



NUag Impact Snapshot **Land Access & Policy Advocacy**



This impact snapshot is part of the National Urban Agriculture initiative and is based on interviews conducted at the NUag Conference, held August 4-6, 2024, in Detroit. Drawing from multiple participant interviews, we have crafted thematic snapshots to highlight key insights. Overall, 48 interviews were conducted across various participant groups. This particular snapshot amplifies perspectives on land access and policy advocacy, focusing on relevance, response, and results.

Relevance

Land access is a major challenge in urban agriculture, especially where green space is scarce or zoning is restrictive. It's mentioned 19 times by the participants, highlighting its importance. Cooperators stress securing land for both current use and long-term success. Policy advocacy, mentioned 12 times, is considered a critical strategy for addressing land access challenges. Gaining land means gaining control over food systems and increasing access to healthy, local food. Fair land policies support food security and the growth of urban agriculture across all communities.

Response

Cooperators have stepped up to advocate for land reform, ensuring that farmers gain access to unused or underutilized urban plots. In cities like Detroit, cooperators have successfully lobbied for zoning changes, helping transform vacant lots into productive farmland. As one Detroit farmer mentioned, "Cooperators helped us navigate the complexities of land acquisition and pushed for changes in zoning laws that opened up more opportunities for farming." Their efforts have also extended to soil health initiatives, ensuring that urban farmers have access to fertile ground for growing crops.



Results

The results of this land advocacy are already evident in several cities. In Detroit, farmers have turned overgrown lots into community gardens that not only provide fresh food but also create green spaces. Cooperators have supported farmers in securing long-term leases, allowing them to invest in their land confidently. The success in Detroit serves as a model for other urban areas where land scarcity remains a barrier to sustainable agriculture.

