



City of New Haven
Community Services Administration
Food System Policy Division

May 29, 2020

The Honorable Tyisha Walker-Myers
President, Board of Alders
City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Alder President Walker-Myers,

In accordance with the Order of the Board of Aldermen authorizing the Mayor to apply for and accept all grants on behalf of the City of New Haven, passed on October 17, 1994, I am writing to respectfully advise the Honorable Board of an application by the City of New Haven's Community Services Administration, Food System Policy Division (FSPD) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services. The FSPD is applying for up to \$500,000 over a three-year period - not to exceed \$200,000 in a single year - from the newly established Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program.

While New Haven has a vibrant urban agriculture community, like many other cities, current zoning and municipal policy have been slow to accommodate its growth. The FSPD would like to better use zoning to support local food systems in each neighborhood. For example, land use policies can assist in securing access to and ensuring the preservation of land for agricultural uses; zoning regulations can ensure that agriculture occurs in suitable locations and under the proper conditions. But there is no one-size-fits-all urban agricultural land use policy. Urban areas vary in availability of land for agriculture, population density, soil suitability, and resident interest. The FSPD envisions creating an environment where urban agriculture and all of its related activities are proactively encouraged by City policy and zoning, with guidance from the communities that would have the most to gain from its environmental, health, and socioeconomic benefits.

Potential funding from the USDA's Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program would provide the FSPD with the unique opportunity to thoroughly identify, research, and develop the policy changes necessary to create an enabling environment for urban agriculture, reducing barriers to entry and sustainability. This project will be performed in collaboration with the communities that have been most impacted by structural and systemic inequity, to ensure that these changes meet their needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Latha Swamy
Director of Food System Policy
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