# 2026 California Urban Agriculture Grant Program

# INFO SESSION

Wednesday, November 4, 6:00pm – 7:30pm;

Thursday, November 19, 4:00pm – 5:30pm;

Monday, November 30, 1:00pm – 2:30pm;

Wednesday, December 16, 10:00am – 11:30am

**These info sessions are part of the public comment period for this program**

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# What to expect in this info session…

**Grant Program Overview:**

- Timelines, Payment Structure
- Program Overview and Definitions
- Funding Details: Eligibility, Grant Term, Award Amounts, Allowable Costs, Reporting
- Application/Scoring

**Public Comment Period Information:**

- Submit survey response at forms.cloud.microsoft/g/a04T9vC1f0
- Email comments to caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov
- Comments due by December 18th

# How we can help during the application

**Application Virtual Office Hours (Tentative)**

- Each Thursday in February from 12-1 – Starting February 4th
- Each Tuesday in March from 4-5 – Through March 30th
- Opportunity to get your questions answered via a live Q+A with CDFA staff

There are no such thing as bad questions!
Stop in anytime you can within the hour. There will be a 20 min presentation covering the basics of the program at the top of the hour.

# Timeline

- **November 4 – December 18, 2026:** public comment period
- **February – March 2027:** applications open (online portal)
- **April – June 2027:** review and scoring applications
- **June 2027:** notification to awardees
- **June – August 2027:** contracts and grant agreements created
- **September 2027:** funding released, and projects start
- **September 2029:** projects completed

# Matching and Payments

- **There are NO Matching Requirements**
  - No additional points will be given
- **Upfront Payments are Allowable**
  - Advance payments shall not exceed the amount necessary for project expenses for a three-month period and cannot reduce the project balance below 10% of the award amount.
- **Indirect Costs Allowance**
  - Indirect cost rates are allowable for grant administration, accounting, printing, or utilities associated with the program. There is no maximum indirect cost rate; however, your proposed indirect rate must be supported with proper documentation or methodology.

# Purpose and Priorities

**The 2026 Urban Agriculture Grant Program will award competitive grants to projects that create or expand sustainable agricultural systems, strengthen community climate resilience and increase market access in urban areas across California.**

To be eligible for funding, applicants must demonstrate how project provides benefits to Native American tribes, disadvantaged communities and/or vulnerable populations.

**Funding Priorities:**

- Urban agriculture projects that demonstrate meaningful and direct benefits to **small- and medium- sized farms, socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran farmers or ranchers.**

- Projects that clearly display nature-based solutions that promote the health and resilience of ecosystems and/or communities.

# Urban Agriculture Definition

Urban Agriculture refers to the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban settings, including things like inground small plot cultivation, raised beds, vertical production, warehouse farms, mushroom growing, urban forestry and tree care, community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and other innovations. Urban farmers and gardeners work among diverse populations to expand access to nutritious foods, foster community engagement, offer workforce development opportunities, educate communities about food and farming, and expand green spaces.

CDFA defines "urban" as a geographic area no more than 25 miles adjacent to or outside of one Urbanized Area containing a population of 50,000 or more people.

# Climate Bond Funding Target

**Funds must provide "meaningful and direct benefits" to Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs), and Vulnerable Populations (VPs), which include socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFRs) and Tribes.**

**DAC**: refers to a community with a median household income of less than 80 percent of the area average or less than 80 percent of statewide median household income.

**SDAC:** refers to a community with a median household income of less than 60 percent of the area average or less than 60 percent of statewide median household income.

**VP:** refers to a subgroup of population within a region or community that faces a disproportionately heightened risk or increased sensitivity to impacts of climate change and that lacks adequate resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from such impacts.

**Resources for identifying DACs, SDACs, and VPs (RFA Section 4)**

- Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities Map
- Vulnerable Communities Platform
- Climate Change & Health Vulnerability Indicators for California

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# What is a Meaningful and Direct Benefit?

For a project to provide meaningful and direct benefits, it must meet all four of the following criteria:

**1. Ensures benefits are direct, tangible, and substantial**

- Not incidental, indirect, or speculative

**2. Builds climate resilience in priority communities by reducing climate change impacts and protecting resources**

**3. Responds to the expressed needs or desired benefits directly identified by community.**

- Community input integrated throughout project planning and implementation.

**4. Does not reduce or degrade community resources or create harm. Benefits are not delivered at the expense of another population.**

- Any potential harms have clear mitigation measures in place.

