

[USDA Establishes New Farm Service Agency Urban County Committees in Columbia, SC](#)

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COLUMBIA, S.C., July 25, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is establishing a new urban county committee in Columbia, SC, joining 26 other cities with a committee focused on delivery of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs to urban producers. County committee members make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally, and this new urban county committee in Columbia is part of USDA’s broad support for urban and innovative agriculture.

“Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the Agency, and they serve as the eyes and ears for the producers who elected them,” said Laurie Funderburk, FSA State Executive Director in South Carolina. “We’ve successfully launched urban county committees in other urban agriculture locations, and we’re excited to establish one here in Columbia to improve how we deliver critical farm loan, conservation, safety net and disaster assistance programs to urban agricultural producers.”

Urban agricultural producers who participate in USDA programs in these cities or cooperate with USDA programs by providing information about their farming operation are encouraged to participate by nominating and voting in their local urban county committee elections. FSA will share more information on the nomination process and elections for this new urban county committee.

Support for Urban Agriculture

To help strengthen urban county committees and other urban agriculture investments, USDA is investing \$40 million, made possible by President Biden’s American Rescue Plan, into partnerships with community-based organizations. Two of those partnerships include:

- Virginia State University’s Small Farm Outreach Program and Cornell University’s Small Farm Center, which will support local partner organizations and urban county committee members across the country by providing guidance and training on the practices and assistance most

needed by urban agricultural producers, holding regular meetings to assess successes and barriers in each location, and gathering data to analyze the effectiveness of programs and provide recommendations to increase future participation.

- To Improve Mississippi Economics, Inc. (TIME, Inc.), whose mission is to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to urban agricultural producers and organizations that provide access to healthy food in impoverished communities. TIME, Inc. will work in collaboration with FSA and local leaders across the nation to fund partnerships with organizations in the 10 cities where USDA will create new urban county committees in 2024.

More Information

The new urban county committee is part of USDA's broader USDA investment in urban agriculture in Columbia. Other efforts include:

- [Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production competitive grants](#), including one to the Upstate Circle of Friends Minority Farmer Education Center to involve youth and local residents to increase access to affordable healthy food for low-income minority families in need.
- Inviting community gardens to join the [People's Garden initiative](#).

To learn more about county committees, including urban county committees, visit our [County Committees webpage](#). Visit farmers.gov/urban for more information on programs and services for urban producers.

This urban county committee in Columbia was announced [last week by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small](#) as part of a significant investment in urban agriculture. The announcement included a total of 10 new urban county committees and 17 new Urban Service Centers. Other cities with new urban county committees include:

- Boston, Mass.
- Denver, CO
- Houston, TX
- Jackson, MS
- Kansas City, MO

- Las Vegas, NV
- Little Rock, AR
- Memphis, TN
- Pittsburgh, PA

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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