

Frequently Ask Questions

T.I.M.E. Inc. Urban Innovative Agriculture Community- Based Organization Funding Opportunity

1. Why were the cities selected? Will there be others in different Request For Proposals (RFP)s?

As directed in the Farm Bill, Farm Service Agency (FSA) leads the effort to carry out the statutory requirements for the Urban County Committees through the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center (FPAC) at the national level as well as through a locally led process.

Locations for county committees were selected based on a consideration of data that included opportunity for economic growth, diversity, proximity to tribal nations, as well as the number of farm-to-table projects, urban farms, community and residential gardens, and green infrastructure projects within metropolitan and suburban areas.

To identify possible locations for consideration of the new county committees, the headquarters (HQ) team worked with FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) leaders and received recommendations from external parties including local agriculture interest groups and elected officials at the federal, State, and local level. The team established several operating principles to aid in the selection of ten (10) locations listed in the RFP.

2. Will any funding be available to programs in cities outside that list?

No, funding is limited to the following locations:

1. Boston, MA
2. Columbia, SC
3. Denver, CO
4. Houston, TX
5. Jackson, MS
6. Kansas City, MO
7. Las Vegas, NV
8. Little Rock, AR
9. Memphis, TN
10. Pittsburgh, PA
11. Tribal Location, TBD

3. Are there plans to connect with other Urban Agriculture Programs in other states?

Section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, known as the 2018 Farm Bill, which amended Subtitle A of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, authorized the Secretary to establish ten new Urban and Suburban Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees as part of a five-year or longer pilot program. FSA is responsible for standing up the Urban County Committees (Urban COCs). The 2018 Farm Bill provided additional resources for urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production initiatives, and authorized annual appropriations of \$25 million (FY2019-FY2023) towards these efforts. Through this pilot, USDA will encourage and promote urban, and other innovative and emerging agricultural production in all urban communities.

4. Can an organization submit multiple proposals?

An eligible entity may submit one proposal per location. Hence, if the entity is planning to work in multiple locations, then it will be required to submit one proposal per location.

5. Will these slides/recording be available after this meeting?

Yes, the slides will be available for download. Link will be sent via email.

6. Can a for profit company apply with a university utilizing the university as a co-applicant?

Applicant and co-applicant must the following eligibility criteria:

- a. City or township governments
- b. County governments
- c. Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- d. Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- e. Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
- f. Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
- g. Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education
- h. Special district governments
- i. State governments.

7. How can we be involved in this grant if we are in another city? Does the lead applicant need to reside in the cities listed?

Eligible entities located in a city not listed in the RFP may partner with an eligible entity in the locations listed. Applicants must include in the “Project Team and Institutional Background” section of the proposal application: a description the applicant’s organization or institution in terms of its location, demographics, mission, relationship to the urban service area and underserved producers, and past successes in the project area. In addition, describe the project team’s experience working with urban producers and underserved

farmers and ranchers. Describe existing partnerships with FSA and FSA state and county employees, if applicable. Identify any collaborating institution(s) and their involvement in the project. Provide a clear description of staff or partners' relevant experience as it relates to the proposed project.

8. Is Cooperative Extension eligible to submit a proposal?

Yes, if it meets the eligibility criteria for the funding opportunity listed in the RFP.

9. What if your project is < \$500,000 does that make us not eligible to apply?

Applicants are highly encouraged to submit applications that meet the funding floor for this opportunity which is \$500,000. The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount per agreement awarded.

10. We have a newly formed non-profit but our officers have great experience working with urban farmers - how can we substantiate the required experience levels for compliance?

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11. Where is the RFP located?

Funding Opportunity Link: <https://toimprovems.org/time-urban-ag-cbo-fund>.

12. Is this a non- competitive funding opportunity?

No, it is a competitive application process.

13. What are the city limits? Greater metropolitan area?

Metropolitan areas or urban areas could be included as long as the named city area is involved.

14. Will the selection committee review past performance?

Yes.

15. Purchase or lease of land considered an eligible cost?

Funds may not be used to purchase land. Funds may be used to lease land in urban area for the period of performance of the award, as long as they follow special provisions per Office of General Counsel and FSA policy. See 2 CFR §200.465 Rental costs of real property and equipment.

16. Do you know how many awards per city will be made?

One award per city.

17. Is there a total allocation per city?

No, the estimated funding floor for this opportunity is \$500,000 and the estimated funding ceiling is \$895,000. The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount per agreement awarded. These numbers refer to the total agreement amount, not any specific budget allocation per city.

18. Is there a page limitation for the proposal?

There is a ten (10) page narrative limitation, but this amount does not count for overall proposal.

19. Can the application include sub-award and/or microgrants?

The application may include sub-awards and/or microgrants. The sub-awardees are responsible for monitoring the performance of project activities under those arrangements to ensure that approved goals and schedules are met. Subrecipient means entity, usually but not limited to non-federal entity, that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal award; but does not include a beneficiary of a microgrant award. Therefore, sub-awards are subject to the requirements set forth in the 2 CFR 200 whereas microgrants are not since these are defined as beneficiaries.

Micro-grants are small, one-time-only, awards given to eligible producers for short-term projects. Micro-grants are grants that can be awarded by awarded cooperators of the FSA Urban and Innovative Agriculture Community-Based Organization Fund. These grants can be awarded by sub-awardees to urban agricultural producers (beneficiaries) for projects that support the goals of FSA Urban and Innovative Agriculture Community-Based Organization Fund and for areas of work (i.e., projects). Micro-grants can be utilized to leverage or implement conservation practices, improve soil quality, purchase on-farm infrastructure, or provide cost share for supplies and equipment if funding is not currently available and/or has not already been awarded through other existing USDA programs for the designated micro-grant recipients.

20. Whether improvements or equipment are considered allowable expense?

Funds may not be used to pay for any: capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land and for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment which materially increase their value or useful life. See 2 CFR 200.439 for additional information. Micro-grants can be utilized to leverage or implement conservation practices, improve soil quality, purchase on-farm infrastructure, or provide cost share for supplies and equipment if funding is not currently available and/or has not already been awarded through other existing USDA programs for the designated micro-grant recipients.

21. Are indirect costs allowable under this funding opportunity?

Yes. Indirect costs are allowable, but only if the recipient has an approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with its cognizant federal agency. A copy of the NICRA is required at the time of application for all FCC grants. If an award is made that includes indirect costs, the grantee must ensure their NICRA supports the amount awarded for indirect costs and extends through their period of performance or submit for USDA approval a newly negotiated NICRA.

Recipients that have never had a federally negotiated indirect cost rate may alternatively elect to request the 10% de minimis rate as described in 2 CFR 200.414(f) which states that organizations can charge a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs. Modified total direct costs includes all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward.