

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2026

Richard Fordyce
Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Colton Buckley
Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Undersecretary Richard Fordyce and Chief Colton Buckley:

We write regarding the Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) competitive grants and the absence of funding opportunities in FY2025 and FY2026. We urge you to release a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), as authorized in Section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill, P.L. 115-334), with \$12 million available to account for appropriated but unspent funds as soon as possible, with a 60-day application period, and no later than December 31, 2026.

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established in the 2018 Farm Bill to promote the viability of urban farms and simultaneously address food insecurity in neighboring communities. Since its inception, the Office has invested in 199 grants and 146 cooperative agreements that increase the capacity of urban agriculture, innovative producers, and municipal composting initiatives in local communities across 43 states and Puerto Rico.

These investments are paired with USDA field experts across 27 USDA Urban Service Centers that promote public and private partnerships that have launched incubator farms, workforce development, K-12 education, and community gardens. These programs are making direct

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investments in the resilience of agricultural production while forging the future of innovative production in metropolitan areas and beyond.

As with any transition of administration, we recognize there has been staff turnover. This turnover has been far more significant than what would typically accompany a change in administration, driven in large part by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)-directed staff reductions and the accompanying reorganization at USDA. While we recognize these are extraordinary circumstances, this level of disruption should not prevent USDA from implementing congressionally mandated and funded programs. The Office received its first funding in FY2020 and appropriated funding has fluctuated annually even while stakeholder support has remained robust. Despite these fluctuations, the Office has continued to implement programs efficiently, including increases from supplemental funding. At the time of writing this letter, USDA has received \$12 million - \$7 million in FY25 and \$5 million FY26 to award UAIP grants, but has not made that funding available - with no explanation

This delay runs counter to the Administration's goals of streamlining programs for farmers, supporting small and family farms, and increasing access to healthy, local food.

We urge you to ensure that Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 funding is made available as soon as possible at the fully appropriated levels.

Consequently, we respectfully request responses to the following questions by December 31st, 2026:

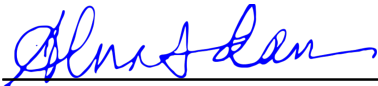
1. What caused the delay in publishing the NOFO for the Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants in FY2025 and FY2026?
2. When will the NOFO be available for the grant program?
3. What will be the new regular cycle of funding opportunities moving forward?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our offices should you have any questions, and we look forward to prompt action from the Administration in service of our urban and indoor farmers.

Sincerely,

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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



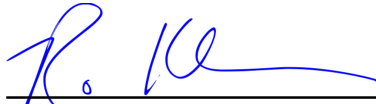
Shontel M. Brown
Vice Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture



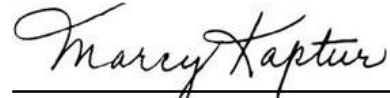
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



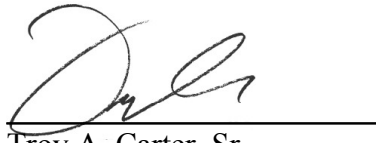
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



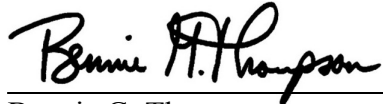
LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



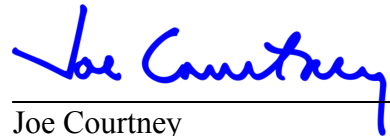
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



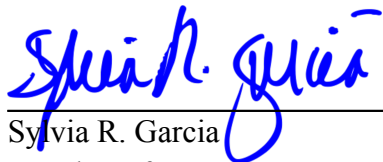
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



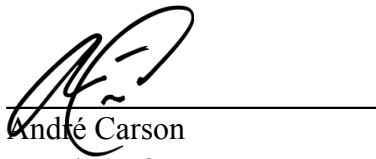
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



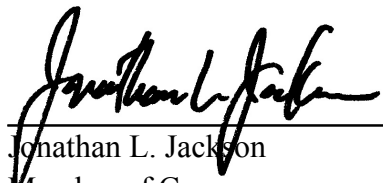
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



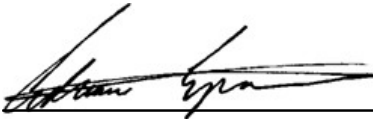
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



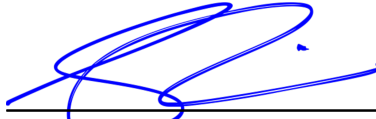
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

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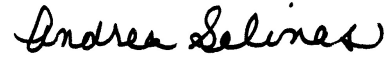
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Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



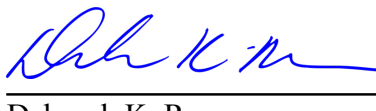
Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



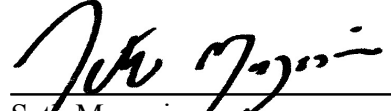
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress