

Resources and Funding

The University of Georgia

➤ Where can I find technical assistance?

- **Master Gardeners:**
 - Master Gardeners are strong resources for gardening advice. Trained by USDA's Cooperative Extension System, Master Gardeners are community members who volunteer their time to help Americans plant, grow, and harvest fresh produce from gardens. Master Gardeners are available in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. To find a Master Gardener in your community, please visit: <https://extension.uga.edu/programs-services/georgia-master-gardener-extension-volunteer-program/find-a-program.html>.
- **USDA Cooperative Extension:**
 - Every state and territory has a Cooperative Extension state office at its land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices. These offices are staffed by experts who can provide helpful, practical information on gardening and nutrition. Please consult this map to find the office closest to your community: <https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices.html>.
- **The People's Garden:**
 - This initiative challenges USDA employees to establish People's Gardens at USDA facilities worldwide or help communities create gardens. People's Gardens vary in size and type, but all have a common purpose – to help the local community and environment. Visit the People's Garden website to find the garden closest to you. You can register your community garden on their garden map: www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden.
- **American Community Gardening Association:**
 - The mission of the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) is to build community by increasing and enhancing community gardening and greening across the United States and Canada. Staff, board members, and volunteers answer thousands of requests for information each year about community gardening and greening. Their website also has resource guides to help you get started. For more information, visit www.communitygarden.org.



- **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):**
 - Nearly every county in the United States has an NRCS office to help private landowners steward their land. NRCS helps landowners and land managers with conservation planning designed to benefit soil, water, air, plants, and animals, ultimately building more productive land and healthier ecosystems. NRCS staff can help incorporate sustainability into your garden design: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.
- **USDA National Agricultural Library:**
 - Before you start gardening, remember to test your soil for safety! The National Agricultural Library provides listings of labs nationwide: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/> and <https://www.nal.usda.gov/natural-resources-conservation-environment/soil>. You can also call your local Cooperative Extension office or visit the [soil and water testing services](#) webpage or the State Department of Agriculture to find out where to get the soil tested.

➤ **What resources are available for teaching kids about gardening?**

- **Junior Master Gardener:**
 - This program provides an educational curriculum to help kids learn how to garden. You can organize youth in your community to register as a Junior Master Gardener group. Junior Master Gardener is a 4-H youth development program of the USDA Cooperative Extension system: www.jmgkids.us/.
- **Grow It, Try It, Like It!**
 - USDA has created a garden-themed nutrition education kit to introduce young children to several fruits and vegetables. The kit is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it>.

➤ **Do you have any resources on urban agriculture?**

- **The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**
 - The EPA offers information on urban agriculture, including start-up advice, educational materials, and links to other resources: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/resources-about-brownfields-and-urban-agriculture>.

➤ **Where can I find funding for my garden?**

* Cities and towns can strengthen their local food systems through a variety of federal, state, local, and philanthropic projects, and programs. USDA and other federal agencies help support local food systems by working with producers, engaging with communities, financial local processing, and distribution, or helping retailers develop local food connections. Below are some of the resources available.



- **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food:**
 - This is a USDA-wide effort to connect consumers to their local producers better. The website provides a list of the major loan and grant programs available through the Department to support the development of local agriculture. Some programs, such as the Community Food Projects grant program, can be used for community gardening projects: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants>.
- **Let's Move! Faith and Communities Toolkit:**
 - The appendix of the Let's Move! Faith and Communities Toolkit lists many national foundations and nonprofit organizations working to reverse childhood obesity. Some organizations have funding and/or technical assistance for projects that increase access to healthy, affordable food: https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/lets_move_toolkit.pdf

USDA Agricultural Marketing Services

- **Farmers Market Promotion Program**
 - The program aims to increase domestic consumption of and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets. This program can support the development, improvement, and expansion of farmers markets, agritourist activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Grant awards range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 for capacity-building projects and \$250,000 to \$500,000 for community development, training, and technical assistance projects. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpps>
- **Local Food Promotion Program**
 - The program offers grant funds with a 25 percent match to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets. Planning grants fund the planning stages of establishing or expanding a local and regional food business enterprise. Activities can include but are not limited to market research, feasibility studies, and business planning. Implementation grants help establish, improve, or expand local and regional food business enterprises. Activities can include but are not limited to training and technical assistance for the business enterprise and/or for producers working with the business enterprise; outreach and marketing to buyers and consumers; and non-construction infrastructure improvements to business enterprise facilities or information technology systems. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>
- **Organic Certification Cost Share Programs**
 - Two Organic Certification Cost Share Programs help certified organic operations defray the costs associated with organic certification. Organic operations can be reimbursed for 75 percent of their certification costs up to \$750. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/occsp>



USDA Rural Development

- **Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program**
 - This program provides funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas with no more than 20,000 residents. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve local food system facilities such as community gardens, food pantries, community kitchens, food banks, food hubs, and greenhouses. The program offers grants of up to 75 percent of eligible project costs, low-interest loans, and loan guarantees.
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>
- **Economic Impact Initiative Grant Program**
 - Funding for essential community facilities is also available through this program for communities with extreme unemployment and severe economic depression.
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/economic-impact-initiative-grants>
- **Rural Business Development Grants**
 - These grants fund technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small businesses in rural areas with no more than 50,000 residents. Generally, grants range from \$10,000 up to \$500,000 and do not require cost sharing. The program can support activities such as training and technical assistance; acquisition or development of land; construction or renovation of buildings, equipment, roads, and utilities; capitalization of revolving loan funds; rural transportation improvements; feasibility studies and business plans; and rural business incubators.
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>
- **Value-Added Producer Grants**
 - These grants help agricultural producers with the processing and marketing of value-added products. The program aims to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. Planning grants of up to \$75,000 can be used for activities such as conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans for processing and marketing a value-added product. Working capital grants of up to \$250,000 can be used for processing costs, marketing and advertising expenses, and some inventory and salary expenses. The grants require matching funds of 50 percent of total project costs.
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

- **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program**
 - This program provides grants to collaborative partnerships of public or private entities for education, mentoring, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers or ranchers.
<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>



- **Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program**
 - This program helps private nonprofit entities fight food insecurity by funding community food projects that help promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities. Community food projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs. Preferred projects develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system, support the development of entrepreneurial projects, develop innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors, encourage long-term planning activities, and build long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of communities. Grants range from \$10,000 to \$400,000 and require a dollar-for-dollar match in resources. <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/community-food-projects-competitive-grant-program-cfpcgp>
- **Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program**
 - This program supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by providing incentives at the point of purchase. It funds pilot projects at up to \$100,000 over one year; multi-year, community-based projects at up to \$500,000 over no more than four years; and multi-year, large-scale projects of more than \$500,000 over no more than four years. USDA gives priority to projects that provide locally or regionally produced fruits and vegetables. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/gusnip-grant-program>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
 - The program provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related natural resources on agricultural land. Producers are eligible for payments totaling up to \$450,000 for completed high tunnel systems that can extend the growing season for high-value crops in an environmentally safe manner. The program can also provide up to \$20,000 per year for organic producers and those transitioning to organic to address natural resource concerns and meet requirements for the National Organic Program. <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

USDA Farm Service Agency

- **Farm Storage Facility Loan Program**
 - This program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible facilities include cold storage facilities for fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meat products. Producers may borrow up to \$500,000. <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/index>



- **Microloan Program**

- The Microloan Program helps finance small, beginning, niche, and non-traditional farm operations; farms participating in direct marketing and sales such as farmers markets; and farms using hydroponic, aquaponic, organic, and vertical growing methods. Eligible uses of funds include to make a down payment on a farm; build, repair, or improve farm buildings; purchase hoop houses, tools, and equipment; gain GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), GHP (Good Handling Practices), and organic certification; and market and distribute agricultural products. The maximum loan amount is \$50,000. <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index>

