

NRCS Texas Urban and Rural Conservation Project



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas has opportunities for Urban and Rural Conservation Grants.

This program was put together in an effort to address food deserts and educate both rural and urban citizens and youth on the benefits of locally grown fresh produce and greening of the urban landscape. It is aimed at empowering urban communities to use agriculture and conservation as a platform to promote education, sustainability, and community as well as helping provide food and environmental benefits. Grants are available for projects that address hunger challenges in areas where local, fresh, and nutritious foods are not available.

Urban Areas

Interest in urban farming within city limits continues to grow in popularity as producers seek to find sustainable food sources to feed growing populations. With the vast majority of Texans living in urban areas, this program presents a unique opportunity for community-based agriculture.

Rural Areas

Gaining access to healthy and affordable food can be a challenge for rural residents. Many rural areas lack food retailers and are considered food deserts: areas with limited supplies of fresh, affordable foods. Ironically, some of these food deserts are in areas where farming is important to the local economy. This program can help alleviate some of the challenges facing rural communities.

Grant Opportunity

The **Texas Urban and Rural Conservation Project** grant is available to states, political subdivisions, or agency thereof, a public or private agency, organizations,

and federally recognized Native American tribal governments.

Project G.R.E.E.N. (Growing Roots for Education, Environment and Nutrition) grants are available only to elementary, middle and high schools or school districts and institutions of higher education.



The grants have four components –community gardens, pollinator habitat, high tunnels and rainwater harvesting systems. Applicants can apply for one, two, three or all four components of the grant.

Community Gardens

Community gardens are plots of land, that can be in rural or urban areas, that are rented by individuals or groups for private gardens or are for the benefit of the people caring for the garden. The simple act of planting a garden can help unite neighbors in a common effort and inspire locally-led solutions to challenges facing our state. Grants up to \$4,000 are available for community gardens. The funds are to be utilized for garden supplies which can include tools, seeds, plants, fertilizer, soil additives, irrigation materials and other garden materials.

Applying for a Grant

A Notice of Funding (NFO) announcing the availability of funds will be posted to www.grants.gov. The NFO will contain detailed information on the program description, application and submission process, funding restrictions, application review information and selection process.

Applications eligible to apply include: states, political subdivisions, or agency thereof, a public or private agency, organizations, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments.

Schools, school districts and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply through Project G.R.E.E.N.

Whether you are in a rural or urban area, the process is the same.

The process is competitive, and the grant awards are typically one-year duration.

There is no cost share required.

Refer to the NFO for detailed information on how to apply for a grant.

Pollinator Gardens

Pollinators are a crucial part of healthy agricultural and natural landscapes. Pollinator habitat planned with gardens can provide an increase in harvest potential while providing food and habitat for declining insect communities in Texas. Improving existing and providing new habitat for pollinators has become a major focus for NRCS. Grants up to \$3,000 are available to establish pollinator habitat.

High Tunnels

High tunnels for crops are quickly becoming part of the agricultural production landscape. High tunnels are an enclosed polyethylene, polycarbonate, plastic, or fabric covered structure that is used to cover and protect crops from sun, wind, excessive rainfall, or cold and can extend a growing season in an environmentally safe manner. Grants up to \$6,500 are available to construct a high tunnel. NRCS standards and specifications must be followed when constructing a high tunnel.

Rainwater Harvesting Systems

Rainwater harvesting is collecting the runoff from a structure or other impervious surface in order to store it for later use. Rainwater collection systems are as simple as collecting rain in a rain barrel. Grants up to \$5,000 are available to establish a rainwater harvesting system for a new or existing garden.

More Information

For details, contact [Bertha T. Venegas](#), State Outreach Specialist at (830) 249-3508 extension 103 or visit USDA-NRCS State website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/tx/programs/landscape/?cid=nrcseprd1458072>



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