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Oregon FSA Newsletter - May 2024

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Oregon FSA Newsletter - May 2024

Farm Service Agency | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Risk Management Agency

- [Black Food Sovereignty Coalition & Ecotrust to Distribute \\$150,000 in Microgrants](#)
- [USDA Seeks Members for Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#)
- [USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs](#)
- [Farm Loan Interest Rates - May 2024](#)
- [Want To Grow Your Career With FSA? We're Hiring A County Executive Director In Redmond, OR!](#)
- [Need Help? Give The FSA Call Center A Ring!](#)

Black Food Sovereignty Coalition & Ecotrust to Distribute \$150,000 in Microgrants



In partnership with Ecotrust, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched a new urban agriculture center for the Portland region to support urban agriculture efforts of historically underserved farmers.

Producers need targeted, focused, and intentional outreach, education, and support. This includes community-led, community-centered, and culturally appropriate solutions that will support their involvement and engagement in Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other USDA programs and services. Ecotrust has committed to build the capacity of the Oregon's FSA to serve producers inclusively by conducting outreach, distributing \$150,000 in microgrants, providing direct technical assistance and facilitating on-farm engagements while building awareness of USDA programs. These efforts are intended to result in a greater number of underserved producers utilizing federal programs that support conservation practices, land access, and operations expansion.

Applications for microgrants are currently being accepted. Applicants can apply for a one-time grant of \$5,000. If awarded, funds must be spent by December 1, 2024. Applications are due by close of business on **May 31, 2024**.

Learn more from our [informational flier](#) and list of [resources](#). The purpose of the microgrants is to increase the capacity of urban farmers who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) for growing food, medicines, fibers, and/or commodities and for expanding their growing operations. Grants will increase urban BIPOC farmers' capacity for implementing climate-friendly and/or conservation practices that improve soil quality and increase their resilience to a changing climate if funding is not currently available through existing USDA programs.

This work is grounded in partnerships between Black Food Sovereignty Coalition, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon State University Center for Small Farms, Oregon Metro, and Multnomah County Health Department's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health program that works to ensure the agency delivers equitable service to all.

USDA Seeks Members for Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production



Nominations open from May 7, 2024 to July 7, 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking nominations for four positions on the [Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#). USDA will accept nominations from May 7, 2024, to July 7, 2024. The 12-member Committee, which first convened in March 2022, is part of USDA's efforts to increase support for urban agriculture and innovative production. Members of the Committee provide input on policy development and help identify barriers to urban agriculture as USDA works to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country.

Members of the Committee include representative from urban and innovative agricultural production, higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chain, and financing. Last year, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack [appointed four new members](#) to the Committee to replace members whose terms expired. The Committee's last [public meeting](#) was held in April 2024.

Nominations

USDA is seeking nominations for individuals representing a broad spectrum of expertise. Four positions are open for nominations including:

- One individual who is an agricultural producer or farmer using innovative technology.
- One individual representing an institution of higher education or extension program.
- One individual with supply chain experience, which may include a food aggregator, wholesale food distributor, food hub, or an individual who has direct-to-consumer market experience.
- One individual representing related experience in urban, indoor and other emerging agriculture production practices.

Individuals who wish to be considered for membership must submit a nomination package including the following:

- A completed [background disclosure form \(Form AD-755\)](#) signed by the nominee.
- A brief summary explaining the nominee's interest in one or more open vacancies including any unique qualifications that address the membership composition and criteria described above.
- A resume providing the nominee's background, experience, and educational qualifications.
- Recent publications by the nominee relative to extending support for urban agriculture or innovative production (optional).
- Letter(s) of endorsement (optional).

Nomination packages must be submitted by email to UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov or postmarked by July 7, 2024. If sending by mail, packages should be addressed to USDA NRCS, Attn: Brian Guse, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4083, Washington, DC 20250. Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership, including self-nominations. For special accommodations, contact Markus Holliday at UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov.

Additional details are available in the [Federal Register notice](#).

