

USDA Establishing New Urban Service Center in Dallas and Urban County Committee in Houston

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COLLEGE STATION, Texas, July 26, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is opening a new Urban Service Center in Dallas as well as establishing an urban county committee in Houston, both part of a broader effort to support urban agriculture in Texas. With its new urban county committee, Houston joins 26 other cities with a committee focused on delivery of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs to urban producers.

"Providing urban producers with the same level of support as all farmers and ranchers is key to equitable USDA assistance," said FSA State Executive Director Kelly Adkins, "We look forward to welcoming producers in Texas to our new Urban Service Centers and to serve on Urban County Committees."

Urban Service Centers

The Urban Service Center in Dallas is one of 17 across the country. The Urban Service Centers will be staffed by Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees and will offer farm loan, conservation, disaster assistance and risk management programs. USDA works with agricultural producers through a network of more than 2,300 Service Centers nationwide, and the new Urban Service Centers will strengthen services to urban producers.

"Every producer deserves USDA support in their own community, whether that community is urban or rural," said Kristy Oates, NRCS State Conservationist in Texas, "We encourage people in urban communities to connect with us at our new Urban Service Centers."

The Urban Service Center is located at 3102 Maple Ave., Ste. 100, Dallas, TX 75201. Team members include Stefen Tucker, Urban County Executive Director, Deandra Wheeler, Urban Program Technician, Michael Brooks, Urban Conservationist, and Mikela Pryor, Urban Engineer.

Urban County Committees

County committee members make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally. USDA is announcing 10 new urban county committees, including the one in

Houston. In total, USDA has 27 Urban County Committees, also including Dallas.

Urban farmers who participate in USDA programs in these cities or cooperate with USDA programs by providing information about their farming operation are encouraged to participate by nominating and voting in their local urban county committee elections. FSA will share more information on the nomination process and elections for this new Urban County Committee in Houston.

Support for Urban Agriculture

To help strengthen Urban Service Centers and Urban County Committees and other urban agriculture investments, USDA is investing \$40 million, made possible by President Biden's American Rescue Plan, into partnerships with community-based organizations. Two of those partnerships include:

- Virginia State University's Small Farm Outreach Program and Cornell University's Small Farm Center, which will support local partner organizations and urban county committee members across the country by providing guidance and training on the practices and assistance most needed by urban agricultural producers, holding regular meetings to assess successes and barriers in each location, and gathering data to analyze the effectiveness of programs and provide recommendations to increase future participation.
- To Improve Mississippi Economics, Inc. (TIME, Inc.), whose mission is to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to urban agricultural producers and organizations that provide access to healthy food in impoverished communities. TIME, Inc. will work in collaboration with FSA and local leaders across the nation to fund partnerships with organizations in the 10 cities where USDA will create new urban county committees in 2024.
- Meanwhile, FSA has also awarded cooperative agreements to organizations located in cities where USDA is opening Urban Service Centers, including Grow North Texas in Dallas. Through outreach, education, research and technical assistance, Grow North Texas and other organizations will work to improve the coordination and effectiveness of USDA programs and services for urban and innovative producers, help mitigate economic disruptions by funding projects designed to increase equity in urban food systems by expanding outreach efforts and technical assistance to urban producers.

More Information

The new cooperative agreements and Urban Service Center in Dallas and Urban County Committee in Houston are part of USDA's broader USDA investment in urban agriculture in Texas. Other efforts include:

- [Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production competitive grants](#), including one to Small Places in Houston for Project CAPTAN (Community Agricultural Production and Training for Aspiring New?farmers) to increase food access, community-based production and farmer training in Houston's East End community. Meanwhile, USDA also awarded a grant to Frazier Revitalization, Inc. to make a significant difference to the economic and nutritional health of the local South Dallas community.

- [Composting and Food Waste Reduction \(CFWR\) cooperative agreements](#), including one to the City of Dallas to reduce food waste and simultaneously provide compost to local community gardens.
- Partnering with Texas Discovery Gardens to grow the [People's Garden](#) initiative in Dallas.

To learn more about Urban Service Centers, [download our fact sheet](#) or visit our [Urban Service Center webpage](#). To learn more about county committees, visit our [County Committees webpage](#). Visit farmers.gov/urban for more information on programs and services for urban producers.

The Urban Service Center in Dallas and urban county committee in Houston were [announced last week by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small](#) as part of a significant investment in urban agriculture.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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