



USDA Urban Agriculture Toolkit: *A Brief Overview*

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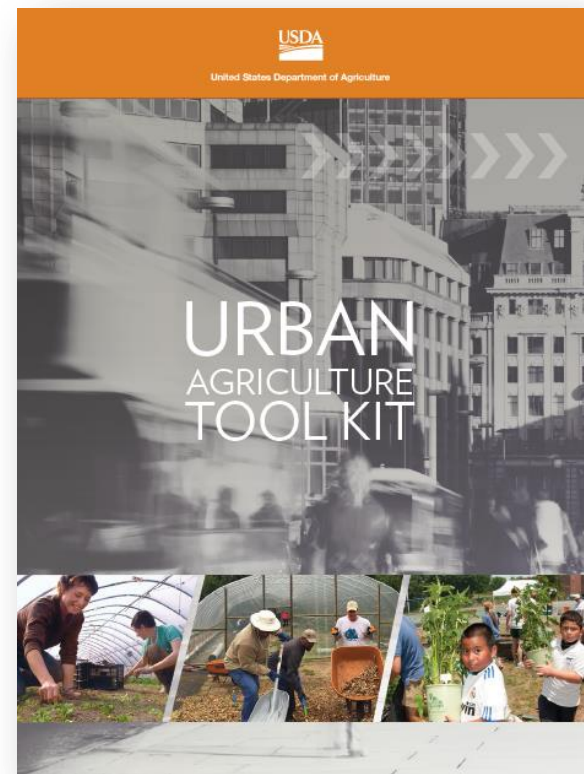
Washington, DC

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Toolkit Background

- Created through the USDA Urban Agriculture Working Group (UAWG)
- Agencies and offices from across the Department including the Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture
- Includes information on funding opportunities, technical assistance, and informational resources from federal, state, and local partners





Eight Topic Areas

- Business Planning
- Land Access
- Soil Quality
- Water Access/Use
- Capital and Financing
- Infrastructure
- Market Development
- Production Strategies





Business Planning & Risk Management

1

The Farmer's Market Promotion Program supports farmers markets, mobile markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agrotourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. LFPP supports local food projects that are not direct-to-consumer (e.g. food hubs, farm to retail/restaurant).

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers grant funds with a 25% match to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

- Approximately \$13 million is available to fund applications under the FMPP solicitation. The minimum FY 2016 FMPP award per grant is \$50,000 and the maximum is \$500,000. An applicant is limited to one FMPP award in a funding year.
- **For more information:** <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/>



Business Planning & Risk Management

2

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance policy and is available in all counties nationwide.

- This insurance plan is tailored for any farm with up to \$8.5 million in insured revenue, including farms with specialty or organic commodities (both crops and livestock), or those marketing to local, regional, farm-identity preserved, specialty, or direct markets.
- WFRP provides protection against the loss of insured revenue due to an unavoidable natural cause of loss that occurs during the insurance period and will also provide carryover loss coverage if you are insured the following year.
- **For more information:** <http://www.rma.usda.gov/policies/wfrp.html>



Business Planning & Risk Management

3

NIFA's **Community Food Project Grants (CFP)** intends to solicit applications and fund three types of grants. Relevant to this section are the Planning Projects (PP) grants. The purpose of a Planning Project (PP) is to complete a plan toward the improvement of community food security in keeping with the primary goals of the CFP Grants.

- The primary goals of the CFP include: Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities; Promote comprehensive responses to local food access; and meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs.
- **For More Information:** <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/community-food-projects-cfp-competitive-grants-program>



Accessing Land, Capital, and Financing

USDA's **Farm Service Agency** provides a variety of **loan programs** to support farm ownership and operation, including microloans of up to \$50,000. Loans are available to both urban and rural producers.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) also delivers commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, and emergency assistance programs that help improve the stability and strength of the agricultural economy.

This includes **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** which provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters

For more information: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index>





Soil Quality

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has compiled a set of resources on its Urban Soils webpage. The site includes surveys, links and guides including the Urban Soil Primer, an introduction to urban soils for homeowners and renters, local planning boards, property managers, students, and educators.

Cooperative Extension Service staff provide practical and research-based information in communities of all sizes. Depending on where you are located, an Extension agent may be available to provide technical assistance on soil and other issues as you develop your urban farm.

Most Extension offices offer free or low-cost soil testing services to farmers, gardeners, and landowners.





Soil Quality

Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey led by NRCS and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world.

NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent in the near future.

Find the survey here:

<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related natural resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. EQIP may also help producers meet environmental regulations.

- For more information:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>





Infrastructure

NRCS' EQIP program supports infrastructure such as high tunnels and efficient irrigation on farms, both rural and urban, through contracts up to a term of 10 years. NRCS offers both financial and technical assistance. For more information on EQIP see slide 10.

USDA NIFA's Community Food Project Grants cover "equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project" and other specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agricultural needs. See Slide 6 for more Information.

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan Program support cold storage for fruit and vegetables, along with wash and pack facilities and related equipment. FSFL security requirements have been eased for all types of loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Now FSFL loans up to \$100,000 can be secured by a promissory note only.

For More Information: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/index>



Infrastructure



Rural Development's **Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program** can support the purchase of land, equipment and buildings by nonprofits, for-profit businesses, or individuals. This program places a priority on projects related to local food systems, and loan guarantees for local food projects can be made in urban areas as well as rural areas.

- **For more information:**
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees>

Urban and Community Forestry Program (UCF) provides financial, technical, and educational assistance to cities, suburbs, and towns to support urban tree planting and management, including urban orchard and urban agroforestry projects. Assistance is delivered to communities through state forestry agency partners **For More Information:**

<http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/>



Infrastructure

Rural Development's **Rural Energy for American Program (REAP) Grants** supports on-farm sustainable energy projects, including purchasing, installing and constructing renewable energy systems, making energy efficiency improvements, and participating in energy audits.

