Local Food Programs and Resources
U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

Support for Local and Healthy Foods

Local Agriculture Market Program

The 2018 Farm Bill provided permanent funding for the programs and activities covered under Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). The bill established LAMP to strengthen development of local and regional food systems through better coordination of existing programs, creation of new partnerships, expansion of activities covered under the program, and a simplified application process. Programs covered under LAMP include: Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program, Value Added Producer Grants, and Regional Partnerships.

2018 Farm Bill Funding: This program received $500 million over 10 years in mandatory funding.

2018 Farm Bill Highlights:
- Provides permanent funding for local food, farmers markets, and value-added agriculture production.
- Creates new regional partnerships to encourage local food infrastructure development.
- Program funds can be used to cover costs related to food safety certification and equipment upgrades.
- Food Policy Councils are now eligible to participate in the program.
- Simplifies the application process.

Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program:
The goal of the program is to expand local and regional food business enterprises, increase domestic consumption of and access to local and regional agriculture products and develop new market opportunities. This program provides competitive grants to improve and expand farmers’ markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. It also supports education, promotion, outreach, coordination and business planning for local food projects that are not direct-to-consumer operations, which may include food hubs and farm-to-retail or farm-to-restaurant operations. There are four different types of grants offered through this program: Farmers Market Promotion Program Capacity Building and Community Development Training and Technical Assistance. Both have a three-year performance period. Funding ranges from $50,000 to $500,000. Along with Local Food Promotion Program 18-month Planning Grants and 3-year Implementation Grants. Funding ranges from $25,000 to $500,000. Up to $6,500 of any grant may be used for food safety equipment upgrades. These grants require a 25 percent match.
Eligible Entities: Eligible applicants include agricultural businesses or cooperatives, producer networks or associations, community supported agriculture networks or associations, food councils, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers market authorities, and tribal governments.


More information: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants

Staff Contact: 202-720-0933

Value-Added Producer Grants:
This program is designed to encourage independent producers of agricultural commodities to process their raw products into marketable goods, thereby increasing farm income. Grants may be used for planning activities, for working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products, and for farm-based renewable energy. These grants will retain priority for projects benefiting beginning farmers and ranchers. This program requires a 50 percent match.

Eligible Entities: Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures are eligible to apply for this program.

Implementation Status: USDA is working to implement 2018 Farm Bill changes and anticipates a funding announcement to be made in spring 2019.


Program Contact: Michigan Rural Development Business Programs Staff at (517) 324-5157.

Local Food Regional Partnerships:
The 2018 Farm Bill authorized new regional partnerships that can be used to enhance development of local food systems. These partnerships will help communities better assess their local food needs and respond to growing demand for local food products.

Eligible Entities: Agricultural producers, a producer network or association, a farmer or rancher cooperative, a majority controlled producer-based business venture, a food council, a local or tribal government, a nonprofit corporation, a public benefit corporation, a community supported agriculture network or association, and a regional farmers market authority.
Eligible Partners: A State agency or regional authority, a philanthropic organization, a private corporation, an institution of higher education, a commercial, Federal, or Farm Credit System lending institution or other partner determined by USDA.

Implementation Status: USDA is developing new program criteria for the local food and regional partnership component of LAMP. USDA has not indicated when funding for these partnerships will be available.

Additional Local and Healthy Food Resources

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (formerly the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program): This program supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase. The 2018 Farm Bill provided permanent mandatory funding for this program, beginning with $45 million in 2019. It also created new Training and Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center(s) to help expand and improve incentive programs, which USDA has not yet established.

Eligible Entities: Private non-profits and government entities, who may partner with a broad range of groups including emergency feeding organizations, agricultural cooperatives or producer groups, farmers’ markets, community health organizations, retailers, and other entities.

