

USDA Invests \$9.4 Million in Compost and Food Waste Reduction Projects

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing more than \$9.4 million in 45 cooperative agreements that support innovative, scalable waste management plans to reduce and divert food waste from landfills. The [Compost and Food Waste Reduction](#) (CFWR) cooperative agreements, which are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, are part of USDA’s broad support for urban agriculture through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). The projects will be implemented between 2023 and 2025.

“These Compost and Food Waste Reduction projects play important roles in building resilient, local food systems, including strong food recovery networks and food waste reduction solutions that benefit farmers and communities,” said Terry Cosby, Chief of USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which houses OUAIP. “With an estimated 4% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions attributable to uneaten food, local strategies and tools like these are important climate solutions.”

USDA prioritized projects that anticipate or demonstrate economic benefits, incorporate plans to make compost easily accessible to farmers, including community gardeners, integrate other food waste strategies, including food recovery efforts and collaborate with multiple partners.

Recipients include projects in 27 states and one territory. Some highlights of recipients include:

- **Geneva Compost and Food Waste Diversion, Town of Geneva, Geneva, N.Y.** The project will involve a variety of partners to improve the environmental justice profile of Geneva by diverting food waste and other biodegradables from the waste stream, generating nutrient-rich compost, improving soil quality, reducing reliance on fertilizers, and engaging in food recovery efforts that take “extra” food and get it to community members in need.
- **Composting and Food Waste Reduction Pilot Project, Tucson Unified School District, Tucson, Ariz.** This pilot project will build the infrastructure needed to provide compost to school

and community gardens, improve soil quality, reduce food waste, and demonstrate the economic benefits of including food reclamation education as an integral part of a school garden and nutrition programs for students, their families and the community of Tucson and Pima County, Arizona.

- **Tlingit and Haida Compost Pilot Project, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Juneau, Alaska.** This pilot composting program will operate in conjunction with the Tribe's newly constructed Taay Hít Greenhouse in Juneau that already generates fresh produce for its tribal citizens. The integrated composting and greenhouse program design is supported by Tlingit & Haida's Climate Change Adaptation Plan and Climate Change Action Plan, which identify food security and community greenhouse projects as priorities. Tlingit & Haida first incorporated agricultural science into a greenhouse operation by using the best growing practices to maximize sustainable food production and recently completed its first harvest from the Taay Hít Greenhouse, serving community elders a curry soup featuring bok choy, kale and cilantro.
- **Miami-Dade County 2022 CFWR Pilot Project, Miami-Dade County, Miami, Fla.** This project will implement a two-year pilot project to jump start a circular economy for food waste that aims to accelerate and scale the services of three small locally owned composting companies. The project will expand existing service capacity by 50% over one year, obtain a renewable 18-month pilot project permit, and develop a commercially viable compost product that can be used by Miami-Dade County's Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Department to create a circular economy for food waste and compost that will reduce landfill food waste and replace chemical fertilizer.

For a complete list of cooperative agreement recipients and project summaries, visit usda.gov/urban. These new agreements build on USDA's \$3 million investment in 37 agreements in 2020 and 2021.

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. The CFWR cooperative agreements are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture. Other efforts include:

- 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. [The next meeting is Feb. 23, 2023.](#)

- Reopening the [People's Garden Initiative](#). People's Gardens across the country grow fresh, healthy food and support resilient, local food systems; teach people how to garden using sustainable practices; and nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife and greenspace for neighbors.
- [Grants](#) that target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, and policy development related to zoning and other urban production needs. In late January, USDA [announced the availability of \\$7.5 million](#) for grants.
- Providing technical and financial assistance through conservation programs offered by USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS).
- Organizing 17 FSA urban county committees.

Today's announcement supports the Biden-Harris Administration's broader work to strengthen critical supply chains as directed by [Executive Order 14017 America's Supply Chains](#).

Learn more at usda.gov/urban. For additional resources available to producers, download our [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 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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