



2022-2026

SFI Urban Agriculture Program

Strategic Outlook

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This Plan addresses the Grant Priorities.

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SFI Urban Agriculture Program

Plan

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Assisted by:
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And

Prairie View A&M University College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
Cooperative Agriculture Research Center (CARC) Small Farm Institute (SFI)

Mission:

The Small Farm Institute (SFI)'s mission is to serve as a premier outreach and agriculture educational leader for limited resource landowners and communities and provide quality research, education, service, and training to Texans."

Small Farm Institute POW Authorized Elements:

The Small Farms Institute (SFI) is part of the College of Agriculture Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at Prairie View A&M University. CAFNR provides applied and basic research education through 5 agriculture systems (Animal, Food, Plant, Agriculture, Social Systems, and Natural Resources). The SFI was created to provide underserved, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers landowners in Texas with a new outreach and technical education to help landowners grow innovatively, farm sustainably, and adapt relevant research-based application that encourages, improves, and develops economic and land sustainability. The Institute focuses on outreach engagement that serve as example of how technical, financial, and training assistance to farmers and ranchers can improve farm management, farm production, and gain innovative learning knowledge to help landowners' improve farm viability and sustainability. The SFI provides outreach and technical assistance through three main programs: A) Climate Smart Program, B) Small Farm Outreach Assistance Programs, and C) Small Farm Outreach and Technical Assistance Programs. These are technical, financial, and educational assistance programs for landowners.

- A. CLIMATE SMART FARM PROGRAM** The Climate-Smart Farm Program support 250 underserved farmers in East Texas as they adopt regenerative agriculture (livestock, specialty crops, forest, crops, vegetables, leafy green) practices for carbon-smart farm plans. This program will provide financial assistance and training to underserved farmers and ranchers.
- B. THE SMALL FARM OUTREACH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SFDAP)** --educates and empowers small, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers to be sustainable through agricultural education, technical, financial, and training programs that improve farm management, farm operation, and agricultural knowledge to improve bottom line financial farming operation. The SFDAP provide opportunities to landowners for land and production management, resource management, and participating in USDA financial assistance programs. The program is supported through several grants:
- The Reckoning Program
 - Urban Agriculture
 - Sustainable Forestry African American Land Retention (SFLR)
 - Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Suatsan
 - Sustainable Agriculture Research Education (SARA)

C. SMALL FARM OUTREACH EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

To provide learning opportunities for small-scale ranchers and farmers and limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers to educate them on managing their agriculture operations and improving farm management skills and production management.

- Agricultural Training
- Farm Management/Business Plan
- Agriculture Leaders Leading
- Women in Agriculture

URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

The concept of agriculture has expanded beyond the traditional view of agriculture to a more inclusive agriculture view as we search for alternative ways to feed and feed more people healthier. Today, agriculture has grown to include populated areas called Urban Agriculture. The USDA defines Urban Agriculture as city and suburban spaces that comprise backyard, roof-top, balcony, and community gardening in vacant lots and parks, roadside urban fringe agriculture, and livestock grazing in open space.

As part of the SFI's Small Farm Outreach Assistance Program, I developed an Urban Agriculture Program to: 1) address healthy food access, 2) revitalize food deserts, 3) combat food insecurity, 4) promote civic engagement, 5) expand economic opportunities, and 6) transform impoverished communities. Urban Agriculture provides an impetus for this reorganization, bringing together critical community stakeholders for a common goal. It provides the missing resource solution to mitigate food deserts, impact public health, and educate low income communities. Urban Agriculture plays a significant part in the overall food system.

The Small Farm Institute (SFI) Urban Agriculture program plan encompasses a strategic long-term approach to change the social economic food desert and food insecurity food system landscape. Our initial plan was designed to achieve particular urban agriculture for food deserts, food insecurity, food system outcomes. Through the Small Farm Institute urban agriculture program and partnership with USDA NRCS, we planned to accomplish the following five outcomes:

- 1) Conduct outreach education, tours, and training events relevant to urban agriculture and community gardens. These events shall focus on Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers and NRCS staff and should promote the resources available for individual assistance, including the USDA.
- 2) Work with NRCS, local producers, community organizations, and leaders on urban agriculture policy development.
- 3) Organize urban agriculture conferences in Texas major cities to share farmer to farmer practical solution, research findings, and technical understanding of urban farming.
- 4) Design research surveys, conduct demonstration sites, partner with local community organizations to document individual practice scenario component needs and costs for urban and small agricultural conservation practices.
- 5) Implement an urban agriculture financial assistance grant program to assist urban ag farmers. Through this program, SFI will provide grants to individuals, businesses, and organizations food deserts and impoverished communities to establish urban gardens to address food insecurity.

To accomplish the urban agriculture outcomes, we developed one goal and four objectives:

GOAL A: To implement an urban agriculture program that promotes critical practices, knowledge, leadership, and community sustainability to address food system, food security, and food deserts challenges and support urban and innovative farming operations and food systems.

Objective No. 1: Develop an urban agriculture program to provide outreach education, technical, financial, and research-based assistances to Texans, with emphasis on minority, underserve, socially disadvantaged, urban farmers and encourage production, processing, and marketing by December 2022-2025.

Action Items:

- a) Integrate the Urban Agriculture Program with the Prairie View Small Farm Institute.
- b) Develop an urban agriculture web page.
- c) Develop urban agriculture brochures, fact sheets, and education material.
- d) Design information and public access urban agriculture conservation practice on a webpage.

- e) Develop at least one online social media website centered around urban agriculture.
- a) Conduct a community assessment to identify needs, dignitaries, and the land legislature for partnership with urban ag practices programs.
- g) Discuss the priorities of urban agriculture practices with NRCS.
- h) Develop strategies to increase interest in urban
- i) Work with NRCS to develop specifications for urban agriculture practice materials.
- j) Develop a campus-based urban agriculture practice demonstration farm.
- k) Identify aij designated food desert and impovish communities in Houston, Arlinton, Dallas, Fort Worth, and San Antonio.
- l) Contact local county and state governments to introduce and promote the Prairie View Urban Agriculture Program.
- m) Evaluate urban communities to determine the potential for developing and creating modified urban ag programs to address food insecurity.
- n) Attend USDA State Technical Committee meetings a year.
- o) Identify/inventory sites urban ag groups that have historical significance to the area.

Objective No. 2: Provide outreach assistance to minority urban farmers and educate them about Extension and USDA conservation practices by 2025.

Action Items:

- a) Design a small producer grant program.
- b) Create an urban agriculture survey for research to assess landowners' responses in urban agriculture.
- c) Work with NRCS on implementing the Urban Agriculture demonstration and Grant Program Initiatives.
- d) Identify urban locations to promote and conduct demonstration practices.
- e) Develop an outreach model to assist landowners
- f) Meet with community leaders to discuss urban agricultural opportunities.
- b) Design urban ag workshop with community leaders around food systems, food desert, and food insecurity

- l) Identify cities and locations to conduct urban agriculture demonstration

- g) Create an urban agriculture training program.

- i) Investigate and promote urban agriculture projects that protect or enhance water quality.

- j) Develop urban agriculture certification program

- k) Provide programmatic reports on Small Farm Institute's urban agriculture activities.

Objective No. 3: Implement the practice and scenario of the Small Farm Institute urban agricultural program by 2026.

Action Items:

- a) Conduct tours, demonstration workshops, and field days.
- b) Conduct at least six virtual online sessions with small farmers & producers in various counties.
- c) Create Cooperative Extension Program /NRCS Training plan development for employees and agents

- d) Connect with 2 Texas-based Agriculture Consulting organizations to partner and provide educational program assistance.
- e) Organize six outreach urban agriculture education programs with extension agents and promote NRCS urban agriculture conservation practices.
- f) Meet regularly/monthly with the NRCS Urban Agriculture statewide/regional team.
- g) Develop urban agriculture tours to demonstrate conservation practices and urban agriculture.

Objective No. 4: Organize Urban Agriculture conservation practice projects and financially assist 150 landowners by November 2025-2026.

Action Items:

- a) Send out the urban agriculture practice scenario survey to urban landowners.
- b) Hold two CEP-AgNR and NRCS conservation practice training workshops.
- c) Implement a marketing plan to promote urban agriculture programs and conservation practices.
- d) Develop technical resource documents for urban outreach and training implementation.
- e) Conduct three live Small Farm Institute demonstrations at the PVAMU Urban Farm site.
- f) Form an external committee to facilitate the urban agriculture program.
- g) Conduct at least one urban agriculture tour per year.
- h) Work with conservation organizations/groups to promote the urban agriculture Program.
- i) Create a contact list (email, mail, etc.) about partners/clients/ others to communicate about urban agriculture programs.