



# NUag News Blast

Summer Edition



The NUag team is back with our Summer newsletter! Get the most updated information about our project as we work with producers, cooperators, and the USDA to advance urban agriculture.

## NUag Atlanta Policy Workshop Meeting

One of the most important deliverables of the national NUag project is to develop cooperator informed FSA program and policy recommendations. As a part of that effort, the NUag team successfully gathered 40 cooperators and stakeholders in Atlanta to facilitate stakeholder discussions and collect input on program implementation and participant experiences in support of cooperator-informed FSA program and policy development. The team also discussed next steps for the network of organizations within the initiative.

Liz Turner from Vermont Law and Graduate School and Russell Thorson from PASA Sustainable Agriculture gave a brief presentation on local policy and how to get involved.



The group also learned a little about FSA policy and decision making from Hannah Quigley from National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and Hagen Capnerhurst from Michigan Food and Farming Systems.

Participants then applied that knowledge to discuss program delivery challenges and operational considerations relevant to small, urban, and innovative producers.

Recommendations proposed by the NUag team based off of previous feedback and survey results, were analyzed and discussed to find supporting evidence and information to strengthen them. The



group discussed opportunities and solutions for current and emerging barriers, and took time forming their own recommendations.

## Learning Exchange Highlight: Looking Back, Growing Forward: Reflecting, Celebrating, and Continuing the Work

As some of our national cooperators wrap up their projects, we want to highlight their hard work and value that they've brought to our local communities through this initiative. Below are project impact highlights from the community-based organizations that are finishing up their local USDA urban agriculture agreement.

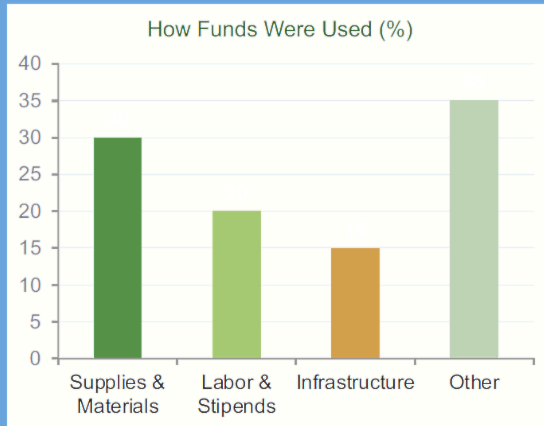


### Community Alliance with Family Farmers

At our May NUag learning exchange, Keely Cervantes, Policy & Organizing Manager at Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), shared a glimpse into their three-year project prioritizing connecting urban farmers in California with resources, education, and community. CAFF created networking spaces for urban producers to share knowledge and increase stakeholder engagement and participation. They also curated an 18-month fellowship program building skills, experience, and lasting relationships. CAFF's fellowship and mini grant had an immense impact on their community dispersing over \$800K directly to growers. The mini grant funds were used to help local urban agriculture organizations with supplies, materials, labor, infrastructure, and more.

[Learn More About Their Work Here!](#)

52 grants • Tangible, diverse results



**85%** of recipients served disadvantaged groups including youth, elders, and low-income populations

**\$805K** Total direct funds to growers

**7** counties served across LA, Orange, and the Bay Area

*Results were tangible across composting, soil health, refrigeration, microgreens automation, and more.*



**Virginia Tech Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation & Virginia State Small Farm Outreach Program**

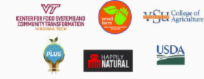


At our May NUag learning exchange, Dr. Kim Niewolny, Professor and Director at Virginia Tech's Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation gave us a look into their project in partnership with Virginia State Small Farm Outreach Program. The Advancing Urban Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems in Virginia project focused on program outreach, training activities, and resource coordination. The project included several curriculum workshops and programs including a Sustainable Urban Agriculture Certificate program which

provides a certification after the class and required internship hours are completed. The project team curated several regional convenings, capturing data and insight which informed a statewide urban agriculture landscape assessment. The team also put together an advisory board that guided a successful mini grant funding distribution. The team funded initiatives across Virginia including food pantry funding, new water lines, and community garden infrastructure. The project team wrapped up their project with a local urban agriculture celebration field day with a mini grant panel, skill share demonstrations, and farm tours.

[Read More About the Project Here!](#)

## Key Activities



Develop Advisory Committee comprised of urban farmers and service providers

Co-design and implement Urban Agriculture Enhancement Projects (mini-grants)

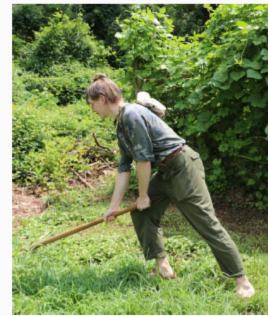
Conduct Virginia Urban Agriculture Landscape Assessment

Provide regional urban agriculture convenings

Launch “Working with FSA as an Urban Farmer” program

Launch “Introduction to Soil Health for Urban Farmers and Growers”

2025 Urban Agriculture Summit



VSU Urban Agriculture Certification Program

Launch urban agriculture tool lending library

Create Online Resource Center with Urban Ag Content



# NUag Impact Snapshots

These snapshots are our version of impact statements based on interviews conducted at the National Urban Agriculture Conference, held in Detroit. Overall, 48 interviews were conducted across various participant groups to highlight key insights.

Collaborative Networks for Food Resilience

Organizational Growth & Capacity Building

Sustainable & Regenerative Practices



Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these videos are those of the individual speakers and are provided for informational purposes only. They do not represent the official positions or policies of the NUag initiative, participating institutions, or any federal agency. Reference to external individuals, programs, or materials does not constitute endorsement. All programs and activities referenced are conducted in accordance with applicable federal requirements and are open to eligible participants as defined by law.



External resources and links are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of these resources does not constitute endorsement by the NUag initiative or participating institutions. Participating institutions are not responsible for the content, accuracy, or applicability of external sites.

## Relevant USDA Links

[USDA Announces Enrollment Period and Payment Rates for Specialty Crop Farmers | Farm Service Agency](#) - USDA announced payment rates and the enrollment period for the Assistance for Specialty Crops Farmers (ASCF) program.

[RMA Offers New Resource for Specialty and Small-Scale Farmers | Farmers.gov](#) - RMA created searchable directory for quality vetted crop insurance agents.

[Urban Grower Resources From USDA | Farmers.gov](#) - USDA urban Grower's resources page

[Ask the Expert: A Q&A on Urban Conservation and Gardening in the Summer with Brooke Franklin | Farmers.gov](#) - Urban producer Brooke Franklin helps urban producers implement conservation practices on their operation, no matter the size and offers tips for gardening in the summer heat.

[USDA Urban Service Centers | Farmers.gov](#) - Find an urban service center so you can meet face to face with service providers and discuss your farming goals and vision.

[Farm Bill Updates | Farmers.gov](#) - Read about available farm bill programs, and the benefits of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025.



## *Urban Insights*

[Weed Management on Organic Farms | NC State Extension Publications](#) - Complete guide to managing weeds

[Sustainable Pest Management - SARE](#) - SARE's guide to IPM

[Snip Smart: How Pruning Your Veggies Boosts Production and Fights Disease - Denver Urban Gardens](#) - Tips and tricks on how to prune your vegetables for optimal growth and harvest

[Integrated Weed Management : Pest Management Guidelines / UC Statewide IPM Program \(UCIPM\)](#) - Integrated weed management is the use of multiple strategies to manage weeds in an economically and environmentally sound manner

[Rainwater Harvesting 101 | Your how-to Collect Rainwater Guide](#) - Info on water catching regulations and how to build an effective system

[Tips for Composting in the Summertime - Agriculture and the Environment](#) - Tips and tricks to keep in mind when managing your backyard compost pile during the summer.

[Heat Tolerant Vegetables that Thrive in Summer Heat | Grow Where You Sow](#) - Read about different heat tolerant vegetables

[Unpacking the House Farm Bill: Part 1 - National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#) - NSAC summarizes the movement of the current farm bill progress

[GMFTS Summer Activity Guide](#) - Green Mountain's Farm to school's guide to children's summer garden activities

[Activities - Kids Gardening](#) - List of fun garden ideas for families or informal groups.

---

## *Stay Informed*

Sign up at the bottom of the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production page for updates

[OUAIP Homepage](#)

Stay up to date on current FSA news and programs

[FSA News](#)

Keep in contact with your local Urban Agriculture Service Center, FSA office and NCRS office

[Local service Center Locator](#)



The NUag Grant was made possible by a grant from USDA Farm Service Agency: FSA23CPT0012863 & FSA23CPT0013042

This publication is part of a collaborative initiative involving multiple institutions. Each participating institution operates its programs and activities in accordance with applicable federal nondiscrimination laws and program requirements. Participation in programs and services is open to eligible individuals without regard to factors protected by law.

This publication is intended for informational and educational purposes and is developed in accordance with applicable federal program requirements. Content reflects program activities and information available at the time of publication. Participation in referenced programs is open to

Virginia State University College of Agriculture | One Hayden Drive Box 9081 | Virginia State University, VA 23806 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!