



# Urban Agriculture County Committees

## Frequently Asked Questions

June 2022

### Are FSA Urban-Suburban County Committees New?

USDA is standing up the first-ever FSA county committees focused exclusively on urban agriculture. These new committees are part of USDA's efforts to better support urban agriculture and will consist of three to 11 members. County committees have been used as the vehicle for farmer input on FSA programs since the 1930s. They represent farmers and set priorities at the local level.

### What will the Urban/Suburban County Committees Do?

The urban and suburban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the new county committees may address areas such as food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost, and food waste reduction. They also make determinations, listen to appeals and make decisions, and conduct outreach to urban and suburban farms and farmers for both FSA and NRCS.

### Why is it important?

Until now, there has been no vehicle for urban growers to affect USDA priorities and funding. Urban farmers are uniquely qualified to identify the needs of growers

and their communities and provide direction on how USDA can best serve them. By serving on a county committee, you will be included in local decisions for USDA programs and can positively impact the services USDA provides urban farms.

### How Long is a Term and What is the Time Commitment?

Committee members meet at least quarterly and terms are three years. Members have the option to run for reelection for up to three terms or nine years.

### Where Are the Urban County Committees?

Locations are being piloted in: Albuquerque, NM; Cleveland, OH; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; Richmond, VA; Atlanta, GA; Dallas, TX; Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN; New Orleans, LA; Phoenix, AZ; and St. Louis, MO. Additionally, USDA added Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Grand Rapids MI; Los Angeles, CA; Oakland, CA; and New York, NY; in 2022. Elections for these new locations will be held at a later date.

### How Do the Nominations Work?

Urban farmers who participate or cooperate in an USDA program in the local area identified for the Urban County Committee may either be nominated or may nominate themselves or others. Organizations may nominate candidates.

To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) or [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban).

### When are the Deadlines?

Jun. 15 – FSA will begin accepting nominations for urban/suburban county committees.

Aug. 1 – Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office.

Nov. 7 – Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 5 – Last day to return ballots to service center.

Jan. 1 – New member takes office.

### USDA Programs for Urban Farmers include:

FSA – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Organic Certification Cost Share Program and microloans, and Farm Storage Facility Loans.

NRCS – Conservation financial and technical assistance, including high tunnels, soil health, and irrigation.

### For More Information

Visit [www.farmers.gov/urban](https://www.farmers.gov/urban)