# Two Funding Tracks

- **Track 1:** Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant
- **Track 2:** Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant

✖ **No,** you may not apply to both funding tracks

✖ If you receive a Track 2 award, you **cannot** also apply for Track 1 subaward funding

✔ **YES** you may apply if you have an existing grant with CDFA

# Track 1: Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Overview

**Track 1 will fund Community-Based Organizations (CBO's) with grassroots involvement in urban and regional food systems planning. This funding is intended to increase staff capacity and provide pass-though funding to local urban agriculture projects through subawards distributed to stakeholders in their region.**

- **Design** the **subaward application**. KEEP IT SIMPLE. This could be an interview, a written application, or any other method that the CBO sees fit for equitably determining which projects meet the Climate Bond funding priorities.
- **Develop** an effective **communication strategy** to promote the subaward opportunities including strategies such as language translation as necessary, radio, press, or web-based media, hosting town halls, community gatherings, newsletters, listservs, and more.
- if desired, **employ** Systems Builder Block Grant staff and/or pay existing staff.
- **Distribute subawards** to no less than four urban agriculture stakeholders in your region. There is no maximum number.

# Track 1: Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Regions

CDFA aims to:
Distribute awards to one CBO/non-profit per region.
Award at least one CBO/non-profit with statewide reach.

**REGIONS**

- Sacramento Valley: Sacramento, Stockton
- Bay Area: East Bay, South Bay, North Bay
- Fresno: Fresno, Bakersfield
- LA: Los Angeles, Long Beach
- San Diego: San Diego
- Inland Empire: San Bernardino, Riverside
- Statewide

# **Track 1:** Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Eligibility

**Resource Conservation Districts, Local Government Entities** **OR** **Nonprofit Orgs** **OR** **CA Native American Tribes** **OR** **Public or Private Universities, Institutions of Higher Education**

*I.e.. Tribal Based non-profits, Tribal Governments*

*… with grassroots involvement in urban and regional food systems planning. Priority given to organizations that have led or participated in creating a* Food System Assessment, Greening Plan, Climate Action Plan, Urban Agriculture Assessment, Food Policy Development Plan/Strategies and or other related community fed research assessing their reginal assets and needs.

# Track 1: Systems Builder Community Based Block Grant Details

**Grant Term:** Fall 2027 through September 2029 (24 months)

**Funding Range:** $700,000 minimum - $1,800,000 maximum

**Allowable Costs:** Staffing needed to create, advertise and administer subawards to priority urban agriculture stakeholders in your region and provide technical assistance during pre- and post- award. No less than 4 subawards.

- **Subawards Range from $10,000-$150,000 for:**
  - Infrastructure
  - Equipment/Supplies
  - Workforce Development
  - Technical Assistance
  - Community Engagement
  - Operations

**Reporting:**

- Data for Climate Bond reporting requirements (i.e., spatial and demographic data, surveys).
- Annual reports cover progress made during the first twelve months of a project and successive annual periods thereafter.
- Final report covering progress made during the entirety of the project include data, results, and discussion from all years of the project to form a comprehensive and stand-alone document.
- Quarterly check-ins (what's working, how can we help)
- Evaluation including site visits, final interviews, survey collection, data collection.

# **Track 1:** Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Application Sections and Scoring

| Application Overview | Points |
|---|---|
| Organization Details & Eligibility | -- |
| Region Selection | -- |
| Total Dollar Amount Requested | -- |
| Project Title and Summary | -- |
| Project Team Information | -- |
| Climate Bond Alignment | 15 |
| Participation in Food Systems Evaluation Work | 10 |
| Subaward Management and Outreach | 25 |
| Outreach and Communication | 20 |
| Reporting and Disclosures | -- |
| Community Collaboration | 30 |
| Project Work Plan | -- |
| Project Budget | -- |
| Total | 100 |

**Climate Bond Alignment includes points for:**

- DAC, SDAC, VP service area needs identification and demonstrating meaningful and direct benefits.

**Food System Evaluation Work includes points for:**

- Having led or participated in systems evaluation

**Subaward Management & Outreach includes points for**

- Experience working with grant funding and contracts

**Outreach and Communication includes points for:**

- Number of different outreach strategies employed to announce the subaward program

**Community Collaboration includes points for**

- Letters of Support demonstrating strong community based collaboration

# Track 1: Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Public Comment

**Track 1 Seeking Public Comment Specifically on**

- CBO Capacity Building Activity

- **Optional CBO Capacity Building Activity (RFA Section 7)**
  - $5,000 to $60,000 for internal activities that enhance the CBO's ability to support Urban Agriculture projects in their region.
  - Are the example activities relevant and complimentary for Track 1 project?
  - Does having the option to include a capacity-building component make the funding opportunity more valuable or accessible?

# Track 1: Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Public Comment

## How To Submit Your Public Comment
## Complete Online Survey or Send via Email

Submit a comment by completing this Microsoft Form Survey
Email a letter or comment to caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov

Due no later than 5pm PT
**Friday, December 18, 2026**

Include **"Stakeholder Comment for Draft UA RFA – Track 1"** in the subject line of your email.

# Questions or Comments?

*Please keep your question or comment to under 2 minutes*

**Visit the program webpage to learn more:**
https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/urbanag.html

**Send written comments to:**
caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov. by 5pm PT on December 18, 2026

**Thank you!**

# **Track 2:** Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Overview

**Track 2 will fund projects that strengthen or expand urban agriculture operations and provide meaningful, direct benefits to Tribes, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations.**

- Track 2 applicants must already be operating an existing urban agriculture project.
- Funding cannot be used to establish a new urban agriculture site.
  - Land acquisitions are not an allowable cost.
- Possible examples of eligible urban agriculture production methods:
  - Soil-based production (in-ground, raised beds, shared gardens)
  - Vertical farming systems
  - Indoor/warehouse/greenhouse production (including mushroom cultivation)
  - Rooftop farms
  - Hydroponic, aeroponic, or aquaponic systems (indoor or outdoor)
  - Urban forestry or agroforestry projects (food-producing trees only)
  - Micro-farms (microgreens, specialty crops)

# **Track 2:** Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Eligibility

**For-profit Businesses** **OR** **Nonprofit Orgs** **OR** **Resource Conservation Districts, Local Government Entities** **OR** **CA Native American Tribes**

*I.e.. Tribal Based non-profits, Tribal Governments*

# **Track 2:** Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Details

**Grant Term:** Fall 2027 through September 2029 (24 months)

**Award Amounts:** $150,000 to $400,000

**Allowable Costs:** We aim to provide flexible funding to meet the needs of your urban agriculture project in accomplishing meaningful and direct benefits to priority stakeholders.

- Infrastructure
- Equipment/Supplies
- Workforce Development
- Technical Assistance
- Community Engagement
- Operations

**Reporting:**

- 5-10 photos of the site, project, or infrastructure you plan to improve with grant funding at the start and end of the project.
- Data for Climate Bond reporting requirements (i.e., spatial and demographic data, surveys).
- Annual reports cover progress made during the first twelve months of a project and successive annual periods thereafter.
- Final report covering progress made during the entirety of the project include data, results, and discussion from all years of the project to form a comprehensive and stand-alone document.
- Evaluation including site visits, final interviews, survey collection, data collection.

# **Track 2:** Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Application and Scoring

| Application Overview | Points |
|---|---|
| Organization Details & Eligibility | -- |
| Total Dollar Amount Requested | -- |
| Project Title and Summary | -- |
| Project Team Information | 5 |
| Climate Bond Alignment & Project Narrative | 30 |
| Climate, Economic, & Community Benefits Evaluation | 15 |
| Project Sustainability | 5 |
| Reporting and Disclosures | -- |
| Photo Upload | -- |
| Organizational Capacity | 10 |
| Letters of Support | 20 |
| Project Work Plan | 15 |
| Project Budget | -- |
| Total | 100 |

**Project Team includes points for**

- Providing clear descriptions of team member roles.

**Climate Bond Alignment & Narrative includes points for**

- DAC, SDAC, VP service area needs identification and demonstrating meaningful and direct benefits.

**Climate, Economic & Community Benefits includes points for**

- Identifying climate resilience strategies and community and economic benefit metrics.

**Project Sustainability includes points for**

- Describing project continuation plan post-grant.

**Organizational Capacity includes points for**

- Identifying organizational capacity to implement project.

**Letters of Support includes points for**

- Providing letters of support from collaborators.

**Project Work Plan includes points for**

- Providing project timeline.

# Track 2: Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Public Comment

**Track 2 Seeking Public Comment Specifically on**

➢ Economic and Community Benefits Evaluation Metrics

- **Annual (non-grant) Revenue OR Production Value.**
  - Current Annual (Jan-Dec) ➔ Projected Annual by end of grant period (Jan-Dec)
  - Production Value Example: Purchasing a high tunnel may increase production capacity on a specific area of land, resulting in higher annual production value.
  - Non-Grant Revenue Example: Adding a weekly farm stand or participating in additional farmers' markets could increase annual revenue from direct-to-consumer sales.
- **Annual Community Reach from January to December**
  - Current Annual (Jan-Dec) ➔ Projected Annual by end of grant period (Jan-Dec)
  - Number of fellows completing a fellowship during the grant period
  - Number of individuals attending workshops or receiving produce through farm stands or CSA boxes

- Is it practical for applicants to estimate and report these metrics?
- Should the metrics be narrowed or further clarified?
- Any additional considerations when asking applicants to report revenue/production value or community reach?

# Track 2: Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Public Comment

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**Thank you!**