



**THE PROMISE OF URBAN
AGRICULTURE:
ONLINE COURSES FOR GROWERS AND PLANNERS**

How We Got Here

- Original research report: “The Promise of Urban Agriculture” (2019)
 - Case studies and interviews
 - Recommendations for supporting urban ag
- Connection with Rooted
 - Research → Educational Resources
- Cooperative Agreement with USDA-AMS
 - Trainings for farmers, service providers, planners, and policymakers



The Promise of Urban Agriculture

National Study of Commercial Farming in Urban Areas

Report Authors

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Our Project Team

Cornell Small Farms Program

- **Anu Rangarajan** – Director and Co-author of “The Promise of Urban Agriculture”
- **Molly Riordan** – Urban Agriculture Specialist and Co-author of “The Promise of Urban Agriculture”
- **Yolanda Gonzalez** – Urban Agriculture Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest NY Team

Rooted

- **Marcia Caton Campbell** – Executive Director
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USDA AMS

- **Samantha Schaffstall** - Branch Chief, Outreach and Technical Assistance
- **Yvette Garcia** - Agricultural Marketing Specialist
- **Jenna Segal**- Agricultural Marketing Specialist
- **Brittini Echols**- Agricultural Marketing Specialist

Turning Recommendations into Learning

- Development of practical training and educational resources that build on the recommendations presented in “The Promise of Urban Agriculture (PUA).”
- Three Target Audiences
 - **Farmers and nonprofit employees** engaged in or aspiring to operate an urban farm.
 - **Policy and planning officials** wanting to improve support of commercial urban farming.
 - **Nonprofit employees and Extension educators** supporting development of commercial urban farms.
- Four asynchronous online courses

Introduction to the Courses Video



Overall Curriculum Learning Goals

Articulate Factors Important to Building Viable Urban Farms

Understand Policy and Planning Tools that Impact an Urban Farm

Describe Urban Farm Management Factors that Build Viability

Distinguish When a Nonprofit Structure can Better Meet Urban Farm Goals



The Promise of Urban Agriculture (PUA) Courses

PUA 101: Deciding Where to Farm in the City

PUA 102: Urban Farm Planning & Management

PUA 103: Urban Farming by Community
Nonprofits

PUA 201: Urban Agriculture Skills for Planners



Participant Feedback

"I appreciated how accessible the material/videos were, how many active urban farms were highlighted, and that the activities went beyond just resource sharing but actually into supporting the next steps of action."

"I thought that this was a great overview to the topic for new and aspiring urban producers. I think the big challenge is how some of the details covered in the course are specific to a municipality and that may vary from location to location, though I understand the limitations of this being an online course. I appreciated that there was some acknowledgement of social identities and how that may influence involvement in urban agriculture. There might be some additional content that could be developed to help lay out how history, culture, and identity may influence urban ag, but it's difficult to get into those complexities unless it's anchored in a particular city/region."

PUA Course Methods and Structure

- Learner-centered methodology
- Lessons developed with specific audience in mind
- Content, design, delivery, and evaluations tailored to the needs of each group
- Examples drawn from urban farmers and advocates across the country
- Lessons
 - Structured for **participatory active learning**.
 - Invite individuals to **share their experiences**.
 - Integrate new content into **site specific action plans**.
 - Share **resources** relevant to audience.
 - Connect to **USDA urban agriculture resources and support**.
- Courses are 508 compliant

Growers Course PUA 101: Deciding Where To Farm in the City

Course Overview

- Introduction & Learning Objectives
- Meet the Farmers
- Glossary

Section 1: Creating a Commercial Urban Farm with Community in Mind

- Understanding Social Identities
- Making Community Connections
- Where You are From Matters
- Building Community Support for Your Urban Farm
- Commercial Urban Agriculture as a Social Enterprise

Section 2: Accessing Urban Land for Farming

- Assessing Site Suitability
- Ownership vs Leasing
- Land Tenure Models
- Municipal Land Programs
- Land Trusts

Section 3: Zoning for Commercial Urban Agriculture

- How Zoning Affects Commercial Urban Agriculture
- How Municipalities Regulate Farming
- Applying for a Variance
- Examples of Urban Ag Support from Boston and Baltimore



FrontLine Farming, Denver (CO)



