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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Invests \$5.2 Million in 17 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Projects?

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WASHINGTON, July 1, 2024 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$5.2 million in 17 new grants that support urban agriculture and innovative production. Grant recipients, The Ecology School in Maine, will increase food production and access in economically distressed communities, provide job training and education, and allow partners to develop business plans and zoning proposals. These grants build on \$46.8 million invested in 186 projects since 2020 and are part of USDA’s broad support for urban agriculture through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP).? ?

“This grant program has continued to grow in popularity. We received over 620 applications this year, double from last year’s total and we are excited to support urban agriculture and innovative producers and improve access to healthy and nutritious food for local communities with this round of funding.” said Matt Walker, State Conservationist for USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Maine. “These projects support communities by growing fresh, healthy food, providing jobs and increasing access to healthy food in areas where grocery stores are scarce.”?? ?

Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants?

The Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) competitive grants program supports a wide range of activities through grants that include planning and implementation activities. Planning activities initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs, while implementation activities accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve farmers and communities.

Selected projects include The ARC Project in Maine. It will support innovative food production, related food systems education, agricultural workforce training, and fresh food distribution. A holistic and innovative approach to improving critical elements of the local food system to improve long-term resilience while meeting immediate fresh food needs in Saco, ME.

In total, 17 projects were funded in 13 states. For a complete list of grant recipients and project summaries, visit usda.gov/urban.

More Information ?????? ?

OUAIP was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by NRCS and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture and innovative production. Other efforts include:????????????

- Administering the [People's Garden Initiative](#), which celebrates collaborative gardens across the country and worldwide that benefit their communities by growing fresh, healthy food and supporting resilient, local food systems using sustainable practices and providing greenspace. ?????
- Creating and managing a [Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#) to advise the Secretary on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban agriculture.?? ????
- Providing [cooperative agreements](#) that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans.???Several of these CFWR projects have partnered with UAIP recipient projects, supplying compost to urban farms.? [Applications currently being accepted until Sept. 4, 2024.](#)
- Investing in [risk management education](#) to broaden the reach of crop insurance among urban and innovative producers.????
- Organizing [27?FSA urban county committees](#) to make important decisions about how FSA farm programs are administered locally. Urban farmers who participate in USDA programs in the areas selected are encouraged to participate by nominating and voting for county committee members.?????
- Partnering with the [Vermont Law and Graduate School Center for Agriculture and Food Systems](#) to develop resources that help growers understand and work through local policies.??????

Learn more at usda.gov/urban. For additional resources available to producers, download the [Urban Agriculture at a Glance brochure](#) or visit farmers.gov/urban.???? ????

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities throughout America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit? usda.gov?

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