Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications from Florida urban agricultural producers for Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) projects under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which offers producers technical and financial assistance to address resource concerns on their land.

Approximately $500,000 in funding will be available to Florida participants through a competitive process.

WHY URBAN FARMING?
NRCS serves all agriculture – large to small, conventional to organic, rural to urban. As American agriculture continues to grow in new directions, NRCS conservation assistance is growing along with it. By bringing cultivation and opportunity to both rural and urban areas, NRCS addresses many needs to restore the health of the soil and the health of people. Urban agriculture pioneers grow fresh, healthy produce and improve the beauty of their neighborhoods. Through community gardens, produce is grown and donated to those who need it, and children and adults learn about agriculture first-hand. Farmer’s markets offer easy access to fresh foods in areas where grocery stores are miles away and they provide new income streams for residents.

FLORIDA PRIORITIES
Urban agricultural projects will be ranked according to priority resource concerns. The top three resource concerns in Florida are:

- source water depletion
- degraded plant conditions
- sediment, nutrients, and pathogen loss

Other priority resource concerns include field pesticide loss, inefficient energy use, pest pressure, soil quality limitations, terrestrial habitat, weather resilience, and storage and handling of pollutants.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: May 13, 2022
USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepts these applications year-round; however, Florida producers and landowners should apply by May 13, 2022, to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Applications received after the batching date will automatically be considered during the next funding cycle.
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AREAS
Priority areas for funding are those that have a population of 50 thousand or higher and include a two-mile adjoining radius. (Please see map of Urbanized Areas in Florida below, per the Census Bureau.) All practices, except conservation planning activities, are eligible and all land uses are eligible for the urban agriculture program.

HOW TO GET STARTED
To apply for EQIP’s EQIP Urban Agricultural Initiative Projects, contact NRCS at your local USDA Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment, via phone, email, and other digital tools. Also, work with your local Farm Service Agency office to establish farm records. Find your local Service Center at www.farmers.gov/service-locator. Because of the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. On farmers.gov, you can create a secure account, apply for NRCS programs, electronically sign documents and manage your conservation contracts.

NRCS Florida State Office Contact: Teri Nehls, Program Specialist, Teri.Nehls@usda.gov, (352) 338-9545. Florida News Updates: News Releases | NRCS Florida (usda.gov)

OFFICE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE
The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by NRCS and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies, including FSA, to 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 at farmers.gov/urban. National Info Contact: urbanagriculture@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

May 3, 2022