



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2026

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Shapiro-Davis Administration Invests \$500,000 to Support Urban Farmers and Break Down Barriers to Accessing Fresh Food in Cities Across Pennsylvania

Twenty-one Urban Ag Grants will invest in solutions to long-standing challenges in city neighborhoods, from soil quality to storage and land availability.

Projects in Allegheny, Berks, Cambria, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Lancaster, Lehigh, Lycoming, Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia will lead to healthier futures for Pennsylvania’s urban farmers, families, and local economies.

Willkinsburg, PA – Today, **Lt. Governor Austin Davis** and **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** announced 21 **Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grants** totaling \$499,480 for projects addressing long-standing challenges urban farmers face in growing local, farm-fresh produce in cities across Pennsylvania. Lt. Governor Davis and Secretary Redding made the announcement at The Mill in Wilkinsburg, where Landforce, Pittsburgh’s Conservation Corps, will put a \$40,500 grant toward equipment to increase efficiency in production of biochar – a soil enhancer made of wood waste from urban tree removal.

“Landforce is helping to create ladders of opportunity for people who desperately need them,” said **Lt. Gov. Austin Davis**. “They’re giving people skills and training, to set them up for success. The **Shapiro-Davis Administration** is proud to invest in organizations like Landforce through our Urban Agriculture grant program. As a former state representative, I made it a priority to stand up for Pennsylvania’s agricultural industry, and with Governor Shapiro, we’re making agriculture a priority for our administration. That’s because we’re all connected in this Commonwealth – success for a farmer in Lancaster County is connected to the success of a union worker in Allegheny County.”

“Urban Ag grants are providing tools that help Pennsylvanians change Pennsylvania cities for the better,” **Secretary Redding said**. “The Shapiro-Davis Administration is committed to creating and supporting lasting solutions to challenging problems. Getting fresh, healthy food into neighborhoods where it is scarce, regenerating contaminated or

depleted urban soil, and finding and affording land that won't be sold after hard work and investments to improve it are just a few of the challenges with solutions funded by these grants.”

With funding from prior grants through the program, Pennsylvanians are 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 not just food, but opportunities for their communities to thrive.

“We are deeply grateful to the Commonwealth for its continued support as we work to bring The Mill, Landforce’s zero-waste wood production facility, fully online,” said **Landforce CEO Dr. Ilyssa Manspeizer**. “This final piece of equipment allows us to complete the wood waste cycle, transforming fallen timber into biochar, improving soil health across communities in Southwest Pennsylvania, and capturing carbon that would otherwise be released back into the environment — all while creating meaningful workforce training and employment opportunities for individuals facing barriers to work.”

Since 2019, Pennsylvania has invested more than \$3.7 million through the program in the infrastructure urban agriculture needs to thrive, and in removing the barriers unique to producing food in city environments. In total, 180 projects in cities across Pennsylvania are expanding fresh food access in locations often served by a single convenience store.

Funded projects include purchases such as greenhouses, roof-top and school gardens, irrigation systems, storage, soil improvement, and tools that expand the reach of organizations that feed economic, community, and personal growth through agriculture.

The program, part of the historic PA Farm Bill, funds microgrants of \$2,500 in matching funds for one-time projects or a single entity, as well as collaboration grants. Collaboration grants provide up to \$50,000 in matching funds for cooperative or regional efforts to share resources, support community development, and combine products of small farmers, building collective power to supply fresh food in underserved neighborhoods.

Urban neighborhoods are determined by criteria from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

2025-26 Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant recipients in 13 counties include:

Allegheny County

Grow Pittsburgh – \$45,000

Garden Dreams Project, Wilksburg – replacing a blighted structure with a 2,168-square-foot building to house an accessible, green commercial kitchen, cold storage, career education, and community gathering space.

Landforce – \$40,500

Grant will fund fabrication of a conveyor to expand production and efficiency for a biochar kiln to produce zero-waste, soil enhancing, wood by-product at The Mill in Wilkinsburg.

Bible Center - Oasis Farm – \$25,009

Pittsburgh Urban Farm Collaborative – Seven regional farms collaborating to increase food security in Braddock, Breezewood, Gibsonia, Homewood, Perry South, and Wilkinsburg – grant will fund improvements in garden beds, cold-weather structures, irrigation, and food safety.

Berks County

Alvernia University -- \$1,913

Bog Turtle Creek Farm – establish a grow room on the campus sustainability program's farm to increase fresh food production for the greater Reading community.