More information: This program is currently seeking applications for grant funding. Applications are due on June 10, 2019. This is a website with more information: http://nifa.usda.gov/program/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program

Program Contact: Jane Clary Loveless, National Program Leader, at (202) 720-3891 or jclary@nifa.usda.gov

Produce Prescription Program:
The 2018 Farm Bill created a new Produce Prescription program to help healthcare providers connect low-income patients at risk of diet-related disease with healthy fruits and vegetables. USDA may dedicate up to 10 percent of the funds provided for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive program to fund Produce Prescription programs.

Eligible Entities: Private non-profits and government entities, working with an eligible healthcare partner such as a hospital, federally-qualified health center, V.A. hospital or clinic, or a healthcare provider group.

Implementation Status: This program is currently seeking applications for grant funding. Applications are due on June 10, 2019. This is a website with more information: http://nifa.usda.gov/program/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program
Program Contact: Jane Clary Loveless, National Program Leader, at (202) 720-3891 or jclary@nifa.usda.gov

Farm to School Grants:
Farm to School grants to be used for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA’s Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS) administers the program. In FY 2019 and FY 2020, OCFS will release approximately $7.5 million each year. Grants range from $20,000 to $100,000. This program requires a 25 percent match.

Eligible Entities: Applicants may include schools, State and Local agencies, tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit organizations.

Implementation Status: The FY2019 grant application process is currently closed. OCFS anticipates releasing award decisions in late spring or early summer of 2019. Changes could be made to this program as a part of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization this year.


For a list of Farm to School contacts in Michigan, visit: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-contacts)

Program Contact: farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov OR Lori Yelton, Michigan Department of Agriculture, (517) 420-3249 and at yeltonl@michigan.gov.

Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program:
The goal of this program is to improve community access to food through the development of innovative projects such as school-to-garden programs, low income cooking classes, agricultural entrepreneurship training, gleaning efforts, and urban greenhouse initiatives. This program provides grants to support Community Food Projects, Planning Projects, and Training and Technical Assistance Projects to eligible public or non-profit entities. This program requires a 100 percent match.

Eligible Entities: Public food program serve providers, tribal organizations, or private non-profit entities (including gleaners) are eligible to apply.

Implementation Status: USDA is currently accepting applications for this program until June 3, 2019.

**Healthy Food Financing Initiative:**
This program provides funds to community development financial institutions to create revolving loan programs which will provide loans and grants to fresh, healthy food retailers in order to overcome high costs of entry into underserved urban, suburban, and rural communities. Funding is provided through a range of programs at the USDA, Department of Treasury, and Department of Health and Human Services.

**2018 Farm Bill:** Under the USDA HFFI program, activities of the program are expanded from healthy food retail establishments to a broader range of healthy food enterprises, which may include food hubs, mobile markets, direct-to-consumer markets, or food business incubators.

**Eligible Entities:**
- **Department of Health and Human Services Community Economic Development (CED) Grants:** While the CED program no longer has a set-aside for healthy food projects, these projects are still eligible and welcome to apply. Applicants must be a private, non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC), have articles of incorporation, bylaws, or other official documents demonstrating that the CDC has a principal purpose of planning, developing, or managing community economic development activities, and the Board of Directors must have representation from each of the following: community residents, business leaders, and civic leaders.
- **Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Healthy Food Financing Initiative:** This Healthy Food Financing Initiative is currently a supplemental funding opportunity under the CDFI Program. Eligible entities are certified CDFIs (banks, thrifts, credit unions, loan funds, venture capital funds) with a principal mission of serving underserved populations.

**More information:**
- **Department of Health and Human Services Community Economic Development – Funding opportunity is open and applications are due June 3, 2019:** [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ced](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ced)
- **Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions Healthy Food Financing Initiative – Funding opportunity is open and applications are due June 6, 2019:** [https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/cdfi-program/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/cdfi-program/Pages/default.aspx)
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture – While the grant application period is now closed, you can learn more about funding opportunities here:** [https://www.investinginfood.com/](https://www.investinginfood.com/)
- **The Michigan Good Food Fund has used HFFI financing to develop their good food fund, which is making investments in local and good food projects across the State of Michigan. For more information:** [http://migoodfoodfund.org/](http://migoodfoodfund.org/)
New, Beginning, Minority, and Veteran Farmer Programs

Farming Opportunity Training and Outreach

The 2018 Farm Bill established the Farming Opportunity Training and Outreach (FOTO) program to provide permanent funding for the training, education, technical assistance, and outreach for new, beginning, minority, and veteran farmers. This consolidated program has combined the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers.

2018 Farm Bill Funding: This program received $425 million over 10 years in mandatory funding.

2018 Farm Bill Highlights:
- Provides permanent mandatory funding for the program.
- Allows the beginning farmer program to be used for succession planning to help retiring farmers and ranchers connect with new and beginning farmers to keep their land in agricultural production.
- Provides flexibility for matching fund requirements to be cash or in-kind contributions and allows the Secretary to waive the match.
- New cooperative agreement authority to provide more flexibility around the terms and conditions of the funding award.
- Requires new peer review process of socially disadvantaged farmer grants to ensure stakeholders participate in the grant award making process.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program:
This program provides competitive grants and cooperative agreements to support organizations that train, educate, and provide outreach and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Funding has traditionally supported projects to train beginning farmers on production, financial management, natural resource management, and market strategies. Changes in the 2018 Farm Bill will now allow funding to be used for succession planning to help retiring farmers connect with new and beginning farmers to keep their land in agricultural production. The maximum award is $250,000 per year for three years, and this program requires a 25 percent match in cash or in-kind contributions. The Secretary may waive or modify the matching requirement to reach underserved areas or populations.

Eligible Entities: Applicants must be a collaborative, State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner. Others may be eligible to apply.

Implementation Status: USDA is currently accepting applications for this grant program for FY2019. Closing date is Thursday, May 16, 2019.
Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers:
This program provides competitive grants and cooperative agreements to support organizations that provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers. Projects awarded through this program have been used to help minority and veteran farmers access USDA farm programs, loans, and conservation programs. They have also been used for training and education to overcome linguistic barriers and for helping new veterans transition from a military career into farming. The maximum award is $250,000 per year for three years for any cooperative agreement or grant awarded through the program.

Eligible Entities: Applicants may include any community-based organization, network, or coalition of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience working with socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers; historically black land grant universities, tribal colleges, Hispanic serving institutions, and other institutions of higher education with experience working with socially disadvantaged farmers. Others may be eligible per decision of USDA.

Implementation Status: USDA is implementing the 2018 Farm Bill changes to this program and has not indicated when funding for FY2019 will be available. USDA has not updated their website to include the office managing this program, but this grant program will be run through the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

Additional Beginning Farmer Programs and Resources

Next Generation Agriculture Technology Challenge:
The 2018 Farm Bill created a new agriculture technology challenge that will award up to $1 million to 1 or more winners in competition to create new mobile technology to help beginning farmers.

Implementation Status: USDA is working to implement this provision but has not given a timeline for when this challenge will be announced.

National and State Beginning Farmer Coordinators:
The 2018 Farm Bill created a National and State Beginning Farmer Coordinators to help new and beginning farmers better access State and National resources, navigate USDA farm programs and natural resource programs, and better coordinate National and State programs and initiatives aimed at new and beginning farmers. USDA is working to implement this provision and has not indicated when a National or State points of contact will be available to the public.

Implementation Status: USDA has appointed a temporary National Beginning Farmer Coordinator who will begin appointing State Beginning Farmer Coordinators.

Program Contact: Cara McNab, National Beginning Farmer Coordinator at cara.mcnab@usda.gov
Credit and Risk Management Opportunities

Credit Programs

Beginning Farmer Credit:
The 2018 Farm Bill modified the 3 year experience requirement to make it easier for beginning farmers to access credit and loan opportunities at USDA. New and beginning farmers will be able to use education, farm management training, and other business experience to qualify as experience for managing a farm loan.

Implementation Status: USDA is working on implementation of this provision but has not indicated when these changes will be updated.

Microloans:
USDA’s Farm Service Agency offers microloans of $50,000 or less. These microloans have reduced paperwork requirements and are designed to meet the needs of smaller, non-traditional, and niche agricultural operations. Local and regional food producers are the primary recipients of microloans.

Eligible Entities: Traditional and non-traditional family farms and ranches may be eligible for microloan financing. Among other requirements, applicants must have some farm experience; demonstrate acceptable credit history; have no previous debt forgiveness by the FSA, a conviction relating to controlled substances, or a disqualification due to a Federal Crop Insurance violation; and must not be delinquent on any federal debt.

More information:

More information: To locate your local FSA office, visit:
http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=mi&agency=fsa

Loan Pilot Authority:
USDA has the authority to create innovative pilot projects for its loan programs to target borrowers like local and regional food producers. This powerful new authority will allow USDA to increase access to credit for beginning farmers, organic food producers, and local/regional producers.

Urban Youth Loans:
USDA may make operating loans of up to $5,000 to eligible youth outside of rural America. This will provide opportunities for hands-on education and experiences for urban youth interested in agriculture.

Eligible Entities: Applicants must be individual youths ages 10 to 20 seeking to finance an organized, educational project of modest size. The project must be income-producing, agriculture-related, and initiated, developed, and carried out by youths participating in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, or a similar organization.
Program Contact: To locate your local FSA office, visit:
http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=mi&agency=fsa

Other Farm Loan Programs:
USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of farm ownership, operating, conservation, and emergency loans or loan guarantees to help provide credit to producers who may be unable to secure credit from commercial lenders. These programs are available to urban as well as rural farmers. The loan amounts, rates, and terms vary depending on the type of loan.

More Information:
• FSA’s Farm Loan Program hub:
• “Your Guide to Farm Loan Programs:”

Risk Management

2018 Farm Bill Risk Management Changes:
The 2018 Farm Bill requires new studies and research and development of local food risk management tools. This will start the process for developing specific risk management tools for producers who sell into local and direct to consumer markets. This research and development will look at specific concerns and needs of local farmers.

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

Eligible Entities: WFRP is available to producers who have no more than no more than $8.5 million in insured revenue. Among other requirements, producers must have no more than 50 percent of total revenue from commodities purchased for resale, have five consecutive years of farm tax history, and meet the diversification requirements of the policy. For a full list of eligibility requirements, visit the program page below.


Program Contact: To locate a Crop Insurance agent, visit:
**Beginning Farmer Crop Insurance:**
This program provides significant new funding for expanded access and lowered crop insurance costs for beginning farmers. It provides a 10 percent discount for all crop insurance premiums, allows a beginning farmer’s previous experience to be considered in calculating their production history, and provides additional assistance when beginning farmers face natural disasters.

*Eligible Entities:* To qualify as a beginning farmer or rancher, you must be an individual (in most instances, business entities are not eligible) who has not actively operated and managed a farm or ranch with an insurable interest in any crop or livestock for more than five crop years.


*Program Contact:* To locate a Crop Insurance agent, visit: [https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/RMALocal/Michigan](https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/RMALocal/Michigan)

**Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP):**
This program provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when natural disasters damage crops, decrease overall yields, damage inventory or prevent planting.

*Eligible Entities:* Eligibility for NAP coverage requires the crop is uninsurable with an RMA crop insurance policy if three conditions are met: (1) there is an RMA policy for the crop (e.g., lettuce); (2) for the type of the crop you are considering (e.g., head); and (3) for the intended use (e.g., fresh).


*Program Contact:* To locate a local Farm Service Agency office, visit: [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Michigan/index](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Michigan/index)

**Specialty Crops and Organics**

**Specialty Crops**
The 2018 Farm Bill continued support for Specialty Crop Block Grants and improved coordination of multi-state projects. The bill eliminated the citrus disease research carve-out of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative to provide more mandatory funding for all specialty crop research. These funds will help Michigan farmers combat diseases like spotted wing drosophila in tart cherries and the marmorated stink bug in apples.

**Specialty Crop Block Grant Program:**
The goal of this program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops including fruits, vegetables, nuts, and nursery crops by awarding competitive grants to support infrastructure, education, promotion, research, outreach, coordination, or business planning. In the past,
awardees have supported projects to develop urban community gardens and urban agriculture education.

*Eligible Entities:* Block grants are awarded directly to State departments of agriculture, which then award the funding to individual projects. Government organizations, non-profits, and educational institutions who focus on specialty crop promotion are eligible to receive funding.

*More information:* For more information about Michigan’s Specialty Crop Block Grant, visit the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s website: [https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78390---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78390---,00.html)

*Program Contact:* Heather Throne at 517-712-084 or throneh@michigan.gov

**Organics**

The 2018 Farm Bill made significant new investment into organic programs. These programs will help Michigan’s organic producers get organic certification and protect them from fraudulent claims and imports.

*2018 Farm Bill Highlights:*

- Permanent mandatory funding for organic research.
- Improved organic trade enforcement tools to ensure that Michigan families are getting organic certified products that are imported into the country.
- New funding for organic-cost share assistance.

*Implementation Status:* USDA plans to update an existing regulation to include the new organic trade enforcement provisions. USDA has not provided an update on when these changes will go into effect.

**Organic Certification Cost Share:**

This program helps organic farmers and handlers offset the costs of organic certification by providing a small reimbursement of no more than $750 per year, capped at 75% of total certification costs.

*Eligible Entities:* Organic producers and handlers may apply for organic certification cost-share assistance through local USDA Farm Service Agency offices.


*Contact information:* To locate your local FSA office, visit: [http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=mi&agency=fsa](http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=mi&agency=fsa)
Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative:
This program funds research projects on organic agricultural systems, ranging from improving weed management and developing organic seed to enhancing environmental sustainability and carbon sequestration on organic farms.

Eligible Entities: 1862 Land-Grant Institutions, 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, For-profit Organizations Other Than Small Businesses, Private Institutions of Higher Ed, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, State Controlled Institutions of Higher Ed, Other or Additional Information (See below):

1. State agricultural experiment stations; 2. colleges and universities; 3. university research foundations; 4. other research institutions and organizations; 5. Federal agencies; 6. national laboratories; 7. private organizations or corporations; 8. individuals who are United States citizens or nationals; or 9. any group consisting of 2 or more of the entities described in subparagraphs (1) through (8).

Implementation Status: NIFA is currently accepting proposals. Closing date is Thursday, May 2, 2019.


Contact information: Mathieu Ngouajio, National Program Leader, (202) 401-4895 or mngouajio@nifa.usda.gov

Urban Agriculture Programs

Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

The 2018 Farm Bill created a new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production to be a primary point of contact for urban farmers across the country, develop new policy related to urban agriculture, provide technical assistance to urban producers, and advise the Secretary on issues related to urban agriculture production.

2018 Farm Bill Highlights:
- Creates new programs and resources for urban agriculture.
- Authorizes $25 million a year in annual appropriations – will need to get a Congressional appropriation before funding can be awarded through the office.

Implementation Status: USDA is working to implement this provision but has not given a timeline for when this new office will be open. USDA has also not indicated where within the Department the new Office of Urban Agriculture will be located and do not have a website link for the new office.

Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee:
The 2018 Farm Bill created a new urban agriculture advisory committee to provide advice and direction to USDA on urban agriculture policy development. This advisory committee will also
consult with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture on awards made through the urban agriculture research, education and extension grants.

