



Be The Link
between your
agricultural
community and the
USDA

2023 County Committee Election

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Goals for today's discussion...

- ❖ General Overview of County Committees (COC)
- ❖ Roles of County Committees
- ❖ How to Nominate and Vote
- ❖ Urban COC
- ❖ Role of Outreach
- ❖ Program Amplification Resources





United States
Department of
Agriculture

The infographic features a header with the USDA logo and the text 'Farm Service Agency U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'. Below this, a green banner contains the text 'BE THE LINK' with a chain link icon, followed by 'between your agricultural community and the USDA'. An illustration of six diverse people standing in a field with a red barn is positioned to the right. The main title '2023 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS' is centered in a dark blue section. Below the title, five circular icons represent different stages of the election process, each with a corresponding date and description.

2023 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Icon	Date	Description
	JUN. 15, 2023	Beginning of nomination period. Forms available at fsa.usda.gov/elections .
	AUG. 1, 2023	Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.
	NOV. 6, 2023	Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
	DEC. 4, 2023	Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.
	JAN. 1, 2024	Newly elected county committee members take office.

General Overview of County Committees (COC)

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

FSA is run by farmers and ranchers!

- FSA is a unique Federal agency
- FSA relies on an elected advisory board of farmers and ranchers in each county to supervise the local office, conduct outreach to producers, and make critical decisions about our programs.
- Authorized by Congress in 1930s
- More than 7,700 committee members serve on more than 2,200 committees nationwide.



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Responsibilities of COC

- Critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA.
- Helps hire and supervise the County Executive Director (CED).
- Administers farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
- Informs State FSA Committee of local administrative area (LAA) conditions. Makes recommendations to State Committee on existing programs.
- Ensure underserved farmers and ranchers are fairly represented. Have a voice at the table.



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Responsibilities of COC

- Critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA.
- Select individuals to serve as the County Executive Director (CED).
- Administer farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
- Inform State FSA Committee of local administrative area (LAA) conditions. Make recommendations to State Committee on existing programs.



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Duties of the COC Members

- Monitoring changes in farm programs.
- Participate in county meetings.
- Inform farmers, ranchers, and foresters of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs.
- Ensure underserved farmers and ranchers are fairly represented. Have a voice at the table.

COC Members make Decisions on:

- Price support loans & payments
- Acreage verification
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity & disaster payments
- Payment eligibility





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Role Descriptions of COC Members

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Committee Basics

- 3 to 11 Members
- 3-year Terms
- Advisors appointed annually to represent women and minority interests
- Members and advisors are compensated for their time and travel
- Regular and Executive Session

Roles of COC Members

Elected Members	Advisor
Elected by Community	Appointed by State Committee to represent underserved producers when elected members of an LAA do not have SDA representation.
Voting Member	Non-Voting Member
3-11 Members per COC	1 Member per COC
3-year term	1-year term
Fills out form FSA 669-A	Submits a letter of request for consideration to be appointed.

*One Alternate COC Member may replace a member for a single meeting, and only becomes a member if the alternate permanently replaces the member.

Role of the Advisor

Provide diverse viewpoints and represent the interests of targeted underserved communities in the decisions made by the County Committee.

Officially appointed by the FSA state committee based on county committee or community-based organizations recommendations.

Appointed to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of underserved producers, but lack such members on FSA county committee.

*Non-voting position

How do Farmers & Ranchers participate?

- Nominate!
- Vote!
- Inform others!



Who Serves on County Committees?

To hold office as a COC member or alternate, a person must fulfill each requirement:


- Be a producer with an interest in farming or ranching operations
- Participate or cooperate in any FSA program
- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Be of legal voting age
- Meet the basic eligibility requirements
- Reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving.

How to Nominate a Candidate

- Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate.
- Additionally, Organizations and Tribal Nations representing underserved (minority and women) farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates.
- Nomination forms are filed for the county committee at the office that administers a producer's farm records.

****New****

Find your Local Administrative Area - LAA

 Find Your Local Administrative Area

www.fsa.usda.gov/elections

Find address or place

What Are Local Administrative Areas?

A Local Administrative Area is a portion of a county or multi-county jurisdiction that is represented by an elected member on the FSA County Committee.

Each elected member serves a 3 year term, and elections are held annually.

County Committee members can nominate themselves or may be nominated by other agricultural producers in the Local Administrative Area. Community-based organizations can also nominate candidates.

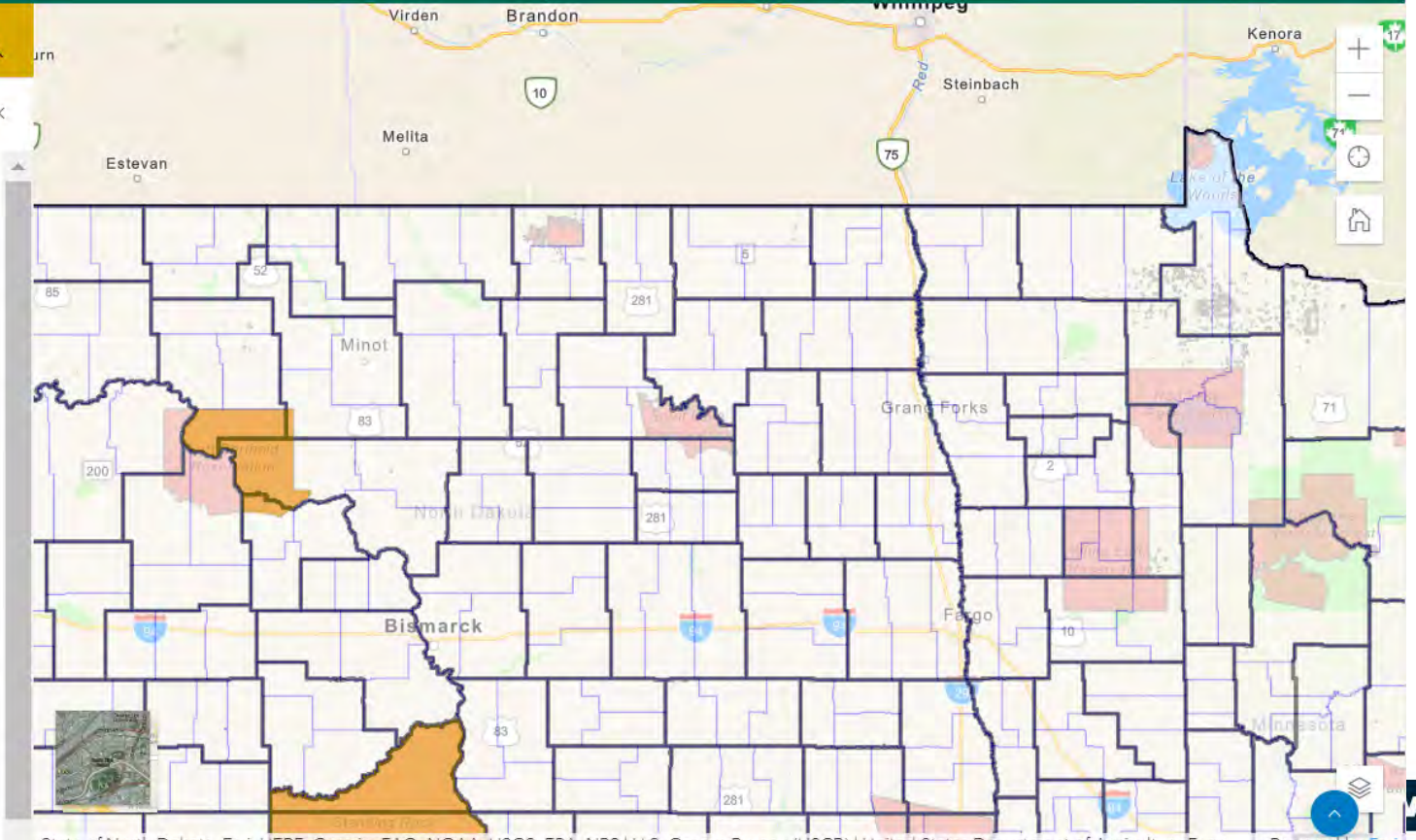
[Click here](#) to learn more about the FSA County Committee nomination and election process.

Find the Local Administrative Area you (or your farming operation) are located in by using one of these search methods:

- Click the search box and type in an address
- Click **Use current location**, or
- Use the map tools to zoom to the area you are interested in and click on the location within the map

Results will include information about the Local Administrative Area and Administrative County Office.

Information presented in this map is under review and is being updated on a regular basis. For questions or concerns, please contact your local FSA Service Center.



State of North Dakota, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS | U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) | United States Department of Agriculture Farm ... Powered by Esri



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Voting in the COC Election

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Who can Vote?

1. **Be of legal voting age or, if not of legal voting age, supervise and conduct the farming operation of an entire farm.**
2. **Have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:**
An individual who meets one or more of the following:
 - Is eligible to vote in one's own right
 - Is a partner of a general partnership
 - Is a member of a joint venture

Who can Vote? *Continued*

3. Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided for by law.

- A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.
- Customers who are uncertain about their eligibility to vote in the FSA county committee election should contact their local FSA office. Affirmation of eligibility to vote must be determined in order for a vote to count in an election.
- During the election period, individuals not receiving a ballot in the mail may obtain a ballot directly from their FSA county office.

Who Can Vote? *Continued* *American Indian Tribal Landowners*

- Every member of an Indian tribe is considered a landowner if the land in question is tribally owned or held in trust for the tribe by the United States.
- All members of Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote if they meet the age requirement. To be on record as an eligible voter, members of Indian tribes must be entered in SCIMS as an individual and:
 - Flagged eligible to vote
 - entered in the correct COC/LAA on the COC Election website.



FSA County Committee Elections

The United States Department of Agriculture county committees (COC) impact the administration of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) within a community. They help make determinations on farm programs such as disaster assistance, hiring decisions and assist with outreach. County committee members can impact producers through their decision making and help shape the culture of a local FSA office. They also ensure the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties and are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA county committee elections are held annually for representation in county Local Administrative Areas (LAAs). Nominations are open each summer; voting occurs each fall.

Tribal Agricultural Landowner Voting Eligibility

For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned or held in trust by the United States for the tribe, **even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land.**

Tribal agricultural landowners 18 years and older can contact their local USDA Service Center to register. After you provide FSA with your contact information, including a current mailing address, you will be updated as an eligible voter in the election database. Contact your local FSA office with any questions.

QUESTION: I'm an 18-year-old+ tribal agricultural landowner and want to vote with FSA. How do I participate?

ANSWER:

1. Register

Locate your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator and connect with the office to register by providing the following:

- Notification that you are a Tribal Agricultural Landowner.
- Address and contact information required to complete an AD-2047 Customer Data Form.

2. LAA Assignment

Registration is now complete, you will be:

- Assigned to a Local Administrative Area (LAA) in the county or multi-county jurisdiction.
- Each LAA is up for election once every three years. Consider nominating a willing producer within the county or multi-county jurisdiction up for election.

3. Eligibility

After registration is complete, you are eligible to vote in the yearly COC election.

- All eligible voters, who have provided a current mailing address to FSA, will receive a ballot by mail when their assigned LAA is up for election. Ballots are mailed in November each year.

4. Ballot not received

If you did not receive a ballot by mail:

- FSA will provide you with one upon request.
- Ensure your current mailing address is on file with FSA.
- Failure to update your address will result in the voter being considered ineligible.

5. To Vote

Return your signed and complete COC election ballot with a candidate selection enclosed.

- Ballots not received or postmarked by the required deadline will not be counted towards the election results.

6. Election Results

Election tabulation is complete in December of each year with new members taking office in January of each year.

- Continue to encourage future election participation in Native American and Tribal Communities. Your vote matters!

Note: persons under the age of 18 may also be eligible to vote. Please check with your local FSA office.

How to Cooperate with USDA FSA?

Complete an AD-2047

- The AD-2047 is the USDA Customer Data Worksheet
- Collects Customer Information including:
 - Name, Address, Email, Phone,
 - Tax ID and demographic information

This form is available electronically.

AD-2047 (01-13-21)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Rural Development
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Risk Management Agency
Agricultural Marketing Service

CUSTOMER DATA WORKSHEET

NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Computer Security Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100-235), OMB Circular A-123, Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act of 1982, and Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The information will be used to document a request by the producer for updating the business partner record. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notices for AMS-3, Personal Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA), USDA-FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated), USDA-NRCS-1, Landowner, Operator, Producer, Cooperator, or Participant File, and USDA-RS-1, Applicant, Borrower, Grantee, or Tenant File. Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility to request changes within the business partner record.

Public Burden Statement (Paperwork Reduction Act Statement): According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0265. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 minutes (25 hours) per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The provisions of criminal and civil fraud, privacy and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. **RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.**

Forms Approved - OMB No. 0560-0265
OMB Expiration Date: 12/31/2023

PART A CUSTOMER INFORMATION

1A. Customer's Full Name or Business Name and Address (Including Zip Code)

1B. Customer Business Type (Example: Individual, Corporation, LLC, Estate, Trust, etc.)

1C. Home Telephone Number (Area Code)

1D. Business Telephone Number (Area Code)

1E. Mobile Telephone Number (Area Code)

2. Taxpayer Identification Number (9 Digits) and Type (SSN, EIN, etc)

3. Birthdate (Only required if the customer is a minor)

4A. Residency Status: (For Individuals Only)
☐ U.S. Resident ☐ Resident Alien (I-551 Required)
☐ Not a US Citizen or Resident Alien
Citizenship country if not US:

4B. Originating Country (For Foreign Entities Only)

5A. Email Address

5B. Does the customer want to receive sensitive (but non-PII) Producer or Farm specific related emails?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Demographic Information

Departmental Regulation 4370-001 provides USDA's policies for collecting demographic data, including race, ethnicity and gender. Providing demographic information is voluntary and at the discretion of the customer. Demographic information is used by USDA for statistical purposes only and will not be used to determine an applicant's eligibility for programs or services for which they apply. You may disregard providing information in items 6A, 6B and 6C if the information has previously been provided to USDA. Customers identified in Item 1A that are a legal entity should base responses to the race, ethnicity and gender of the owners holding majority ownership interest in the legal entity.

☐ I do not want to provide demographic information at this time.

6A. Race: (Note: More than 1 may be selected)
☐ American Indian / Alaskan Native
☐ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
☐ Asian
☐ White
☐ Black/African American

6B. Ethnicity:
☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Not Hispanic or Latino

6C. Gender (Individual):
☐ Male
☐ Female

6D. Gender (Legal Entity)
☐ Not applicable/unknown
☐ Organization/Female Owned
☐ Organization/Male Owned
☐ Organization/Other (no clear male/female ownership)

7. Producer is Customer of One or More of the Following Agencies. (Check Appropriate Agency(ies) below.)
☐ AMS ☐ FSA ☐ NRCS ☐ RMA ☐ RD ☐ Not Participating



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2023 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS



JUN. 15, 2023

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AUG. 1, 2023

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JAN. 1, 2024

Newly elected
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County Committee Elections Timeline

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Understanding Urban COC

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The Unique Needs of Urban Producers

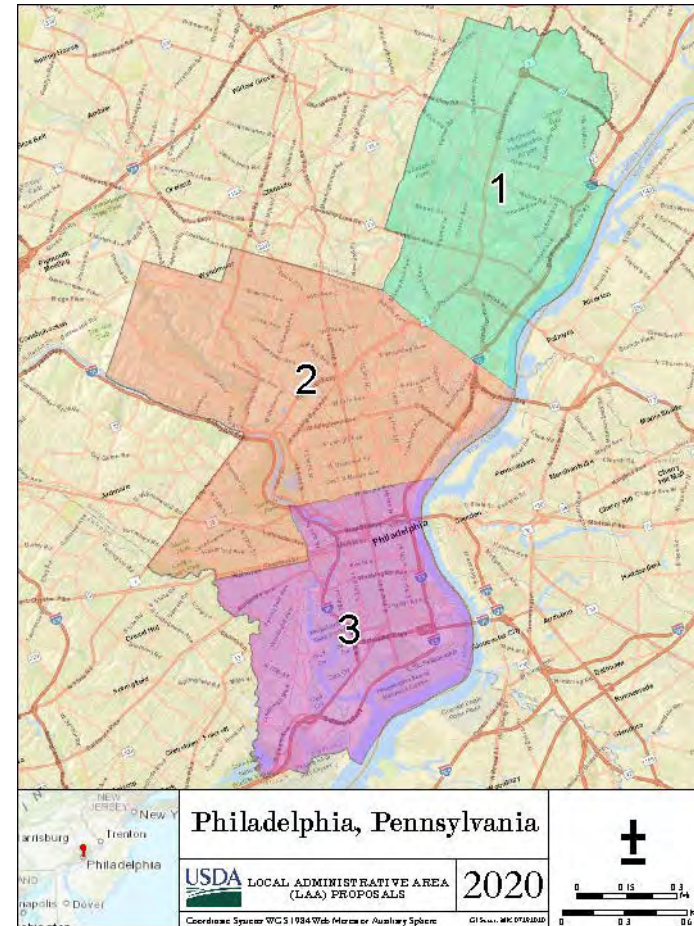
- Many are beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, or serve SDA/beginning farmers
- Many have not participated in FSA programs before
- May not have a farm number
- Limited land access
- Farm in non-traditional ways:
 - CSA
 - Food Hubs
 - Socially Motivated (non-profits)



St. Louis, MO
New York, NY
Albuquerque, NM
Cleveland, OH
Portland, OR
Philadelphia, PA
Dallas, TX
Richmond, VA

How are Urban LAA's Determined?

