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Agriculture

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News Release

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High tunnel assistance available in Cincinnati

Application Deadline is January 15, 2021

COLUMBUS, OH, Dec. 14, 2020 – The United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has an opportunity to those interested in growing urban and rural produce within the Cincinnati city limits to apply for financial and technical assistance for high tunnel systems, commonly referred to as hoop houses.

Imagine enjoying freshly harvested vegetables from a local community producer all winter long. High tunnels make growing vegetables possible long after the first frost. In addition, urban and rural area farmers can build high tunnels, in or near community gardens and residential areas, allowing growers to cultivate and harvest a source of nutritious food closer to where they live, especially for populations living in a food desert.

A high tunnel sits over top of the garden and uses arch shaped aluminum poles to support removable heavy plastic sheets that trap the sun’s heat, warming the air. Most have a peak height that allows an adult to stand easily with room to spare. They look like greenhouses except plants grow in the ground instead of in pots.

Cincinnati is on the forefront of providing opportunities for diversified farming operations by offering more flexibility in allowing farming practices within the city limits. Applicants approved for a high tunnel system must adhere to local zoning and building requirements for high tunnel systems. Applicants must also have control of the land where the high tunnel system will be installed.

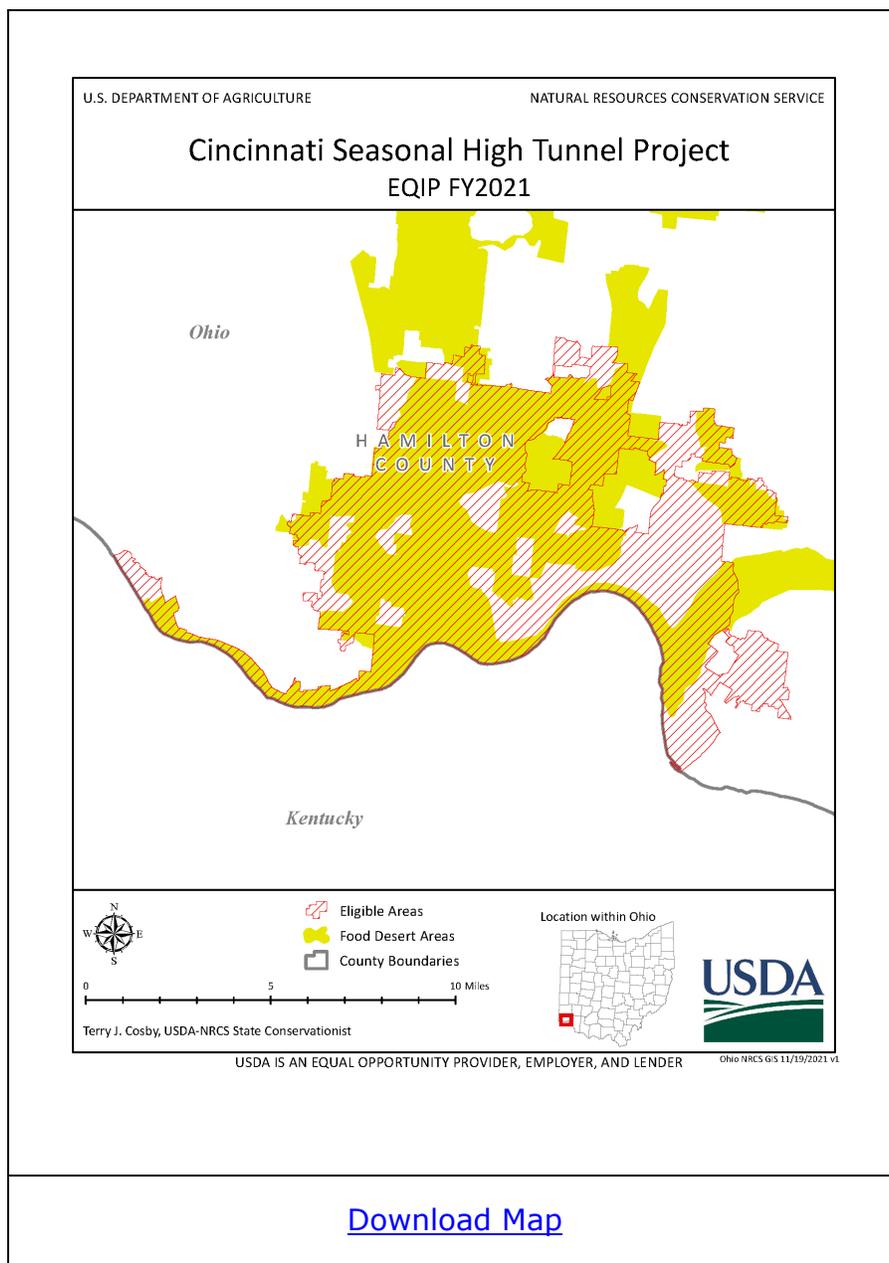
To apply for a high tunnel system in Cincinnati, contact NRCS’ Ms. Lori Lenhart at lori.lenhart@usda.gov or 614-653-3460. Ms. Lenhart will assess proposed high tunnel sites and help applicants through the application process. If you have an interest in a high tunnel system and are located outside of the Cincinnati city limits, contact your [local NRCS conservationist](#) as soon as possible. Be sure to check the status of your Service Center when you reach out to us. For offices with restrictions on in-person appointments, we are

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still available by phone, email, and through other digital tools. Your Service Center's status is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>.

Applications signed and submitted to NRCS by the January 15, 2021 deadline will be evaluated for fiscal year 2021 funding. Visit Ohio NRCS website under "[EQIP Funding Categories](#)" for more details. To learn more about EQIP or other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit [Get Started with NRCS](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).



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