*Eligible Participants:* urban agriculture producers; university extension or representatives from higher education; non-profit representative of a public health, environmental, or community organization; business or economic development entity; an individual with supply chain experience; financing entity; or other participants who have experience in urban agriculture as determined by USDA.

*Implementation Status:* USDA is working to implement this provision but has not given a timeline for when they will issue a solicitation to fill positions on this new advisory committee.

**Urban Agriculture Grants:**
The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes new grants to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production. These grants are intended to serve multiple farmers or gardeners for the purposes of community service, education, farm incubation, or making a profit. These grants may be used to assist with costs related to agricultural production, which may include land acquisition, equipment, utilities, seeds and plants, supplies, basic transportation, and farm cooperative development.

*Eligible Entities:* nonprofit organizations, a unit of local government, tribal government, and k-12 schools.

*Implementation Status:* This program has an authorization for annual appropriations and will require new funding before USDA moves to implement this provision.

**Compost and Food Waste Pilot Program:**
The 2018 Farm Bill creates a new pilot program to encourage municipalities to develop compost plans and food waste reduction strategies. These new initiatives will increase access to compost for urban farmers and local communities find solutions to food waste. USDA may enter into 10 cooperative agreements to implement this pilot program.

*Eligible Entities:* municipalities, counties, local governments, or city planners.

*Implementation Status:* This program has an authorization for annual appropriations and will require new funding before USDA moves to implement this provision.

**County Committee Pilot Program:**
The 2018 Farm Bill requires the Secretary of Agriculture to create 10 Farm Service Agency county committees in urban and suburban counties with high concentrations of urban or suburban farms. Establishment of these committees will better integrate local farmers with USDA farm programs and resources.

*Implementation Status:* USDA is working to implement this provision but has not given a timeline for when the new county committees will be in place.
Research

Urban Agriculture Research Grants:
The 2018 Farm Bill creates new research, education, and extension grants for urban agriculture. This new program will help researchers better understand and support urban agriculture, which may include developing of new tools for soil remediation, determining best management practices for dealing with pest and disease in urban areas, and exploring new technology that can assist in urban production.

Eligible Entities: State agricultural experiment stations; colleges and universities; university research foundations; other research institutions and organizations; federal agencies; national laboratories; private organizations, foundations, or corporations; or individuals.

Implementation Status: USDA is working to implement this provision but has not given a timeline for when this new grant program will be available. USDA has not updated the National Institute for Food and Agriculture website to include the new urban agriculture research program.

Conservation

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):
This program helps farmers and ranchers plan and implement conservation practices by providing technical and cost-share assistance. For urban agriculture operations, EQIP has supported the construction of high tunnels (also known as hoop houses) to extend a producer’s growing season while conserving resources. The 2018 Farm Bill included new language that allows EQIP funding to be used for soil testing and remediation of soils for food production. This will help urban farmers test their soil for potential contaminants and better understand what can be produced on their farms.

Eligible Entities: Owners of land in agricultural or forest production or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land and that have a natural resource concern on the land may participate in EQIP.

Implementation Status: USDA is working to implement the new 2018 Farm Bill changes on soil testing and remediation of soils for food production but has not indicated when these changes will be made in the program.

More information: To learn more about EQIP in Michigan, visit:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mi/programs/?cid=nrcs141p2_024538

Program Contact: Becky Otto, EQIP Coordinator at (517) 324-5257 or becky.otto@mi.usda.gov
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG):
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies for conservation on agricultural lands. CIG could be used to support innovative conservation practices in urban areas and support urban agriculture production. NRCS will accept proposals for single or multiyear projects, not to exceed three years. The 2018 Farm Bill included new language that allows CIG funding to be eligible for urban, indoor, or other emerging agricultural operations.

Eligible Entities: Individuals, businesses, local governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities and American Indian tribes are eligible to submit proposals

Implementation Status: Michigan has announced up to $75,000 available for grant proposals due by May 31, 2019. Priorities for 2019 Conservation Innovation Grants include; grazing lands, organic agriculture systems, soil health, water quality and water quantity.

More information: To learn more about CIG in Michigan, visit: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mi/programs/financial/cig/

Program Contact: Kim Wieber, Assistant State Conservationist-Programs at (517) 324-5256 or kim.wieber@mi.usda.gov

Implementation Status: National CIG priorities include; increasing the pace and scale of conservation adoption, water quantity, pollinator habitat, and urban agriculture. Applications for the national program are open and due by July 30, 2019.


Program Contact: National program contact can be emailed at nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov.

Additional Resources

Additional USDA Local Food Programs and Resources

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE):
The goal of SARE is to provide grants and education programs to advance agricultural innovation and sustainability, including urban agriculture. Since 1988, SARE has support 256 projects with a total of $6.4 million in funding. Michigan is in the North Central SARE region, which has grant programs for Research and Education and Professional Development, as well as grants for Farmers and Ranchers, Graduate Students, Youth Educators, and Partnerships between agriculture professionals and small groups of farmers who seek to find sustainable solutions to problems through on-farm research, demonstration, and education activities. Awards and project duration vary depending on the type of grant and project.
Eligible Entities: Nonprofit organization, researchers, and individual producers are eligible.

More information:
- http://www.sare.org/
- https://www.northcentralsare.org/State-Programs/Michigan

Program Contacts:
- Dean Baas, Michigan SARE Co-Coordinator, MSU Extension at (269) 967-9672 or at baasdean@anr.msu.edu
- Adam Ingrao, Michigan SARE Co-Coordinator, Veteran’s Liaison/Agricultural Entomologist, MSU Extension at (517) 355-3923

Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR):
The USDA SBIR program provides grants to support small businesses with innovative ideas that meet specific research and development needs. Projects may focus on managing the movement of products throughout a supply chain, energy efficiency innovation, or capturing and relaying real-time market data. Funds awarded may be up to $100,000 for Phase I projects and up to $450,000 for Phase II projects. This program has been used to support food hubs and other local food projects in urban areas in the past. USDA’s SBIR program is administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Eligible Entities: For-profit small businesses are eligible to apply.

More information:
http://nifa.usda.gov/program/small-business-innovation-research-program

Program Contact: Scott Dockum, USDA SBIR Program Coordinator at (202) 720-6346 and at sdockum@nifa.usda.gov

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP):
The 2018 Farm Bill provides $50 million in annual funding for REAP. The program also supports small businesses in eligible rural areas. Despite the “rural” in its name, REAP provides grants, loans guarantees, and technical assistance to agricultural producers in both rural and urban areas to make energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation or high-efficiency heating, and purchase or install renewable energy systems. Supported renewable energy types include biomass, geothermal energy, hydropower, hydrogen, wind, solar, and ocean (tidal, current, thermal) generation. Loan guarantees may be provided for loans ranging from $5,000 to $25 million, and grant awards range from $1,500 to $500,000. Matching requirements depend on the type of grant or loan being applied for.

Eligible Entities: Agricultural producers with at least 50 percent of gross income coming from agricultural operations are eligible to apply.

Program Contact: Rick Vanderbeek, Michigan Rural Development Business Programs at (517) 324-5157 and at rick.vanderbeek@mi.usda.gov.

Cooperative Extension:
All universities engage in research and teaching, but the nation’s more than 100 land-grant colleges and universities have a third, critical mission — extension. Through extension, land-grant colleges and universities bring vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, and young people.

More information: To learn more about Michigan State University’s extension services, visit: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/

National Agricultural Library:
The National Agricultural Library maintains a list of resources on urban agriculture and community gardens.


Other Federal Support for Local Food Programs

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program:
The EPA Brownfields program provides funding, tools, and information to support clean-up and reinvestment in properties whose use may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. Brownfields clean-up for urban agriculture or gardening is a supported use. Maximum grant awards depend on the type of grant; EPA offers assessment grants, cleanup grants, job training grants, and Revolving Loan Fund grants.

