

Executive Summary

In this report, the NYC Mayor's Office of Urban Agriculture (MOUA) will detail how the office plans to grow New Yorkers' awareness, access, and activity through urban agriculture in the city. There are cross-cutting themes rooted in the office's priorities:

- **Livability and Affordability:** How urban agriculture can grow food and businesses in the green economy while also supporting other city capital demands like housing
- **Local Food Production and Distribution:** Strengthening the connections between communities and farmers
- **Foster Future Urban Agriculture and Climate Leaders:** Through education, training, and land stewardship throughout the city
- **Innovative Urban Agriculture and Climate Smart Policy:** To strengthen and fund nature-based practices in the city
- **Measuring Data and Impact in Urban Agriculture:** Developing comprehensive information on the urban agriculture landscape
- **Cultivating Economic Development:** For emerging urban agriculture businesses and new entrepreneurs

Reading the Report

The report will outline how the office met its legal mandates through the establishment of the Urban Agriculture Office within the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice¹ (MOCEJ), appointment of the City's first Director, and achieving of key priorities in our inaugural year. The Office of Urban Agriculture actively strives to meet its legal mandates by:

- Developing overarching priorities to set the goals and metrics the office will use to demonstrate progress on an annual basis moving forward
- Implementing equity-driven initiatives collaboratively with city agencies and partners that will bolster innovation and production within the agriculture and food sectors in the city
- Highlighting and delivering on the strategic action needed to chart the course for the expedient growth of the breadth of urban agriculture activity throughout the city

First Year Wins

The Urban Agriculture Office has earned some distinct achievements and success over the last 12 months.

Awarded Top State and Federal Farm to School Funding

The City was awarded the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Patrick Leahy and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) Farm to School grants (\$200,000 in total), and the \$8.4 million New York State Department of Education Local Food for Schools grant this year. In collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), the Office of Urban Agriculture supported the Department of Education Office of Food and Nutrition Services (DOE OFNS) in acquiring the funding from these three grants to increase the supply of local, healthy food and agriculture education for NYC students, develop a farmer/producer training, and facilitate connections to New York State's small-mid scale farmers and producers.

Leadership in Urban Agriculture and Climate Policy

The office was successful in **shaping federal urban agriculture legislation**, such as H.R. 3902, the Growing Opportunities for Innovative Farming Act, introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY 13), which would allow for more equitable access to funding for small farmers and producers, and A.1909, introduced in the New York State legislature by Assembly Member Stefani Zinerman (D-Kings County), allowing water fee exemptions for community land trust gardens, thus alleviating an onerous burden.

Pursued Federal Grant Funding to Develop NYC Urban Agriculture Programming for New and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

In a pivotal Farm Bill year, MOUA **prioritized applying and advocating for federal grants** relevant to urban agriculture, food, and climate. This effort is also in alignment with the NYC Federal Infrastructure Funding Task Force goals. The MOUA, in partnership with NYC Department of Veterans Services (DVS), applied for USDA Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program **to support urban agriculture and horticulture training** that would foster wellness, fresh food access, and workforce development **for NYC veterans**.

Initiated Planning for Land Use Feasibility Study

The MOUA, in partnership with the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC), developed a plan for a **feasibility study** targeting East New York, with the goal of **identifying underutilized city-owned land and developing innovative licensing and land-use agreements** which would facilitate urban agriculture enterprise and other climate benefit uses. This plan was initially submitted for funding under the USDA

Urban Agriculture Innovative Production Grant program, but EDC will continue to engage with MOUA's mission as part of a broader effort to re-examine a number of city-owned sites in the East New York Industrial Business Zone for a number of economic development purposes such as creating local future-forward jobs, fostering businesses in green manufacturing sectors, and other job-dense industrial uses, and strengthening opportunities for green workforce development. This feasibility plan will also be evaluated for replication potential.

This early progress demonstrated by the MOUA, to name just a few examples, will pave the way for future fruitful partnerships with city agencies and urban agriculture stakeholders, as we move forward.