Urban Agriculture County Committees
Frequently Asked Questions

August 2023

Are Farm Service Agency (FSA) Urban County Committees New?

In 2020, USDA began standing up the first-ever FSA county committees focused exclusively on urban agriculture. These new committees are part of USDA's efforts to better support urban agriculture and each consists of 3 to 11 members. County committees have been used as the vehicle for farmer input on FSA programs since the 1930s. They represent farmers and set priorities at the local level.

What will the Urban County Committees Do?

The urban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the urban county committees may address areas such as food and nutrition access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community composting, and food waste reduction. They also make determinations, listen to appeals and make decisions, and conduct outreach to urban and innovative producers for both FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Why is it important?

Until now, there hasn't been a procedure for local urban growers to affect USDA priorities and funding. Urban and innovative producers are uniquely qualified to identify the needs of growers and their communities and provide direction on how USDA can best serve them. By serving on a county committee, you will be included in local decisions for USDA programs and can positively impact the services USDA provides urban farms.

How Long is a Term and What is the Time Commitment?

Committee members meet at least quarterly and terms are three years. Members have the option to run for reelection for up to three terms or nine years.

Where Are the Urban County Committees?

A list of locations with urban county committees can be found on fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Urban producers outside of the pilot areas who are interested on serving on their nearest county committee can inquire at the local FSA county office. Find your local office using our Service Center locator tool at farmers.gov/service-locator.

How Do the Nominations Work?

Urban farmers who participate in a USDA program or cooperate by providing USDA information about their farming operation in the local area identified for the urban county committee may either be nominated or may nominate themselves or others. Organizations may nominate candidates.

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To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections or farmers.gov/urban.

When are the Deadlines?

Mid-June – FSA will begin accepting nominations for urban county committees.

Early August– Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office.

Early November – Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters.

Early December – Last day to return ballots to service center.

Jan. 1 – New member takes office.

New locations establishing urban county committees may have a special election timeline that will be publicized locally. After the initial establishment, new committees will follow a yearly election cycle as outlined above.

USDA Programs for Urban Farmers include:

FSA – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Organic Certification Cost Share Program, microloans, and Farm Storage Facility Loans.

NRCS – Conservation financial and technical assistance, including high tunnels, soil health, and irrigation.

How can I serve as an advisor on an urban county committee?

In addition to elected or appointed members, FSA county committees may also include non-voting minority advisors. Advisors are appointed to county committees to ensure underserved (minority or women) producers are fairly represented. Anyone interested in serving as a county committee advisor may submit their request in writing to the local FSA county office.

For More Information
Visit farmers.gov/urban and fsa.usda.gov/elections.

URBAN GARDEN