

USDA Invests \$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

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WASHINGTON, July 18, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$7.4 million in 25 selected grants that support urban agriculture and innovative production. Selected grant recipients, including community gardens and nonprofit farms, 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 \$40 million in projects funded since 2020 and are part of USDA’s broad support for urban agriculture through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). Funding limits only allowed USDA to select the top scoring 10% of the applications reviewed. This year, USDA received more than 300 applications, which is twice last year’s applications.

“This competitive grant program has already had tremendous impacts for communities across the country, and we look forward to partnering with producers and local organizations to support agriculture in the urban landscape while also helps local communities to provide fresh, healthy food,” said Robert Bonnie, USDA’s Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. “The growing popularity of this grant program shows the importance of our broad support for urban agriculture, local and regional food systems and underserved communities.”

Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants

The Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) competitive grants program supports a wide range of activities through two types of grants, planning projects and implementation projects. Today’s announcement include 25 selected planning and implementation projects.

Planning projects initiate or expand efforts of urban and suburban farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders to target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, urban forestry, and policies related to zoning and other urban production needs. Planning projects are expected to provide an early-stage investment in new and start up projects with surveys, assessments, design and planning, business plan creation, feasibility studies, municipal policy and zoning best practices.

Examples of planning projects include:

- Austin Youth and Community Farm Inc. in Texas, which will increase food equity in Travis County by using regenerative farming and natural resource conservation practices to double food production on two urban farms.
- Living Well Kent in Washington, which will transform the food production system to improve food

security and advance equity among historically marginalized BIPOC, immigrant and refugee producers and consumers.

Implementation projects accelerate urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers and improve local food access. They may support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, education and urban farming policy implementation. Implementation projects are expected to expand the work on existing urban agriculture projects with on-the-job training, mentoring, business development assistance, school training in agricultural careers, and by expanding current operations of community gardens and nonprofit farms.

Examples of implementation projects include:

- Athens Land Trust of Georgia, which will provide locally grown food to the Athens community and offer workshops, paid employment for youth, and business opportunities for beginning and historically underserved farmers.
- Osage Nation in Oklahoma, which will install supplemental lighting for vegetable production facilities and systems along with installing a solar field and serve as a guide for Native nations looking to implement similar systems.

In total, 25 projects were selected in 16 states and territories. For a complete list of selected grant recipients and project summaries, visit farmers.gov/urban.

More Information

OUAIP, established through the 2018 Farm Bill, works in partnership with numerous [USDA agencies that support urban agriculture and innovative production](#). OUAIP coordinates across USDA to help agencies identify, priorities and resolve internal barriers to service with urban, small-scale and innovative customers. UAIP grants are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture.

Other efforts include: ??

- Investing up to \$9.5 million for [Composting and Food Waste Reduction \(CFWR\) cooperative agreements](#) for fiscal year 2023.?
- 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.
- Renewing the [People's Garden](#) movement -- join the People's Garden community with gardens across the country; grow using sustainable practices that benefit people and wildlife and teach about gardening and resilient, local food systems.
- Investing in urban agriculture and urban food systems projects through the [Agricultural Marketing Service's Local Agriculture Market Program \(LAMP\)](#) that develop, coordinate, and expand producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and local food enterprises, including those located in urban communities.??

- Helping child nutrition program operators incorporate local foods through the [Food and Nutrition Services Farm to School Program](#)?

Additionally, OUAIP helps employees at all levels of the USDA to understand that USDA supports agriculture regardless of the size of the operations, where it is located, or how the products are produced.

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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