



Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

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Shapiro Administration Kicks Off 2025 Urban Agriculture Tour, Highlighting Investments in Innovation, Equity, and Opportunity Feeding Progress in Urban Communities

Pittsburgh, PA – Today, **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding**, **Education Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe**, and **Community and Economic Development Secretary Rick Siger** kicked off the **Shapiro Administration's** 2025 Urban Agriculture Tour at [Bidwell Training Center](#) in Pittsburgh, where a high-tech greenhouse expansion funded through a historic [Agricultural Innovation Grant](#) is underway, and urban students are training for in-demand culinary and horticulture careers.

"Feeding opportunities for growth and economic prosperity in urban neighborhoods feeds all of our futures," **Secretary Redding said**. "The **Shapiro Administration** is committed to strengthening local economies through investments that improve quality of life and health by making sure families have fresh, healthy food within reach, and the inspiration, resources, and knowledge to grow fresh food in the future."

"Supporting partnerships with innovative problem-solvers like the leadership at Bidwell Training Center, and others like Grow Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council who joined us today multiplies our capacity to tackle major challenges like raising a skilled workforce and accessing land and capital."

Throughout this week, Sec. Redding and other Shapiro Administration leaders will cross the state to meet dynamic Pennsylvanians working to increase fresh food access in areas where it is scarce; break down racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic barriers; and overcome historical inequities to grow opportunities for their communities to thrive.

"Urban agriculture connects learning to purpose," **said Acting Education Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe**. "At places like Bidwell, learners are doing more than just growing food; they're growing careers, confidence, and communities. When we create clear pathways from the classroom to the workforce, especially in areas that have been underserved, we expand opportunity across Pennsylvania."

"Investments in urban agriculture infrastructure are creating jobs, beautifying neighborhoods, and providing much-needed access to fresh food in underserved communities," **said DCED Secretary Rick Siger**. "The Commonwealth's rich agricultural industry is one of the five key sectors we've focused on in Pennsylvania's

Economic Development Strategy so that we can continue to build a strong economy that lifts up our people and improves the quality of life in our communities.”

This February, **Governor Josh Shapiro** announced the nation’s first Agricultural Innovation grants, a \$10 million investment in [88 ag businesses in 46 Pennsylvania counties](#) to fund state-of-the-art agricultural technologies including Bidwell Training Center’s expansion.

“This transformative investment is about much more than a greenhouse renovation,” said **Senior Director of Horticulture and Agriculture Technology at Bidwell Training Center Dr. Ryan Gott**. “These upgrades and state-of-the-art technologies at the Drew Mathieson Greenhouse will grow fresh food to directly feed our local communities experiencing food insecurity, provide in-demand, no-cost training for our students, and serve as an exemplar of sustainable, energy-efficient urban agriculture. We look to ensure the stability of our local food system through both technological innovation and equipping our future green industry workers with the skills and knowledge to be successful.”

Last March 2025, the Shapiro Administration announced a [\\$500,000 investment in Pennsylvania Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grants in 10 counties](#) to help address longstanding challenges in city neighborhoods, including Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania has invested more than \$3.2 million in urban agriculture through the program, one of many [Pennsylvania Farm Bill](#) grants and initiatives, since 2019. In total, 160 Urban Ag projects in 19 counties are expanding fresh food access in locations often served by a single convenience store.

Funded projects include greenhouses, off-grid energy and water systems, cold storage, and tools to expand the reach of organizations that feed economic, community, and personal growth through agriculture.

Grow Pittsburgh, whose leadership joined a panel discussion hosted by **State Representative Emily Kinkead** earlier in the day, has received Urban Ag Grants totaling \$157,000 in prior years to purchase raised beds, irrigation systems, greenhouses, tools, compost systems, and shade canopies, and to expand their network of community gardens, urban farms, early childhood education gardens, and community composting sites.

“Investing in urban agriculture is about so much more than growing food,” said **Rep. Kinkead, D-Allegheny**. “It’s about growing opportunity and equity for the next generation of Pennsylvania farmers. Empowering organizations like Grow Pittsburgh and the Bidwell Training Center is essential in preparing our future farmers, fighting food insecurity, and implementing agriculture into urban neighborhoods.”

Governor Shapiro proposed continuing these investments and many others and increasing support to keep Pennsylvania a national leader in agriculture in his 2025-26 budget. The Governor’s budget proposes investing:

- An **additional \$13 million** for the historic **Ag Innovation Grant Program** to help build the future of American agriculture right here in Pennsylvania. In its first year, the program was oversubscribed by nearly \$60 million, receiving 159 applications for nearly \$70 million worth of innovation projects.
- A **\$4 million increase** to connect Pennsylvanians at risk of hunger with healthy, local food through the **Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS)** and a **\$4 million increase** to the **State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)** to provide emergency food assistance for low-income Pennsylvanians and support local farmers.
- Continued funding of **\$13.5 million** to keep Pennsylvania farms – both urban and rural – thriving through the [Pennsylvania Farm Bill](#), to protect and promote Pennsylvania's \$132.5 billion agriculture industry, support strategic business planning, and grow the infrastructure and workforce agriculture businesses need to stay competitive.

Learn how **Governor Josh Shapiro's** [Economic Development Strategy](#) recognizes agriculture as key to our future economic success.

Read about more investments to keep Pennsylvania agriculture, and Pennsylvania communities, healthy, competitive and thriving in **Governor Josh Shapiro's** 2025-26 budget proposal at shapirobudget.pa.gov.

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