

# URBAN AGRICULTURE AND INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## PUBLIC MEETING SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (ET) MEETING MINUTES

The Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee (UAIPAC) is established by section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill), Public Law 115-334, 7 U.S.C. § 6923(b)(1), to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban, indoor, and other emerging agriculture production practices; and other aspects of the implementation of that section of the Farm Bill. This Federal advisory committee operates in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended.

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the UAIPAC was convened for a public meeting on September 24, 2025, from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M (ET). The meeting was held virtually and open to the public to join via Zoom.

A [Federal Register notice](#) was published on August 26, 2025, providing general information and public participation details for the meeting. Secondary notices were also sent out to the public directly by the agency.

Committee web page: <https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/federal-advisory-committee-urban-ag>

General inquiries: [UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov)

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## ACRONYMS

- **DFO** – Designated Federal Officer
- **FPAC** – Farm Production and Conservation
- **NRCS** – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- **OUAIP** – Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production
- **UAIPAC** – Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee

## MEETING AGENDA

Item #	Topic
1.	Welcome
2.	Deliberation/Proposed Recommendations
3.	Public Comments
4.	Address Public Comments
5.	Closing Remarks

See official copy on the [Committee Website](#).

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

UAIPAC Members			
Name	Represented Industry	Attendance	Attendance Type
Allison Papp	Financial Entity	Present	Virtual
Tony Minnick	Related Experience	Present	Virtual
Carl P. Wallace	Non-Profit Entity	Present	Virtual
Jerry Ann Hebron	Urban Production	Absent	N/A
Catherine Campbell	Higher Education/Extension	Present	Virtual
Kate Greenberg	Business/Economic Development	Absent	N/A
Kaben Smallwood	Innovative Production	Present	Virtual
Jeff Young	Higher Education/Extension	Present	Virtual
Qiana Mickie	Related Experience	Present	Virtual
Viraj Puri	Innovative Production	Absent	N/A
Dion Dawson	Supply Chain	Present	Virtual

For a full list of member biographies, visit: <https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/federal-advisory-committee-urban-ag/members>

<b>USDA Staff</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>
Markus Holliday	Acting Designated Federal Officer, Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

To request a copy of the public attendee list contact:

[UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov).

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment period was open from August 26, 2025 – September 30, 2025. Written comments were accepted via Zoom registration, email, and during the public meeting via Zoom Q&A. All comments that align with the statutory purpose and duties of UAIPAC are reviewed and may be considered for further discussion at a future public meeting. Oral comments were also accepted during the meeting.

To request a copy of the written public comments contact:

[UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov).

## MEETING RECORDING

To request a copy of the Zoom meeting recording contact:

[UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov).

## MEETING MINUTES

### Welcome

**Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)** welcomed and thanked everyone for joining. He also reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives before taking attendance to ensure the meeting quorum.

### Deliberation/Proposed Recommendations

**Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)** provided an overview of the deliberation and voting ground rules.

#### Proposed Recommendation #1: Permanent Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Establish a discretionary and permanent federal advisory committee for urban agriculture and innovative production.

**Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)** provided a brief recap of the two previously held meetings along with the objective of the current meeting, which included finishing deliberations for each proposed recommendation topic and completing final votes.

**Carl P. Wallace (Member)** presented the proposed recommendation and reiterated points made during the meeting held in the week prior. Primarily, he highlighted the need for the urban agriculture and innovative production community to continue having a collective voice at the federal level to influence USDA policy and decision-making that impacts farmers, producers and other community inputs/outputs.

**Allison Paap (Member)** made a motion to amend the original recommendation language as “Establish a permanent federal advisory committee for urban agriculture and innovative production with a discretionary classification”.

**Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)** made an announcement to inform everyone that USDA would attempt to make live edits during the presentation screen-share, however if time restraint became an issue, the Committee would adopt any revisions orally and make written revisions in a closed session. He then seconded the motion made by Allison Paap to amend the original recommendation language and called for a vote.

**Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)** proceeded to call a vote for the proposed amendments, followed by a second vote for the Committee to pass the recommendation with the new language, as amended.

**FINAL RESULT:**

The recommendation passed by majority vote with all present members voting “yes”.

### Proposed Recommendation #2: Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants

Release a Notice of Funding Opportunity for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants for Fiscal Year 2026.

**Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)** presented the proposal and raised points brought up in the meeting held the week prior. He also clarified that due to it being October, it was no longer an option for USDA to release a notice in Fiscal Year 2025, which is why the decision was made to recommend the release for Fiscal Year 2026.

**Carl P. Wallace (Member)** made a motion for the committee to vote on the recommendation without any amendments.

**Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)** made a second motion.

**Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)** proceeded to call for a vote.

**FINAL RESULT:**

The recommendation passed by majority vote with all present members voting “yes”.

### Proposed Recommendation #3: FSA Urban/Suburban County Committees

Authorize the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Urban/Suburban County Committee (UCOC) program to be permanent instead of a pilot project and adjust responsibilities of the program to better match existing County Committees.

- a. The current list of 27 cities should have full and active UCOCs. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms.
- b. Resources to support the operations and activities of UCOCs should be provided by FSA.
- c. Collaboration and engagement with local FSA Urban Service Center staff should be supported by FSA and NRCS.

**Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)** presented the recommendation and clarified the scope and counterparts involved as outlined in the pilot program.

*Tony Minnick (Member)* proposed a question to clarify sub-bullet b, asking if there were any current resources to support the operations and activities of UCOCs.

*Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)* responded to clarify that FSA currently has staff at active USDA Urban Service Center locations to provide technical assistance to farmers and other customers.

*Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)* briefly paused deliberation to address incoming public comments from the Zoom Q&A regarding the status of the U.S Farm Bill, highlighting that any recommendations for the bill would be outside the scope of the statutory duties of the Committee. He then made a motion for the Committee to vote on the proposed recommendation without any amendments.

*Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)* made a second motion.

*Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)* proceeded to call for a vote.

**FINAL RESULT:**

The recommendation passed by majority vote with all present members voting “yes”.

#### Proposed Recommendation #4: USDA Urban Service Centers: Urban Agriculture Technical Assistance

Integrate dedicated USDA staff with specialized technical expertise in the USDA Urban Service Centers where the Urban County Committees (UCOC) are, to improve technical assistance, outreach, and opportunities relevant to urban agriculture and innovative producers/growers.

- a. Staff should make joint site visits to urban farms with other FSA and NRCS Service Center representatives to provide specific guidance on indoor or other emerging production practices.
- b. Staff should provide specific guidance to eligible urban farmer entities to help them better apply for FSA and NRCS programs such as establishing a farm record and applying for program support.
- c. Solidify engagement with staff and UCOC Board Committees to gather insight and feedback on needed modifications to FSA and NRCS program eligibility guidelines and resources in the service centers to better serve the breadth of urban agriculture and innovative growers and producers.
- d. Solidify formal compensated partnerships with community-based organizations, farm businesses, and technical assistance providers to expand the impact of Urban Service

Centers' outreach and work with demonstration farms for more hands-on, peer-to-peer technical assistance.

**Tony Minnick (Member)** presented the proposal and explained the rationale for the modifications made to sub-bullet d. He also proposed an amendment to the base of the recommendation language to read as “Ensure USDA Urban Service Centers where the Urban County Committees (UCOCs) are located are staffed by FSA and NRCS and fully trained with the specialized technical expertise necessary to improve technical assistance, outreach, and opportunities relevant to urban agriculture and innovative producers/growers”.

**Jeff Young (Member)** raised a point about previously proposed actions regarding the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to provide funding to add urban agriculture extension personnel in USDA Urban Service Center locations as an additional resource to FSA and NRCS.

**Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)** asked Minnick if he opposed adding extension personnel as an additional resource in the proposal.

**Tony Minnick (Member)** supported the suggestion.

**Catherine Campbell (Member)** questioned the bandwidth capacity of extension personnel and whether they would be available to support USDA Urban Service Center operations.

**Jeff Young (Member)** responded to provide background information regarding the previously proposed agreement, highlighting that funding would be used to hire new staff as opposed to utilizing current extension personnel to split their duties that could potentially pose new challenges.

**Qiana Mickie (Member)** made a motion to vote on the amended language previously proposed by Minnick, followed by a second vote to pass the proposed recommendation, as amended.

**Carl P. Wallace (Member)** made a second motion.

**Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)** proceeded to call for a vote.

**FINAL RESULT:**

The recommendation passed by majority vote with all present members voting “yes”.

**Proposed Recommendation #5: USDA Urban Service Centers: *Fully Operational and Staffed***

USDA Urban Service Centers provide critical support to urban farmers to support their operations by providing direct access to USDA services such as farm loans, risk management,

and technical assistance. USDA should continue to maintain and sustain full operational Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) staff at Urban Service Centers. Constituted Service Centers are aligned with the farmer first priorities of USDA.

- a. Resources to support the operations and activities of Urban Service Centers should be provided by FSA.
- b. Where co-located, Urban Service Center staff should collaborate with Urban and Suburban County Committees to engage and support urban and innovative farmers in their area.

***Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)*** presented the proposed recommendation and provided background information.

***Carl P. Wallace (Member)*** proposed an amendment to sub-bullet b to include “innovative” in the context where urban farmers are mentioned.

***Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)*** proposed an amendment to include “suburban” in the context where Urban County Committees are mentioned.

***Tony Minnick (Member)*** proposed an amendment to remove “17” from the base of the recommendation language to be inclusive of all Urban Service Centers that may exist in the future.

***Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)*** proposed an amendment to also remove the word “all” before Urban Service Centers was mentioned to better clarify the inclusive nature of the proposal.

***Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)*** requested all proposed amendments be made live on screen for everyone to review before any motion was called to vote on final changes.

***Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)*** made all proposed amendments live on screen.

***Carl P. Wallace (Member)*** made a point to clarify the distinction between the 17 USDA Urban Service Centers from the 27 USDA Urban County Committees.

***Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)*** called out for a motion to vote on the proposed recommendation language, as amended.

***Catherine Campbell (Member)*** proposed a motion to vote.

***Tony Minnick (Member)*** made a second motion.

***Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)*** proceeded to call for a vote.

**FINAL RESULT:**

The recommendation passed by majority vote with all present members voting “yes”.

## Proposed Recommendation #6: Grant Funding to Build Evidence-Based Urban Agriculture Programs

The Committee recognizes that urban agriculture has the potential to contribute significantly to economic and workforce development, youth education, healthy food access, and community health. However, the current evidence base is fragmented and insufficient to guide both large-scale federal programs and policies and local policies, programs, and businesses. To ensure that future investments are effective, scalable, and grounded in data, the Committee emphasizes the need for dedicated research funding, structured pilot programs with strong evaluation components, and improved national data collection.

- a. The Committee recommends that USDA, with leadership from National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), establish integrated research and education competitive grant programs to support rigorous research on the impacts of urban agriculture on youth education, community development, workforce development, food access, and health outcomes.
- b. The Committee recommends that federal agencies USDA, with leadership from NIFA and in partnership with relevant USDA sub-agencies, funds pilot programs in urban agriculture that require partnerships between community organizations and institutions of higher education with built-in evaluation components, ensuring that findings generate reliable evidence to inform future program development and federal policy guidance.
- c. The Committee recommends that USDA expand systematic, recurring national data collection efforts, including through ERS and the Census of Agriculture, to quantify the scope of urban agriculture activities, practices and outcomes, to support standardized data collection that allows for valid comparisons across states and regions, and to support partnerships with universities and Extension for longitudinal and generalizable research.

**Catherine Campbell (Member)** presented the recommendation and provided background information.

Several members provide positive feedback in support of the proposed recommendation without any request for amendments.

*Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)* proposed a motion to vote on the recommendation with no further amendments.

*Carl P. Wallace (Member)* made a second motion to vote.

*Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)* proceeded to call for a vote.

**FINAL RESULT:**

The recommendation passed by majority vote with all present members voting “yes”.

**Public Comments**

Several members of the public who pre-registered to provide oral comments were given up to three minutes each to discuss relevant topics and concerns that align with the UAIPAC purpose and duties.

**Addressing Public Comments**

*Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson) and Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)* thanked the public attendees who contributed to the oral comment segment and others who provided comments in writing. They both stressed the importance of providing feedback for the Committee to stay informed on the issues occurring in urban agriculture and innovative production communities across the nation.

**Closing Remarks**

*Markus Holliday (Acting DFO)* thanked the committee members and the public for their participation, followed by several committee members who provided feedback on the public meeting series and reflected on their roles and work completed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 P.M (ET).

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

/s/

Kaben Smallwood

Chairperson, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee

/s/

Markus Holliday

Acting Designated Federal Officer, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee