FUNDING DIRECTORY

Small-Scale Community Gardens and Farmers

Prepared for Alabama Urban Gardeners and Farmers Association (AUGF), Strategic Alignment Network, LLC, and community-based agricultural organizations

October 2026

A practical directory of grants, cost-share programs, loans, technical assistance, and community investment opportunities for small-scale farmers, urban gardeners, community gardens, beginning farmers, limited-resource producers, nonprofits, and cooperatives.

Funding focus: garden infrastructure, seeds and supplies, farmer training, food production, market access, agricultural business development, youth education, and community food access.

Funding availability, deadlines, award amounts, and eligibility can change. Always verify current requirements with the funder before applying.

How to Use This Directory

This directory prioritizes programs that may support garden infrastructure, seeds and supplies, farmer training, food production, market access, and agricultural business development. For organizations working to improve food access, address food deserts, educate youth, support underserved communities, and strengthen local food systems, the best fit depends on the applicant type, location, project design, land control, and funding cycle.

1. Federal Funding Sources

These programs are strong starting points for community gardens and small-scale farmers. Eligibility and funding availability vary by program and application cycle.

1. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) — Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Priority: Top priority

Supports eligible growers with high tunnels, irrigation, soil health, composting, and conservation improvements. Particularly useful for urban farms and small-scale vegetable producers.

Best for: Individual farmers, eligible landowners, and urban growers.

Status / timing: Contact the local NRCS service center to confirm practices, application periods, and eligibility.

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-high-tunnel-initiative

2. USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program

Supports community-driven food projects that improve food security and build sustainable local food systems. Potential uses include community food production, nutrition education, and partnerships connecting growers with underserved residents.

Best for: Eligible nonprofits, tribal organizations, and qualifying public food program service providers.

Status / timing: Check the current notice of funding opportunity and applicant requirements.

https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/community-food-projects-competitive-grant-program-cfpcgp

3. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Southern SARE) — Producer Grants

Producer Grants help farmers test sustainable production, marketing, or on-farm demonstration ideas.

Best for: Farmers and farmer organizations, including eligible cooperatives; community nonprofits alone do not qualify for Producer Grants.

Status / timing: The currently listed Producer Grant deadline is November 6, 2026. Verify the date and current application instructions before submitting.

https://southern.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/producer-grants/

4. USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) — Operating Microloans

Loans of up to $50,000 can help eligible small and beginning farmers purchase seeds, supplies, livestock, equipment, and other operating necessities. This is a loan, not a grant.

Best for: Small farms, niche producers, market gardeners, and beginning farmers.

Status / timing: Contact FSA to confirm eligibility, terms, and application requirements.

https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/loans/operating-microloan

5. USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)

Supports projects that develop and expand direct-to-consumer markets, including farmers markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA), and other local marketing channels.

Best for: Eligible farmer groups, nonprofits, market organizations, and local food partners.

Status / timing: FY2026 applications closed June 5, 2026; monitor the USDA AMS website for the next cycle.

https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp

6. USDA Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)

Helps eligible organizations plan or expand local and regional food enterprises, such as food hubs, aggregation and distribution systems, and shared-use food facilities.

Best for: Partnerships helping multiple small farmers reach buyers and markets.

Status / timing: FY2026 applications closed June 5, 2026; monitor the USDA AMS website for the next cycle.

https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp

2. Alabama and Local Funding Opportunities

These sources are relevant for community garden development, neighborhood revitalization, food access, and educational programming in Alabama.

7. Alabama Power Foundation — Good Roots Grant

Priority: Time-sensitive

Offers up to $1,000 for eligible Alabama nonprofits, schools, and local governments to improve green spaces through tree planting and beautification. A community garden may be a fit when the project includes eligible trees, community participation, and a long-term care plan.

Best for: Eligible Alabama nonprofits, schools, and local governments.

Status / timing: The listed 2026 application window is October 5–23, 2026. Confirm details and eligibility on the funder website.

https://www.powerofgood.com/grants/good-roots

8. Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) — Healthy Food Financing

Supports eligible projects that improve access to affordable fresh foods in communities with limited grocery access. Past eligible project types have included farmers markets, food pantries, schools, and grocery retailers.

Best for: Eligible organizations developing food access infrastructure.

Status / timing: Check the current funding cycle, program details, and applicant requirements.

https://adeca.alabama.gov/state-funded-programs/

9. Alabama Power Foundation — Foundation Grants

Supports nonprofit projects in environmental stewardship, education, health, and community development. Garden-based education, neighborhood food access, and community-led environmental projects may align with its priorities.

Best for: Eligible Alabama nonprofits with collaborative, measurable community impact.

Status / timing: Confirm the next cycle directly with the foundation.

https://www.powerofgood.com/grants/foundation

3. Private Foundations and Community Garden Grants

These sources can be helpful when a project needs smaller amounts for raised beds, soil, tools, seeds, youth programming, or garden expansion.

10. SeedMoney — Community Garden Grants and Crowdfunding

Supports public food gardens through small grants, crowdfunding campaigns, and planning resources. Useful for community gardens, food-bank gardens, and neighborhood growing projects.

Best for: Community-led gardens needing modest startup or expansion funds.

Status / timing: Verify current campaign dates and eligibility.

https://seedmoney.org/community-garden-grants/

11. Whole Kids Foundation — Garden Grant

Provides support for eligible school-based edible learning gardens.

Best for: Eligible K–12 schools and qualifying educational garden programs; not a general grant for every community garden.

Status / timing: The 2026 application window has closed; the foundation says to check back in February 2027.

https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/our-work/childrens-nutrition/garden-grant

12. Garden Conservancy — Garden Futures Grants

Has offered grants typically ranging from $2,500 to $10,000 for qualifying nonprofit organizations and small public gardens supporting community garden programming, environmental stewardship, and diverse populations.

Best for: Qualifying nonprofit organizations and public gardens.

Status / timing: The 2026 application deadline has passed. Monitor the website for future rounds.

https://stag.gardenconservancy.org/programs/grants

13. KidsGardening — Community and Youth Garden Grants

Offers periodic grant opportunities for educational gardens, youth engagement, and community gardening. Listings have included intergenerational gardens and vacant-lot transformations.

Best for: Gardens involving youth, schools, or educational programming.

Status / timing: Individual grants have separate eligibility rules and deadlines; check current listings.

https://kidsgardening.org/grant-opportunities/

4. Additional Funding Channels Worth Pursuing

These are not all standalone grants. They can provide a combination of cash, donated materials, technical assistance, and local partnership support.

Funding source	What to pursue	Best fit
Local community foundations	Neighborhood improvement, food access, youth development, and health grants	Nonprofits and community garden associations
City and county governments	Community development funding, vacant-lot revitalization, and eligible CDBG projects	Gardens serving qualifying low- and moderate-income communities
Local banks and credit unions	Community reinvestment, financial literacy workshops, and small-business development	Small farms, cooperatives, and garden nonprofits
Grocery stores and food retailers	Sponsorships, produce donations, seeds, compost, and garden supplies	Food-access projects and community gardens
Nurseries, seed companies, and hardware stores	In-kind donations of seedlings, soil, tools, lumber, fencing, and irrigation equipment	Startup and expansion gardens
Colleges and Cooperative Extension	Joint proposals, demonstration plots, student volunteers, and technical assistance	Educational gardens and small-farm training
Local health systems	Nutrition education, food access, community wellness, and produce distribution	Gardens serving food-insecure neighborhoods

For Alabama, also consult the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and local community foundations to identify regional opportunities, technical support, and potential project partners.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System — aces.edu

5. Recommended Funding Priorities for AUGF and SAN

Priority 1 — Apply or prepare immediately

- **Alabama Power Good Roots:** Apply by October 23, 2026, if the project includes eligible tree planting and green-space improvements.
- **Southern SARE Producer Grants:** Prepare a farmer-led proposal before November 6, 2026, if eligible.
- **SeedMoney:** Review the current campaign and grant opportunities for a community garden project.

Priority 2 — Develop project partnerships

- **NRCS EQIP:** Contact the local service center about farm infrastructure and conservation cost-share assistance.
- **ADECA Healthy Food Financing:** Monitor upcoming funding rounds for projects improving access to fresh food.
- **Alabama Power Foundation:** Prepare a community garden, food access, or environmental education proposal.

Priority 3 — Plan for the next application cycle

- USDA Community Food Projects
- USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program and Local Food Promotion Program
- Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant
- Garden Conservancy and other garden education grants

6. Prepare a Reusable Funding Package

Rather than creating a separate project from scratch for every application, AUGF and SAN can prepare a core funding package and adapt it to each funder.

- ■ One-page organizational overview and mission
- ■ Community garden or small-farm project description
- ■ Itemized budget for seeds, soil, tools, beds, fencing, and irrigation
- ■ Target population and community needs statement
- ■ Land ownership, permission, or lease documentation
- ■ Partnership letters and in-kind donation commitments
- ■ Measurable outcomes and evaluation plan
- ■ Nonprofit, fiscal sponsor, or farmer eligibility documentation

Important Eligibility Considerations

A nonprofit organization may be eligible to apply for community garden grants that an individual farmer cannot access, while an individual farmer may qualify for agricultural loans or conservation assistance that a nonprofit cannot receive directly. Verify the legal applicant, land-control requirements, matching funds, and allowable expenses before preparing a proposal.

Recommended Funding Strategy

Build the funding strategy around three connected goals: grow more food, strengthen small farm businesses, and improve community food access. This allows AUGF and SAN to pursue several complementary sources without depending on one grant to cover every expense.

Program links and deadlines were compiled as a starting directory. Verify every deadline, award amount, eligible applicant type, and program status directly with the funder before relying on it for an application.