

Model USDA Budgetary Guidance

Scenario C: Growing Urban Agriculture

Introduction

Urban agriculture presents a unique opportunity to enhance food security, promote sustainability, and improve the overall health and well-being of urban populations. However, to scale its impact and integrate it into city planning, there is a need for targeted financial support. This proposal outlines budgetary guidelines that can be considered to promote urban agriculture, enhancing its growth and sustainability.

Establishing a Dedicated Urban Agriculture Fund

Purpose: A dedicated fund ensures that urban agriculture projects receive consistent and structured financial support. This fund could be managed by local government agencies or public-private partnerships.

Allocation:

- Direct grants to community-based urban agriculture projects.
- Research and development (R&D) in innovative farming techniques.
- Infrastructure development, such as rooftop gardens, greenhouses, and community gardens.

Incentives for Private Sector and Community Involvement

Purpose: Encouraging businesses and communities to participate in urban agriculture is key to scaling up its impact. This could include tax breaks, subsidies, or technical support.

Allocation:

- Tax incentives for companies that invest in urban farming projects.
- Equipment subsidies for small and medium-sized urban farms.
- Educational workshops, training programs, and certifications.

Investment in Technology and Innovation

Purpose: Urban farming must leverage technology to optimize land and water use, improve yields, and minimize resource consumption.

Allocation:

- Technology grants, supporting the adoption of hydroponics, aquaponics, and other advanced farming techniques.
- Research collaborations with universities and startups to innovate urban farming technologies.

Public Awareness Campaigns and Education

Purpose: Promoting urban agriculture requires community engagement, education, and public awareness to ensure sustainable growth.

Allocation:

- Public campaigns highlighting the benefits of urban agriculture.
- School programs, urban agriculture festivals, and local awareness events.

Real Life Examples

Below are some links to real life examples of cities putting their money into supporting urban agriculture:

San Francisco:

<https://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/2012-05-14/harvesting-city>

The City of Atlanta has numerous resources available under their AgLanta program:

<https://www.aglanta.org/aglanta-resources-index>

Here is an example of their worksheet for creating a community garden and estimating costs and overcoming challenges:

https://www.aglanta.org/s/CreatingACommunityGardenWorksheet_2018.pdf

Austin

<https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2024/08/first-travis-county-food-plan-nears-finish-line/>

(this article traces the city developing a food plan and their work to fund the plan and its recommendations).

Seattle:

<https://ocr.seattle.gov/mayor-harrell-advances-community-investments-in-participatory-budgeting-projects/>

Conclusion

These proposed budgetary guidelines offer a roadmap for cities and municipalities to encourage the growth of urban agriculture, supporting food security, sustainability, and community development. By providing structured financial support, cities can help urban farming thrive, ensuring long-term benefits for urban environments.