Growers Course PUA 102: Urban Farm Planning and Management

Section 1: Choosing a Business Strategy and Structure

- Farm Business Structures
- Urban Farm Revenue Strategies
- Contingency Planning

Section 2: Social Enterprise Strategies

- Social Impact Goals
- Planning a Social Enterprise
- Deciding to Farm as a Nonprofit

Section 3: Sources of Urban Farm Income

- Revenue Sources
- Events and Tours
- Value Added Production

Section 4: Market Assessment and Building

- Understanding Markets and Barriers
- Choosing Certifications
- Food Safety

Section 5: Building Urban Crop Plans to Maximize Returns

- Farm Goals and Crop Plans
- Pricing
- Specialization vs Diversification

Section 6: Scaling Up and Labor

- To Expand or Not
- Managing Employees
- Apprentices, Interns and Volunteers



Growers Course PUA 103: Urban Farming by Community Nonprofits

Section 1: Grounding the Nonprofit Mission in Urban Farming

- Centering the Mission
- Community-Led vs Community-Based Farming
- Working Authentically towards Food Justice and Sovereignty

Section 2: Planning the Nonprofit Urban Farm

- Incorporating as a Nonprofit
- Risk Management
- Staffing
- Revenue Strategies

Section 3: Grant Writing for the Urban Farm

- Preparing to Apply for Grants
- Preparing to Receive Grants
- Local and Federal Grants

Section 4: Documenting Activities for Funders

- Grant Reporting Fundamentals
- Documenting Farm Impacts
- Community Engagement in Reporting

Section 5: Sustaining and Leveraging Your Urban Farm's Success

- Growing the Farm Infrastructure
- Building Organizational Capacity
- Planning for Financial Sustainability



A Nonprofit Example: Red Hook Farms, Brooklyn (NY)



Planners Course Learning Outcomes

Identify how urban agriculture relates to broader planning priorities in cities, towns, and suburbs

Describe how zoning and comprehensive planning influence urban agriculture outcomes

Integrate urban agriculture efforts into emerging areas of planning, like sustainability and equity

Employ strategies and techniques that foster inclusive community engagement



Planners Curriculum Overview

Section 1: Defining Urban Agriculture

Section 2: Determining the Value of Urban Agriculture

Section 3: Effective Engagement Strategies to Plan for Urban Agriculture

Section 4: Urban Agriculture in Comprehensive Plans

Section 5: Zoning Considerations for Urban Agriculture

Section 6: Urban Agriculture Plans




Sample Planner Course Components

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History of Agriculture in Cities, Part 2: Birth of the Planning Profession

Acknowledging that the history of agricultural land use in the territory currently known as the United States stretches back thousands of years, and that European contact set off centuries of violence and displacement, we look specifically at agricultural production and the concurrent rise of the planning profession.



The birth of the planning profession...


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Case Studies and Resources on Cultivating Community

The following video featuring Rooted's [Troy Farm](#) in Madison, WI shares the story of when community connections were not cultivated. As you watch, consider these questions:


- What challenges has Rooted's Troy Farm encountered in creating community?
- What role could a planner play to build bridges within the local community?



Watch on  YouTube

Worksheet 6_Farm and Food Tours.pdf

The Promise of Urban Agriculture Worksheet 6



Community Engagement: Farm and Food Tours

Purpose
This public-engagement activity is designed to introduce local decisionmakers, like elected officials or leaders of departments and agencies, to the leaders and "doers" in the farm and food community. Farm and food tours connect people with political or bureaucratic authority to food policy issues and the real people, gardens, and farms that experience the impacts of food policy (or lack thereof).





Objective
Make key stakeholders aware of urban agriculture and UA stakeholders, as well as the benefits of urban farms and gardens and the challenges they face, by speaking directly with farmers, gardeners, and UA advocates.

Activity

Time allotment:	Participants:	Resources/supplies	Roles
Event: Half-day, during the growing season; allow a 2-3 months to plan.	Elected and appointed local officials, funders, farmers, gardeners, UA advocates	Transportation, catering, farmer stipends,	Tour "guide" Timekeeper Driver(s) if needed

Preparation:

1. **Identify a tour planning team.** Identify and approach the appropriate UA organizations or networks in your jurisdiction with the idea to collaborate on a food and farm tour. Ideally, a tour is tied to a specific request of the targeted decisionmakers, such as introducing a new policy or zoning change, or gathering support for new resources. If there is interest, ask the UA organization/network(s) whether they are interested in leading, especially if you (the planner) are working for a public agency. It is good practice for public agency staff—and for all planners—to lift up the voices of those most impacted by food policy change. Set up an informal committee with clear roles and responsibilities that will share planning and accountability for the event, and meet regularly to ensure all needed tasks are completed.
2. **Develop a budget.** Budget should include rental of a van or small tour bus and driver, catering, and stipends for participating farmers, as well as any potential printing or other last-minute needs.

Sample Planner Course Components

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Example Urban Agriculture Plans:

- Albuquerque / Bernalillo County, NM: <https://bccurbanag.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ID-Ag-Plan-Final-Report.pdf>
- Baltimore, MD: <https://www.baltimoresustainability.org/homegrown-baltimore-plan/>
- Boston, MA: https://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/boston-urban-ag-vision-final_tcm3-52791.pdf
- East Point, GA: <https://www.foodwellalliance.org/east-point>
- Kamloops, BC: https://www.kamloops.ca/sites/default/files/docs/city-hall/15-09-food_urban_agriculture_plan_2015_285947.pdf
- Minneapolis, MN: http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/cped/planning/cped_urban_ag_plan#:~:text=The%20development%20of%20an%20Urban,grown%20foods%20within%20the%20city.
- Pittsburgh, PA: <https://foodactionplan.org/>
- Philadelphia, PA: <https://www.phila.gov/documents/philadelphias-urban-agriculture-plan/>

Journey Mapping:

- IdeoU, "Use Customer Journey Maps to Uncover Innovation Opportunities." Accessed March 15, 2021.

Food Policy Audit

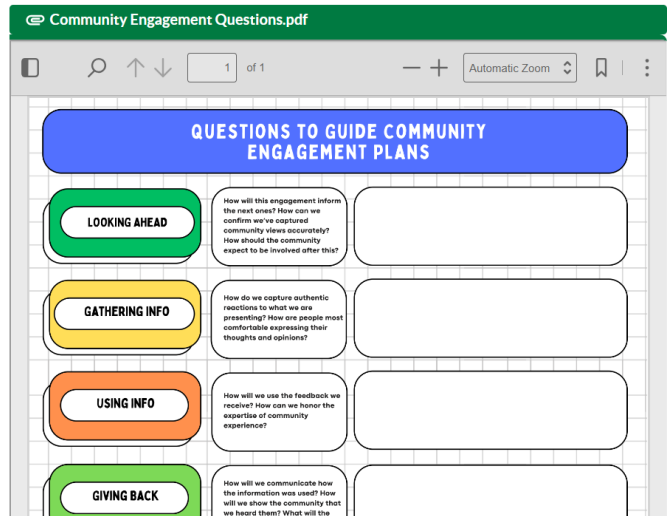
- Described in O'Brien, J., & Cobb, T. D. (2012). The Food Policy Audit: A New Tool for Community Food System Planning. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 2(3), 177-191.

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Plan community engagements with the end in mind.

The graphic below offers guiding questions to plan your community engagement by thinking about how one engagement feeds the next, and how to build rapport with community stakeholders. Answers to these questions can help planners design engagements that are grounded in authentic and honest communication.

A PDF of this image is included for download, and can be a useful handout when collaborating on community engagement planning.



Community Engagement Questions.pdf

1 of 1 Automatic Zoom

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLANS	
LOOKING AHEAD	How will this engagement inform the next one? How can we confirm we've captured community views accurately? How should the community expect to be involved after this?
GATHERING INFO	How do we capture authentic reactions to what we are presenting? How are people most comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions?
USING INFO	How will we use the feedback we receive? How can we honor the expertise of community experience?
GIVING BACK	How will we communicate how the information was used? How will we show the community that we heard them? What will the

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A Planner's Perspective: Comp Planning for Urban Agriculture in Rochester, NY

Listen to this interview with Elizabeth Murphy, Associate Planner in the City of Rochester (NY), about her experience incorporating urban agriculture into the city's comprehensive plan, Rochester 2034. As you listen consider the following:

- What was the community engagement process like in the comprehensive planning process?
- What's different than you would expect?
- What assumptions about urban agriculture does the comprehensive plan make?
- What are the potential trade-offs that Rochester planners had to consider?

Supplementary Resource

- [Rochester 2034](#), Rochester, NY

▶ A Planner's Perspective Comp Planning for UA in Rochester, NY (Elizabeth Murphy).wav

Download

Complete and Continue >

Sample Planner Course Components



The City of Rochester's comprehensive planning team, from the left, Associate City Planner Kevin Kelley, Manager of Planning Dorraine Kirkmire, City Planner Scott Thompson, and Senior Community Planner Elizabeth Murphy. - PHOTO BY RYAN WILLIAMSON via Rochester's City Magazine.

[\[Audio Clip\]](#)

Promise of Urban Ag Podcast
feat. Elizabeth Murphy, Associate Planner,
City of Rochester (NY)



Reaching Planners

With the American
Planning
Association Food
Systems Division
6 CM Credits

The screenshot shows the American Planning Association (APA) website. At the top, the APA logo and tagline "American Planning Association - Creating Great Communities for All" are visible. Navigation links include "About APA", "Join", and "Log In". A search bar is present with the text "Enter keyword or phrase" and a "Search" button. A dark blue navigation bar contains dropdown menus for "Membership", "Knowledge Center", "Conferences and Learning", "AICP", "Policy and Advocacy", "Career Center", "In Your Community", "Connect with APA", and "APA Foundation".

The main content area is titled "AICP Certification Maintenance". It features a breadcrumb trail "Home > AICP >" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn. Below the title is a large, colorful graphic with the word "CREDENTIAL" in the center. Surrounding it are various terms: "PROFESSIONAL", "EXPERTISE", "CREDIT", "ETHICS", "EQUITY", "ELEVATE", "IMPACT", "EDUCATION", "LAW", "TOOLS", "MAINTENANCE", "RESILIENCE", "PRACTICE", "INVEST", "QUALITY", "PROMOTE", "BUILD", "EARN", "SUSTAINABILITY", "CONNECT", "VALUE", "INNOVATION", "QUALITY", "IMPACT", "EDUCATION", "PROVIDER", "QUALITY", "EARN", "IMPACT", "LEAD", "ELEVATE", "PRACTICE", "INVEST", "QUALITY".

At the bottom of the graphic is a red button that says "Get Started".

On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with the AICP logo and the following menu items: "Why AICP?", "One Path to AICP", "Certification Maintenance", "For AICP Members", "Program Details", "CM Search", "AICP Member FAQ", "Become a CM Provider", and "CM Providers Resources".

USDA Resources for Urban Agriculture

Videos

- Getting Ready for Federal Grant Opportunities
- Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production
- Composting and Food Waste Reduction
- Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion
- Regional Food System Partnerships
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Farm Service Agency Loans



Video
Getting Ready for Federal Grant Opportunities



Story Map Case Studies

The Promise of Urban Agriculture



[Story Maps](#)

National Urban Agriculture NUag



Led by Kyle Karnuta
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Harvest NY Team

Goals

- Identify UA benefits, unique characteristics, opportunities for USDA to support urban growers and design an action plan to inform relationships with urban growers

Target Audience

- USDA employees

Content

- 7 Online Courses to gain an in-depth understanding of urban agriculture practices and markets and learn how to build community with urban growers

New open access
resource on urban
agriculture

Planning for Equitable Urban Agriculture in the United States

*Future Directions for a New Ethic
in City Building*

A new book, *Planning for Equitable Urban Agriculture in the United States*, builds on the legacy of Jerome L. Kaufman, a food systems scholar, teacher and advocate. Written for communities, urban planners, professionals, and academics, this open access book examines the opportunities for and pitfalls of planning for urban agriculture in the United States, especially in how questions of ethics and equity are addressed.

Raja, S., Caton Campbell, M., Judelsohn, A.,
Born, B., & Morales, A. (Eds.). (2024). *Planning
for Equitable Urban Agriculture in the United
States: Future Directions for a New Ethic in City
Building*. Springer International Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32076-7>

Download the
book here!



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STORY MAPS

Yvette Garcia – yvette.garcia@usda.gov



The Promise of Urban Agriculture -
<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/urban-ag/promise-urban-agriculture/>

Enrollment Open Now!

- Teachable platform
- Free enrollment until January 31, 2025
- Nominal fee thereafter
- Course completion certificates and/or AICP CM credits awarded