Eligible Entities: Eligible entities for Brownfields grants include state, local, and most tribal governments; general purpose units of local government, land clearance authorities, regional council or redevelopment agencies; or non-profit organizations.

More information:
- https://www.epa.gov/brownfields
- https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/turning-brownfields-community-supported-and-urban-agriculture

Program Contact: EPA Region 5 Brownfields Contact is Yolanda Bouchee at (312) 353-3209 and at Bouchee.Yolanda@epa.gov

Department of Commerce:
The Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the Department of Commerce has programs that support construction or upgrade of public facilities, technical assistance for
economic development, and other resources. Local and regional food systems are not an explicit focus of EDA programs, but they have been supported in the past.

**Eligible Entities:** Eligible applicants for EDA financial assistance include District Organizations of a designated Economic Development District; an Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; State, county, city, or other political subdivisions of a State; institutions of higher education; or public or private non-profit organizations or associations acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.

**More information:** [http://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/](http://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/)

**Program Contact:** Lee J. Shirey, Regional Economic Development Representative for Michigan and Wisconsin, at (312) 789-9751 or lshirey@eda.gov

**Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Program:**
The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) program under the Department of Treasury expands access to credit, capital, and financial services to underserved populations and communities by providing financial or technical assistance to CFDIs, who in turn provide financing to third parties. Treasury also offers a similar program, the New Markets Tax Credit Program, to eligible Community Development Entities (CDEs).

**Eligible Entities:** Eligible entities are certified CDFIs (banks, thrifts, credit unions, loan funds, venture capital funds) or CDEs with a principal mission of serving underserved populations. Specific projects seeking funding should contact local CDFIs/CDEs that received assistance through this program.

**More information:**
- New Markets Tax Credit Program: [https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx)

**Program Contact:** Community Development Financial Institutions Help Desk at (202) 653-0421 and at cdfihelp@cdfi.treas.gov

**Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):**
HHS has several programs that provide funding to help improve the health of communities, including the Community Economic Development grant program (CED). CED grants are part of a broader strategy to address objectives such as decreasing dependency on federal programs, chronic unemployment, and community deterioration in urban and rural areas. HHS also has a Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program (RAPP) to help refugee farmers earn viable incomes through agriculture. This program provides grants to support organizations and provide training in business, pest control, land financing, and marketing.

**Eligible Entities:**
- Community Economic Development: Applicants must be a private, non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC) have articles of incorporation,
bylaws, or other official documents demonstrating that the CDC has a principal purpose of planning, developing, or managing community economic development activities, and the Board of Directors must have representation from each of the following: community residents, business leaders, and civic leaders.

- Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program: State, local, or tribal governments; non-profit organizations; institutions of higher education.

More information:
- Community Economic Development: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/ced/about

Program Contact:
- Community Economic Development: Rafael J. Elizalde, Program Manager, Community Economic Development Program, Office of Community Services at (202) 401-5115 and at OCSgrants@acf.hhs.gov
- Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program: Yimeem Vu, Program Manager, at (202) 401-4825 or Yimeem.Vu@acf.hhs.gov

Small Business Administration (SBA):
SBA provides support to small businesses through capital, contracts, and counseling. The USDA and SBA have partnered to encourage sustainable growth and development in the United States, including support for local and regional food systems. Some of the loan programs administered by the SBA include the 7(a) loan program, Certified Development Company/504 loan program, and Small Business Microloans.

Eligible Entities: Eligibility requirements vary by program, but typically applicants must be operated for profit, meet SBA’s size requirements, have reasonable owner equity to invest, and use alternative financial resources before seeking assistance. Farms and agricultural businesses are eligible, but these applicants should first explore USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, particularly if the applicant has a prior or existing relationship with FSA.

More information: https://www.sba.gov/loanprograms

Program Contact: Michigan SBA District Office at (313) 226-6075 or Michigan@sba.gov