Cambria County

Center for Population Health -- \$40,500

Recovery Rooftop Garden, Johnstown – fund will support design and construction of six garden beds with waterproofing, structural support, and shaded benches to produce free food, and improve health and healing for community members in post-substance-abuse recovery.

Chester County

Trellis for Tomorrow – \$38,250

Agricultural Learning Center at Lundale Farm – funds provide education and healthy, organic produce and seedlings for community members in and around Pottstown, in partnership with a mobile market and Trellis's network of gardens.

Chester and Montgomery Counties

The Best Route and Two Gander Farm -- \$45,000

Project will expand cold storage for a partnership that unites farming expertise from one farm with a regional network of growers from another to increase access to fresh food across two counties.

Dauphin County

Salvation Army Harrisburg – \$10,515

Funds will support purchase of a greenhouse to expand capacity and the growing season for fresh food supplied through Our Choice Food Pantry.

Verbos Family Farm -- \$1,850

Funds will support expanded cold storage for area farms to provide greater consumer options for fresh, local food.

Delaware and Philadelphia Counties

City of Chester -- \$37,000

Ruth Bennett Community Farm in Chester and Philly Food Works in Philadelphia -- funding will add irrigation and storage capacity to increase production of produce, and fresh flowers which help fund the distribution of produce to low-income households in the area.

Erie County

Ridgemeade Farm -- \$1,912

Farm plans to add energy-efficient cold storage to improve quality and shelf-life of fresh food supplied in area markets.

Groundwork Erie -- \$2,214

4th Street Community Farm – project will install a ventilation and irrigation system in the greenhouse to improve the variety and quality of food grown in a collaborative, youth-focused project.

Lancaster County

Lancaster Recreation Commission -- \$45,109

Bay Street Garden Project – enhancement and expansion of operations, infrastructure, and community programming on Lancaster City-owned land to strengthen food access, environmental sustainability, and neighborhood engagement in a high-need city area.

Lehigh County

Provisions Farm -- \$1,850

Grant will support the farm start-up in purchasing equipment to grow food for the Lehigh Valley community.

Lycoming County

The Potting Bench -- \$1,850

Funds will help the small farm increase growing capacity through vertical farming technology.

Montgomery County

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society – \$44,460

Funds will help expand the society's Community Farm at Norristown Farm Park to increase production and distribution of produce during winter months to community food and health partners.

Variety – The Children's Charity of Delaware County -- \$11,475

Funds will support an irrigation system in greenhouses used to provide vocational training to learners with disabilities, while producing produce for food pantry donations and Variety's pop-up farm market.

Northampton County

Easton Area Neighborhood Center -- \$10,355

The project will establish an Edible Landscaping Demonstration featuring fruit trees, figs, berries, and vines, and fund construction of two Community Compost Demonstration Sites at the Easton Urban Farm and 10th and Pine Community Garden.

Philadelphia County

Penn Alexander Home and School – \$37,800

Urban Garden Reimagined – funds will help transform a distressed school garden at Penn Alexander in West Philadelphia to feature garden beds for locally grown produce, a smart water system, outdoor tables, and garden shed with writing boards.

Fern Hill Food Forest – \$38,250

A new waterline will expand irrigation across a five-acre permaculture teaching farm to support fruit and nut tree plantings across our 50-acre park. This infrastructure will reduce labor-intensive hand-watering, increase fruit, nut, perennial, and annual crop production, and enable expanded educational and community programs.

New Kensington Community Development Corporation -- \$23,178

Ruth Street Garden – purchased in 2025, the site is preserved for long-term community use, ensuring that partner-gardener, Philly Unknown, will not be displaced. The grant will help fund installation of essential electrical and water infrastructure, significantly expanding capacity to serve Kensington residents and the Kensington Garden Coalition.

Find more information about [Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grants](#), including an FAQ and past grant recipients and funded projects [here](#). Learn about other PA Farm Bill grants and initiatives to grow Pennsylvania agriculture on the [PA Farm Bill webpage](#).

Learn how **Governor Josh Shapiro's** [Economic Development Strategy](#) recognizes agriculture as key to the future economic success of all Pennsylvanians, both urban and rural.

Read about more commonsense investments to keep Pennsylvania agriculture competitive and thriving in **Governor Josh Shapiro's** 2026-27 budget proposal at shapirobudget.pa.gov.

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