



Farm Service Agency  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## **USDA Seeks Members for Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture**

**News Release | Virginia | January 07, 2021**

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RICHMOND, VA, Jan. 6, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking members for a new advisory committee on urban agriculture, part of a broader effort to focus on the needs of urban farmers. The 12-person committee will advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices as well as identify any barriers to urban agriculture.

“Food insecurity is a common issue in many Virginia communities,” said Dr. Edwin Martinez-Martinez, State Conservationist for USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “Our local field office staff have been working hand in hand with urban growers to implement farm improvements and innovative approaches that address food production and access concerns now and in the future. We’re excited to see the City of Richmond included in the USDA’s new urban ag pilot and look forward to expanding our conservation partnerships through this effort.”

Added Nivin A. Elgohary, State Executive Director for USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Virginia: “This group will underscore USDA’s commitment to all segments of agriculture and has the potential to support innovative ways to increase local food production in urban environments.”

USDA is seeking nominations for individuals representing a broad spectrum of expertise, including:

- Four agricultural producers (two agricultural producers in an urban area or urban cluster and two agricultural producers who use innovative technology).
- Two representatives from an institution of higher education or extension program.
- One representative of a nonprofit organization, which may include a public health, environmental or community organization.
- One representative of business and economic development, which may include a business development entity, a chamber of commerce, a city government or a planning organization.

- One individual with supply chain experience, which may include a food aggregator, wholesale food distributor, food hub or an individual who has direct-to-consumer market experience.
- One individual from a financing entity.
- Two individuals with related experience or expertise in urban, indoor and other emerging agriculture production practices, as determined by the Secretary.

Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership. Self-nominations are also welcome.

Nominations should include a cover letter, resume and a [background form](#). Nomination packages must be submitted by mail or email by March 5, 2021. They should be addressed to Ronald Harris, Designated Federal Officer, Director of Outreach and Partnerships, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 6006-S, Washington, D.C. 20250, or emailed to [Ronald.Harris@usda.gov](mailto:Ronald.Harris@usda.gov).

The 2018 Farm Bill established the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and directed USDA to form this advisory committee as well as make other advancements related to urban agriculture. It is led by the NRCS and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available in [this notice on the Federal Register](#) or at [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban). Additional assistance is available [Ask.USDA.Gov](#) or by calling (202) 720-2791.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with Farm Service Agency, NRCS or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will continue to work with our producers by phone, email and using online tools.

More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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