- **Local Administrative Area (LAA)**
 - LAA's are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction.
 - No less than three LAA's may be established for any single county or multi-county jurisdiction.
 - Single counties may be divided into three to five LAA's.

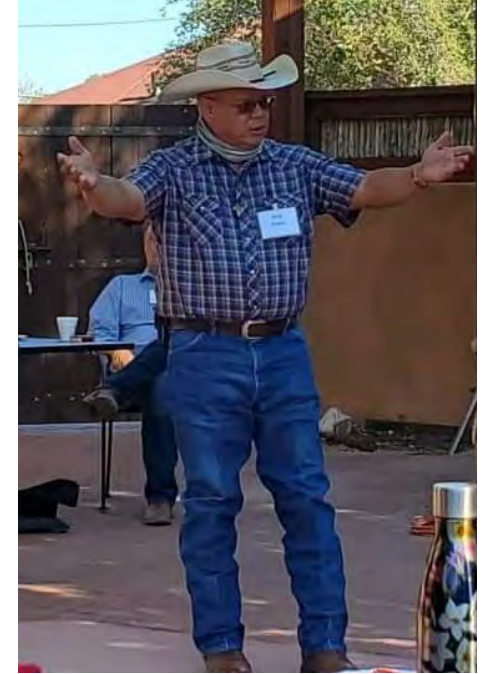


Urban County Committee Roles

- Outreach to local Stakeholders to promote USDA programs.
- Understand Programs within USDA and how they impact the producers.
- Identify the needs of the growing urban agriculture market within the defined urban area.
- Engage with a new customer base.
- Make recommendations on training needs.

Summary of Urban Committees

- Urban COCs are a board of local agriculturalists.
- Urban COC members are elected by local agriculturalists.
- Urban COCs can report urban ag needs through the Administrator directly to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Serving on the committee provides an opportunity to educate fellow producers on USDA programs and participation requirements.
- Serving on the committee provides an opportunity to help make decisions that can impact local farmers and ranchers.



Outreach for County Committee Elections

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Role of Outreach

- **Highlight FSA Programs that Producers can participate in**
 - Creating Outreach Program Guides, slide decks templates, and trainings on COCs
 - Identify the key stakeholders and needs of producers (BFRs, unique farming practices and farming structures, female farmers, SDA producers etc.)
- **Build relationships with Ag Stakeholders and cross-USDA programs**
- **Leads National Urban Agriculture, Tribal & Equity Work Groups**
 - Make recommendations to the administrator about programs, opportunities, and staffing needs

How Can USDA, NRCS & Local Partners Help?

- **Cross-promote USDA programs that urban farmers can apply to**
- **Increase awareness about this unique pilot to get more COC members nominated**
- **Assist FSA staff with outreach**
- **Share knowledge about the needs of urban farmers**
- **Identify producers in Pilot UCOC locations**
 - Help determine LAA boundaries in new pilot UCOC locations



Select Examples of USDA Agency Programs - Assisting Urban Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

- Local Food Promotion Program
- Regional Food Systems Partnership Grants
- Specialty Crop Block Grants
- Local Farmers Market Promotion Program
- Federal State Marketing Improvement Program

Farm Service Agency

- Farm Microloans
- Disaster Assistance
- Organic Cost Share Program
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program
- Youth Loans
- Farm Storage Facility Loan Program
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)
- Outreach-related Cooperative Agreements
- Assistance for BFRs, SDA producers

Food and Nutrition Service

- Farm to School Program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Women Infants and Children (WIC)

Natural Resources Conservation Service

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Innovation Grants
- Agriculture Management Assistance
- Conservation Technical Assistance
- Outreach/ Partnership Agreements

NIFA

- Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture Competitive Grant Program
- Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
- Beginning Farmers and Rancher Development Program
- Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans
- Food Safety Outreach Program
- Organic Research and Extension Initiative
- Small Business Innovation Research
- Specialty Crop Research Initiative
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

- Socially Disadvantaged and Farmers and Ranchers Program (2501)

Forest Service

- Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost Share Program

Where Can I Get More Information on COC Elections?

www.fsa.usda.gov/elections

<https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/operations/office-of-outreach/program-toolkits/county-committees-coc>

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/outreach-and-education/stakeholder-toolkit/index>

For questions, contact FSA Outreach at:

Jennifer Perez or Kanika Davis at

FSAOutreach@usda.gov