USDA Food and Nutrition Services

- **Farm to School Grant Program**

- These grants support farm-to-school programs that improve access to local foods in schools. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school-grant-program>
- Support service grants of \$65,000 to \$100,000 help state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers, and nonprofit entities develop and provide support services to farm-to-school initiatives.
- Implementation grants of \$65,000 to \$100,000 help schools or school districts scale or further develop existing farm-to-school initiatives.
- Planning grants of \$20,000 to \$45,000 help schools or school districts just getting started on farm-to-school activities organize and structure their efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations.
- Training grants of \$15,000 to \$50,000 help state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers, and nonprofit entities support trainings that strengthen farm-to-school supply chains or provide technical assistance in local procurement, food safety, culinary education, and/or integration of an agriculture-based curriculum.

- **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program**

- This program, similar to the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, awards grants to state agencies and Indian Tribal organizations to provide low-income seniors with coupons for fruits and vegetables at farmers markets. The state agencies provide nutrition education to participants and authorize farmers markets to accept the benefits. For a list of state program contacts, visit: https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-contacts?f%5B0%5D=fns_contact_related_programs%3A31

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

- SNAP offers nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. Benefits can be used to purchase many of the foods sold at farmers markets, including fruits and vegetables, dairy products, breads and cereals, and meat and poultry. The Food and Nutrition Service works with state agencies, nutrition educators, and neighborhood and faith-based organizations to help that those eligible for nutrition assistance access benefits. The Food and Nutrition Service also has resources for farmers markets and retailers interested in accepting SNAP benefits. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>



- **WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program**

- The program is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC. It awards grants to state agencies and Indian Tribal organizations to provide coupons for fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants for use at farmers markets. The state agencies provide nutrition education to participants and authorize farmers markets to accept the benefits. For a list of state program contacts, visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/contacts>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- **Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Program**

- This program provides grants to develop an area-wide plan for assessing, cleaning up, and reusing brownfield sites. Plans focus on a specific project area, such as a neighborhood, downtown district, commercial corridor, old industrial corridor, waterfront, or city block affected by a single large or multiple brownfield sites.
<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-area-wide-planning-program-factsheet>

- **Brownfields Assessment Grants**

- Assessment grants provide funding to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or petroleum. The maximum grant amount is \$350,000. <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>

- **Brownfields Cleanup Grants**

- Cleanup grants provide funding to carry out cleanup activities at sites contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or petroleum. The maximum grant amount is \$200,000 per site. Awardees must contribute 20 percent of the amount of funding provided by EPA, although waivers of this requirement are available. An applicant must own the site for which it is requesting funding at time of application.
<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>

- **Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program**

- Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program This program provides financial assistance to organizations for projects that address local environmental and/or public health issues in their communities using EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model. The program helps recipients build collaborative partnerships to help them understand and address environmental and public health concerns in their communities.
<https://www.epa.gov/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-cooperative-agreement-0>



- **Environmental Justice Small Grants**

- This grant program supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. The program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks and funds projects up to \$30,000. Previously funded projects include Educating South Florida's Residents on Hydroponic Urban Gardening; Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Healthy Food Production in Athens, Georgia; Creating Safe Soil for Healthy Gardening; and Promoting Urban Agriculture and Food Sustainability in Brooklyn, New York.
<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-small-grants-program>

- **Targeted Brownfields Assessments**

- This program helps states, tribes, and municipalities minimize the uncertainties of contamination often associated with brownfields. This program supplements other efforts under the Brownfields Program to promote the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields. Services include site assessments, cleanup options and cost estimates, and community outreach. Services are for an average of \$100,000. The sites for this program are selected locally, once a year. Applicants should currently have redevelopment plans for the contaminated property. <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/targeted-brownfields-assessments-tba>

- **Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities Program**

- This program funds three organizations who—with their extensive team of subgrantees, contractors, partners, and other network contacts—provide technical assistance to communities and other stakeholders. The program helps communities tackle the challenge of assessing, cleaning up, and preparing brownfield sites for redevelopment, especially underserved, rural, small and otherwise distressed communities.
<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/epas-technical-assistance-brownfields-tab-communities-program-providing-technical>

