

**2027**

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## WHAT IS THE CAPSTONE?

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The Capstone Project is an impact-focused collaborative project that Masters of the Environment (MENV) students complete in partnership with a public, private, or non-profit organization in Colorado and beyond.

**The Capstone Program provides MENV graduate students with real-world, hands-on, application-based experiences in response to Capstone Partners' proposed projects.**

Capstone students work as graduate student-consultants who come into the projects as experts equipped with prior professional experience and knowledge in sustainability. They provide innovative solutions and valuable deliverables to Capstone Partner organizations.

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## CAREER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CAPSTONE PROJECTS

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In addition to work experience, students acquire:

- Professional connections in their desired industry
- Knowledge and skills relevant to their future careers (including technical and interpersonal skills)
- High quality deliverables for their professional portfolio
- Potential for future internships and jobs

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## STUDENT SKILLS & COMPETENCIES GAINED

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Time Management & Organization  
Project Management  
Effective Communication  
Critical Thinking  
Stakeholder Engagement  
Research & Analysis

Public Speaking  
Cross-Functional Collaboration  
Presentation Design  
Problem Solving  
Adaptability & Resilience  
Strategic Planning

Leadership  
Grant Writing  
Industry Expertise  
Technical Writing  
Financial Modeling  
and more!

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## **CAPSTONE COURSE SEQUENCE**

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### **Capstone Innovation Lab 1 (CIL1) Fall Year 1 (1 credit)**

Students learn leadership and collaboration skills, kick start their professional and career development, and are guided to select and apply to a relevant Capstone project by December. Students are assigned to projects based on their preferences.

### **Capstone Innovation Lab 2 (CIL2) Spring Year 1 (2 credits)**

In teams, students launch Capstones and collaborate with partners to conduct background research and create a work plan. Students also take technical skill workshops including data collection, analysis, and visualization.

### **Capstone Summer Session Summer Year 1 (5 credits)**

Each student contributes 300 hours towards successful execution of their Capstone Project.

### **Capstone Leadership Lab (CIL3) Fall Year 2 (1 credit)**

Teams finalize their projects, communicate outcomes to diverse audiences and to their partner organization, and celebrate their successes at a Symposium!

After Capstone, students take advantage of our Career and Professional Development Team and prepare to apply for jobs in Spring!

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## **CAPSTONE FACULTY ADVISOR**

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Each Capstone Project team is assigned a Capstone Faculty Advisor who is available to:

- Resolve team conflict
- Provide technical expertise
- Identify additional resources

Capstone Faculty Advisors are responsible for ensuring that deliverables meet a professional standard and graduate rigor. Most teams meet with their advisors weekly or every other week.

Capstone Faculty Advisors become mentors to Capstone Teams and individual students and support student careers often past the Capstone project.

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## **CAPSTONE PARTNER**

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The relationship between Capstone Partners and Students functions similarly to a client-consultant relationship.

Unlike an internship, you can expect to work collaboratively with your partner and meet at least once a week for the duration of the project.

Capstone Partners often become student mentors and aside from the project, support their career and professional development during and after the Capstone Project.

Many students link their professional success to their Capstone Projects.



**Capstone Partner Showcase**



**Capstone Poster Session**



**Capstone Symposium**

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## **CAPSTONE EVENTS**

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### **Capstone Partner Showcase - November**

Students meet potential Capstone Partners to learn more about projects and identify their own areas of interests prior to Capstone selection.

### **Capstone Design Workshop - March**

Teams present their initial scoping and research to other students in order to receive questions, identify gaps, and brainstorm possible solutions in a peer-to-peer setting.

### **Capstone Poster Session - September**

Student teams present the results of their summer work via conference-style posters.

### **Capstone Symposium - October**

Joined by Capstone Partners, community professionals, and guests, the MENV Community celebrates student work! Teams present on the conclusions of their work to a hybrid audience. In past years, we hosted between 500-700 attendees!

In addition to learning from our students, we invite keynote speakers to our public-facing events.

Past keynote speakers have included Justin Schwartz, CU Boulder Chancellor, Jonathan Asher, Director of the Colorado Governor's Office of Climate Preparedness and Disaster Recovery, and Joe Neguse, U.S. Representative for Colorado's 2nd Congressional District.

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## CAPSTONE STIPEND

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The Capstone Project is professional work experience. Many Capstone Partners recognize the value students bring to their organizations and are able to offer a stipend to their teams.

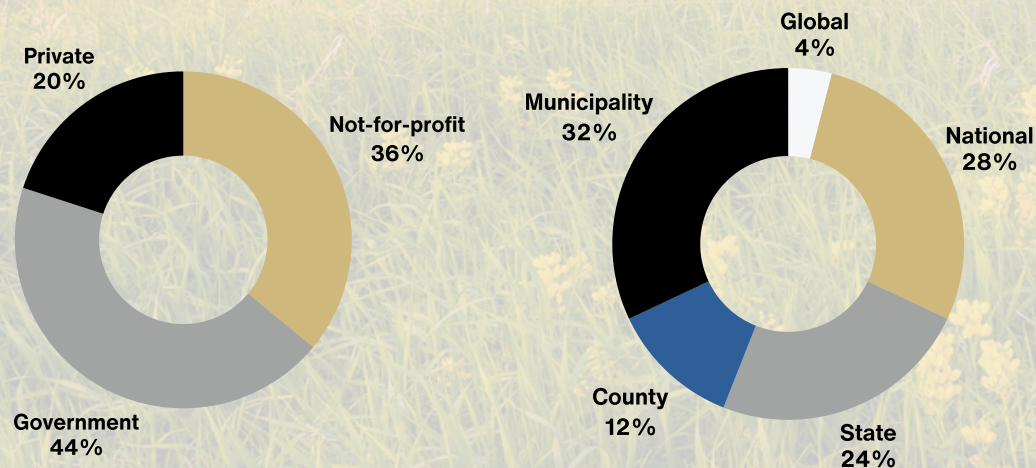
Most teams receive a stipend from their Capstone Partner Organizations. The average project compensation has been ~\$2,500 per student.

In 2024, we launched the MENV Capstone Support Scholarship! This additional funding is available by application to all students who receive no or limited compensation from their Capstone Partners. The amount of Capstone Support Scholarship varies depending on the overall compensation from Partners and availability of funds..

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### 2026 CAPSTONE PARTNERS BY SECTOR AND LOCATION

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The Riverside Natural Foods team (L to R):  
Jonny Maier, Megan Chan, Leah Glidden

## PROJECT SOURCING

Students are not responsible for finding their own Capstone Partner organizations. However, students can submit ideas for potential Partner Organization to Capstone Lead.

Prospective Partner organizations submit their Capstone proposal by September. MENV faculty review all proposals for graduate rigor and professional relevance.

In November, students meet prospective partners at the Capstone Partner Showcase and rank their top five project choices.

In 2026, ALL students were paired with one of their first three choices and 63% of students were paired with their first choice.



Capstone Students presenting at the Mountain Towns 2030 Summit in Breckenridge, CO

## PAST CAPSTONE PROJECTS

To learn more about past projects, review 2025 project briefs [here](#).



Mad Agriculture Capstone Team