More Information

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 that support urban agriculture and innovative production. The Committee is part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture and innovative production. Other efforts include:

- Investing \$9.1 million for [Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#) competitive grants in fiscal year 2023.
- Administering the [People's Garden Initiative](#), which celebrates collaborative gardens across the country and worldwide that benefit their communities by growing fresh, healthy food and supporting resilient, local food systems using sustainable practices and providing greenspace.
- Investing approximately \$11.5 million in [cooperative agreements](#) that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans in fiscal year 2023.
- Investing \$40 million, made possible by President Biden's American Rescue Plan, into partnerships with community-based organizations to that will conduct outreach, education and technical assistance to support urban producers.
- Investing in [risk management education](#) to broaden reach of crop insurance among urban and innovative producers.
- Organizing 27 FSA urban county committees to make important decisions about how FSA farm programs are administered locally. Urban farmers who participate in USDA programs in the areas selected are encouraged to participate by nominating and voting for county committee members.
- Establishing 17 new [Urban Service Centers](#) staffed by FSA and NRCS employees where urban producers can access farm loan, conservation, disaster assistance and risk management programs.
- Partnering with the [Vermont Law and Graduate School Center for Agriculture and Food Systems](#) to develop resources that help growers understand and work through local policies.

Learn more at www.usda.gov/urban. For additional resources available to producers, download the [Urban Agriculture at a Glance brochure](#) or visit www.farmers.gov/urban.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities throughout America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).

USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that Farm Loan Programs can be used to support a variety of climate-smart agriculture practices, which build on many practices that farmers and ranchers already use, like cover cropping, nutrient management and conservation tillage.

Climate-smart agricultural practices generate significant environmental benefits by capturing and sequestering carbon, improving water management, restoring soil health and more. Farm loan funding complements other tools to help producers adopt climate-smart practices, such as FSA's [Conservation Reserve Program](#), [crop insurance options](#) that support conservation, and conservation programs offered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

FSA offers [multiple types of loans](#) to help farmers and ranchers start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. These loans can provide the capital needed to invest in climate-smart practices and equipment including the establishment of rotational grazing systems, precision agriculture equipment or machinery for conversion to no-till residue management. Additionally, for programs like Conservation Reserve Program and NRCS conservation programs where USDA and the producer share the implementation cost, a farm loan could be used for the producer's share, if consistent with the authorized loan purpose.

Some additional ways farm loans can be leveraged to invest in climate-smart agriculture practices or equipment include:

- **Precision Agriculture Equipment** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment like GPS globes, monitors, or strip till fertilizer equipment.
- **Cover Crops** - Eligible producers could use an Annual Operating Loan for seed costs.
- **No/Reduced Till** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment.
- **Livestock Facility Air Scrubber or Waste Treatment** - Eligible producers could use a Farm Ownership Loan for capital improvements to livestock facilities.
- **Cross Fencing** - Eligible producers could use an Annual or Term Operating Loan to purchase fencing and installation equipment.

Visit the [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry webpage on farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov) to learn more and see detailed examples of how an FSA farm loan can support climate-smart agriculture practices.

Farm Loan Interest Rates - May 2024

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for May 2024 are as follows:

[Farm Operating Loans](#) (Direct): 5.250%

[Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 5.500%

[Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct, Joint Financing): 3.500%

[Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Down Payment): 1.500%

[Emergency Loan](#) (Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750%

Want To Grow Your Career With FSA? We're Hiring A County Executive Director In Redmond, OR!



The Farm Service Agency is hiring s County Executive Director in Redmond, OR.

Open Period: 05/02/2024 to 05/16/2024

Who May Apply: Internal FSA Nationwide

[Apply Here!](#)

Need Help? Give The FSA Call Center A Ring!

Farmers and ranchers can contact a call center to receive one-on-one assistance from USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) employees ready to help. By calling 877-508-8364, customers can ask questions about FSA programs.

The call center was created as a way to better serve customers, especially those who have not worked with FSA previously.

Customers who contact the call center can expect to receive the same great service they would receive as if they were in their FSA county office.

FSA Call Center staff can also provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers using the call center will still call 877-508-8364 and select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish-speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the call center staff.

The call center is just one of many ways USDA has adjusted and added flexibilities to meet the needs of our customers. One thing remains the same, USDA stands committed to offering exceptional customer service to our nation's farmers and ranchers.



7620 SW Mohawk St.
Tualatin, Oregon 97062
Phone: 503-692-3688 Fax: 855-824-6185

How can we help you? Submit questions or requests for further information to [ASK.USDA.GOV](https://ask.usda.gov) or 1-833-ONE-USDA.



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To subscribe, text FSNOW (372-669).

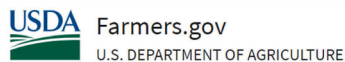
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