- **Urban Waters Small Grants**

- This grant program helps protect and restore urban waters, improve water quality, and support community revitalization and other local priorities. Projects address local water quality issues related to urban runoff pollution, provide additional community benefits, actively engage underserved communities, and foster partnerships. The grants are competed and awarded every two years, with individual award amounts of up to \$60,000.
<https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/urban-waters-small-grants>
- **View EPA grant opportunities for the Southeast Region** <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-4>.



Others

- **National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant Program**
 - Our Town supports creative placemaking projects that integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work—placing arts at the table with land use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies. Projects require a partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government entity, with one of the partners being a cultural organization. Matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. In 2016, the American Dance Institute and the village of Catskill, New York, received an Our Town grant to renovate a former lumberyard and associated buildings into a permanent home for the institute’s artist residency, which will include a theater, artist housing, and an open interior courtyard for performances, visual arts displays, and the local farmers market. <https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction>
- **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Transportation Alternative Set Aside**
 - This program provides set-aside funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives (including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity); recreational trail projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former divided highways. Funds are allocated to state departments of transportation, which select projects through a competitive process. Local governments, school districts, and nonprofit organizations responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs are among the entities eligible to apply for funding. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>

Private Grant Funding

* While funding programs of individual foundations can change from year to year, these resources are good starting points to look for philanthropic and other private support:

- **American Community Gardening Association**
 - The American Community Gardening Association offers a list of grant opportunities for community gardens and other related projects. <https://www.communitygarden.org/resources>
- **Farmers Market Coalition**
 - The Farmers Market Coalition website includes funding resources for farmers markets and other community food projects. <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/funding-opportunities/>



- **Food Co-op Initiative**
 - The Food Co-op initiative provides seed grants of up to \$10,000 for retail food co-ops. The grant money must be matched in equal dollars by locally raised funds. Funding has been used to help offset the cost of feasibility and marketing studies, hiring a project manager, and supporting owner/member recruitment and investment projects. <https://fci.coop/>
- **Healthy Food Access Portal**
 - The Healthy Food Access portal was created by PolicyLink, The Food Trust, and Reinvestment Fund to better support communities seeking to launch healthy food retail projects. The portal has a funding section including grants, loans, and incentives suited for healthy food projects. <https://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/>
- **Kresge Foundation**
 - Kresge Foundation's Developing Healthy Places focus area offers programs and grants to promote health equity among people in low-income neighborhoods and foster improved health for entire communities. Open calls for proposals can be found on the Current Funding Opportunities page. <https://kresge.org/grants-social-investments/current-funding-opportunities/>
- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**
 - The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation supports research and programs to help build a national culture of health. Projects that link local foods assets such as community gardens and farmers markets with recreation and alternative transportation projects that seek to improve access to healthy foods could fit with the foundation's giving. The foundation has programs that help to transform local environments in ways that remove health barriers and make it easier for people to lead healthier lives. <http://www.rwjf.org/en/our-focus-areas/topics/built-environment-and-health.html>
 - The foundation also has programs to increase the ability to provide more free fresh produce in low-income communities, raise public awareness about food insecurity, and encourage healthier eating. Find current and upcoming funding opportunities here <https://www.rwjf.org/en/grants/active-funding-opportunities.html?o=1&us=1>
- **W.K Kellogg Foundation**
 - The W.K. Kellogg Foundation helps communities transform school food systems, improve community access to good food, and create environments for active living. The foundation accepts grant applications from organizations and institutions throughout the year. <https://www.wkcf.org/grantseekers/>
- **Be creative and resourceful!**
 - Depending on the scale of your project, a community garden is not an expensive undertaking. Funding for community gardens can come from private grants from foundations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. Check with your local and state government as well. You can also raise funds locally in your community or congregation, a great way to get more people invested in your garden.



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