
USDA Adds New Urban County Committees in Detroit and Grand Rapids to Support Urban Agriculture

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GRAND RAPIDS, June 3, 2022 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced six additional locations for Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees focused exclusively on urban agriculture, including new urban county committee (UCOC) locations in Metropolitan Detroit and Metropolitan Grand Rapids. Organized in collaboration with Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP), within USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), other new committees in Chicago, Los Angeles, Brooklyn, and Oakland join 11 previously announced urban county committees.

The six new locations were selected based on a consideration of data that included opportunity for economic growth, diversity, proximity to tribal nations, as well as the number of farm-to-table projects, urban farms, community and residential gardens, and green infrastructure projects within metropolitan and suburban areas. NRCS Chief Terry Cosby joined Senator Debbie Stabenow at Michigan State University’s Kent County Extension Office to announce the new urban county committees and discuss USDA’s efforts to support urban agriculture and food system transformation.

“Urban county committees promote equity by giving urban producers a voice in creating and implementing policy and developing and designing programs specific to urban producers,” FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux said. “These new urban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban agriculture and address areas such as food and program access, community engagement and food security.”

“We look forward to learning how we can better serve urban agricultural producers in these cities from the FSA urban county committees. Urban agriculture will play an important role in USDA efforts to strengthen local food systems, increase access to safe and nutritional food, and address climate change,” said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby.

“Supporting agriculture in our urban communities helps grow our economy and provides food to people,” said Senator Debbie Stabenow. “I’m proud that Michigan has been a pioneer in this effort.

Urban farmers provide fresh and healthy food to children and families while creating jobs and revitalizing our neighborhoods.”

Like traditional county committee members, urban committee members make important decisions about how FSA programs are administered locally. Each urban and suburban county committee will be composed of three elected members who will serve a term of up to three years. Urban farmers who participate in USDA programs in the areas selected are encouraged to participate by nominating and voting for themselves or others. Urban producers living outside an area represented by a UCOC will also have access to USDA services.

The Metropolitan Detroit Urban County Committee will represent urban producers in Adrian, Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Detroit, Farmington Hills, Flint, Livonia, Monroe, and Warren. This UCOC’s geographic scope includes components of Lapeer, St. Clair, Genesee, Oakland, Livingston, Macomb, Wayne, Washtenaw, Monroe, and Lenawee counties.

The Metropolitan Grand Rapids Urban County Committee will represent urban producers in Grand Rapids, Holland, Kentwood, and Muskegon. This UCOC’s geographic scope includes components of Mecosta, Montcalm, Ionia, Kent, Allegan, Ottawa, and Muskegon counties.

USDA also announced \$43.1 million for grants and cooperative agreements, including \$10.2 million in new cooperative agreements to expand compost and food waste reduction efforts and \$14.2 million in new grants to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects. Additionally, \$18.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were awarded to 75 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production grant applicants from 2021.

USDA and Urban Agriculture

Grants and cooperative agreements to support urban production are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture. Other efforts include \$260,000 for risk management education from USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) and technical and financial assistance through conservation programs offered by USDA’s NRCS.

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by NRCS and works in partnership with FSA and numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. Learn more by visiting farmers.gov/urban or downloading the new [Urban Agriculture at a Glance brochure](#). Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include grants from USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture as well as FSA loans.

These significant investments by USDA's Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production build on the Biden-Harris administration's Food System Transformation framework for USDA to transform the food system to benefit consumers, producers and communities by providing more options, increasing access, and creating new, more, and better markets for small and mid-size producers.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In 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 in rural 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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