There are three types of assistance: (1) Grants of 20,000 or less (2) Unrestricted grants [Up to \$500,000] and (3) Loan guarantees. The application deadline for the grants is May 2, 2016.

- **For more information:** <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency>

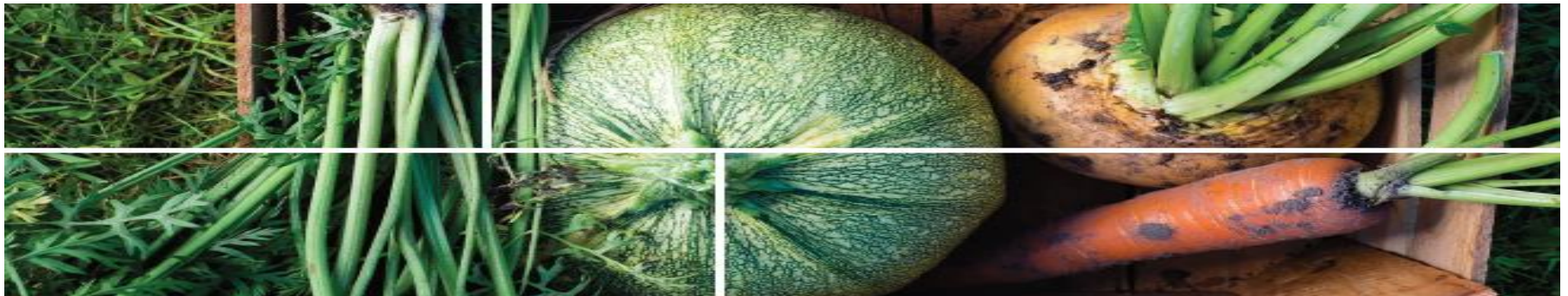
USDA' can support equipment purchases, though not brick-and-mortar construction, through its **Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)** and **Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)**. See slides 3 and 4 for more information.





Production Strategies

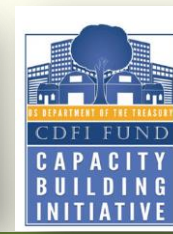
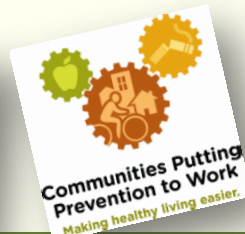
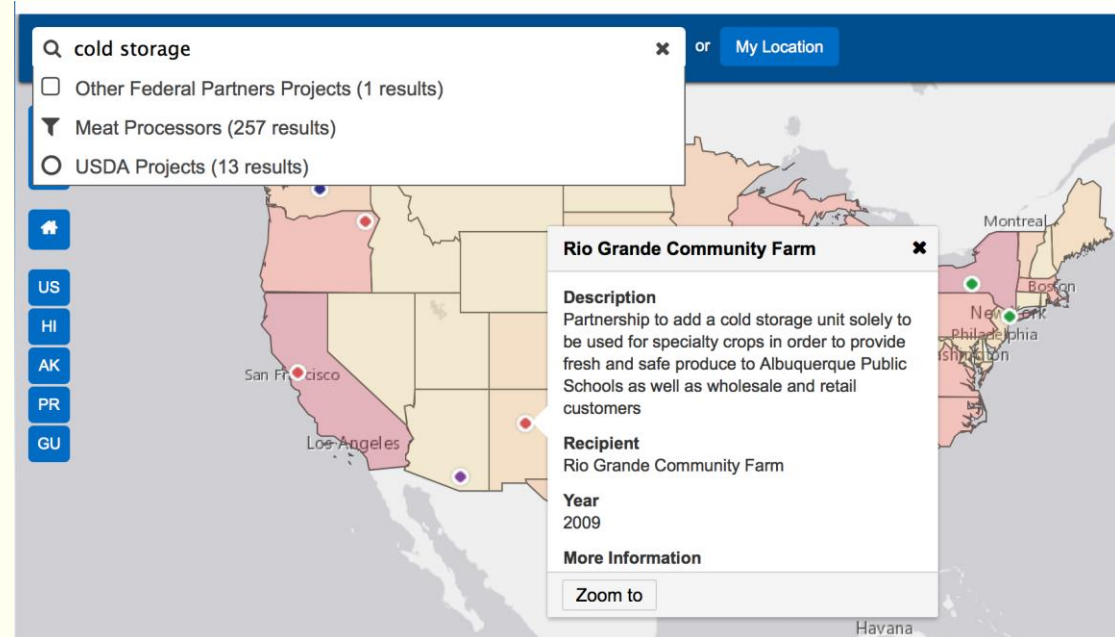
- USDA's **Agricultural Research Service** has developed **Virtual Grower software version 3.0**. Virtual Grower can help greenhouse growers determine heating costs, identify potential heat cost savings through different greenhouse designs, predict crop growth, assist in scheduling, make real-time predictions of energy use, and see the impact of supplemental lighting on plant growth and development. **For more information:**
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/services/software/download.htm?softwareid=309>
- USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides **conservation planning and technical assistance** in consultation with farmers. NRCS works with farmers to develop a schedule for implementation of conservation practices to solve a variety of natural resource concerns. **For more information:**
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/technical/cta/?cid=stelprdb1049425>



The KYF2 Compass Map



- Includes data on:
 - USDA-funded local food projects
 - Farmers markets and other “context data” gathered by USDA agencies
- Projects and resources from 9 other federal departments
- Updated annually



www.usda.gov/kyfcompass

**KNOW YOUR FARMER
KNOW YOUR FOOD**