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Shapiro Administration Wraps Up 2026 Urban Agriculture Tour, Highlighting Investments that Expand Opportunity, Food Access, and Economic Opportunity Across Pennsylvania

***Governor Josh Shapiro** signed the 2026-'27 Budget last weekend, fully funding the **Pennsylvania Farm Bill** for an eighth year at \$13.8 million, and renewing support for Urban Agriculture Grants, Agricultural Innovation Grants, the Fresh Food Financing Initiative and other investments to increase food access for all.*

*This week, **Secretary Russell Redding** highlighted projects Erie, Pittsburgh, Williamsport, Shamokin, Philadelphia and Lancaster, working to expand economic opportunities and meet local challenges to providing fresh food in urban communities with support from Shapiro Administration initiatives and investments.*

Lancaster, PA – Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding wrapped up the **Shapiro Administration's** 2026 Urban Agriculture Tour today in at [Lancaster Recreation Commission's Bay Street Garden](#), where a **\$45,109 Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant** is helping to grow a healthier community by supporting innovative approaches to producing fresh food on a redeveloped urban site.

Urban Agriculture Grants are part of the **Pennsylvania Farm Bill**, fully funded for an eighth year at **\$13.8 million** in the [2026-27 budget Governor Shapiro signed Sunday](#).

"It's fitting to wrap up the 2026 Urban Agriculture Tour in what started out as a WWII Victory Garden, rallying the community around a common cause and doing that now in a way that welcomes everyone to the garden," **Secretary Redding said**. "Increasing access to fresh food is still improving lives in cities across Pennsylvania, and food security is still key to national security, just as it was decades ago. The **Shapiro Administration's** local approach to public investment helps communities tackle the impacts of poverty and hunger with solutions that fit their communities."

"Bay Street Garden has brought neighbors together in a deeper sense of the word community, meeting neighbors they have lived next to for years," **Lancaster Recreation Commission Recreation Specialist Spencer Shambaugh** said.

“Connections grow beyond the garden, getting more people involved in their neighborhood, making it more desirable to live in and easier to feel like they belong.”

The weeklong tour featured projects supported by **Shapiro Administration** initiatives and investments at work increasing economic opportunities and meeting specific local challenges to providing fresh food in urban communities. Highlighted projects are funded by PA Farm Bill **Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grants**, as well as **Agriculture Innovation Grants**, **Fresh Food Financing Grants**, and other **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** programs.

Throughout this week, Secretary Redding and other Shapiro Administration leaders crossed the state, meeting dynamic Pennsylvanians working to increase fresh food access in areas where it is scarce; break down racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic barriers; and overcome historical inequities to grow not just food, but opportunities for their urban neighborhoods to thrive. Stops included Erie, Pittsburgh, Williamsport, Shamokin, Philadelphia, and Lancaster.

Highlighted projects included Shapiro Administration investments in urban agriculture, showcasing projects that expand access to fresh food, strengthen local economies, and build healthier neighborhoods.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Labor & Industry Nancy A. Walker joined the tour in Pittsburgh. “Urban agriculture is about more than growing food, it is about growing opportunity,” said **Secretary Walker**. “The projects I visited in Pittsburgh are helping communities expand access to fresh, healthy food while creating pathways to skills, jobs, and stronger local economies. Under Governor Shapiro’s leadership, Pennsylvania is making smart investments that meet communities where they are, remove barriers, and help more people see a future for themselves in the neighborhoods they call home.”

Department of Human Services Secretary Val Arkoosh was on the tour in Philadelphia at [The Community Grocer](#). Supported by a \$100,000 **Fresh Food Financing Initiative** grant, the grocer offers 100% SNAP-eligible, locally sourced ingredients, meal kits, and youth job training to increase fresh food access for all in the surrounding Philadelphia neighborhood.

“Fresh, healthy food is essential to good health, and when that food is grown and produced here in Pennsylvania, we’re both helping people be healthier and investing in our agricultural economy and the jobs it creates across the Commonwealth,” **said PA DHS Secretary Val Arkoosh**. “The Community Grocer is delivering this win-win to West Philadelphia with an innovative vision that makes healthy food and meals accessible for SNAP recipients. TCG’s work centered on and built alongside the community and people it will serve, and we are excited to see this transformative model come to fruition creating a community hub, workforce development site, and locally sourced food supplier to the Cobbs Creek neighborhood.”

Additional highlighted stops included:

- **Minority Community Investment Coalition** in Erie, where a \$130,000 [Agricultural Innovation Grant](#) is supporting development of projects to boost local food production and alleviate effects of urban poverty at a time when federal food assistance has been cut.
- **Groundwork Erie's 4th Street Community Farm**, where a [2025-26 Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant](#) of \$2,214 is supporting greenhouse irrigation and ventilation, growing food for the surrounding neighborhood.
- [Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network's Farm and Little Italy Farmers Market](#), the only Erie market offering a dollar-to-dollar match for SNAP benefits, as well as [Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) vouchers.
- [Hilltop Urban Farm](#) and [Oasis Farm](#) in Pittsburgh — two projects where **Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grants** are supporting work to boost local food production and expand food access for all in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Supporting Agricultural Innovation and Fresh Food Access in Pennsylvania's Urban Communities

Last February, **Governor Josh Shapiro** announced the nation's first Agricultural Innovation grants, a \$10 million investment in [88 ag businesses in 46 Pennsylvania counties](#) to fund state-of-the-art agricultural technologies, like those being used by MCIC and Grow Erie, that are helping to increase food production by providing sustainable solutions to conserve water and soil, produce clean, renewable energy, or increase efficiency and profits.

In April 2026, the Shapiro Administration announced a [\\$500,000 investment in Pennsylvania Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grants in 13 counties](#) to help address longstanding challenges in city neighborhoods statewide. Since 2019, Pennsylvania has invested more than \$3.7 million through the program in the infrastructure urban agriculture needs to thrive, and in removing the barriers unique to producing food in city environments. In total, 180 projects in cities across Pennsylvania are expanding fresh food access in locations often served by a single convenience store.

Funded projects include purchases such as greenhouses, roof-top and school gardens, irrigation systems, storage, soil improvement, and tools that expand the reach of organizations that feed economic, community, and personal growth through agriculture.

The program, part of the historic PA Farm Bill, funds microgrants of \$2,500 in matching funds for one-time projects or grants to single entities, as well as collaboration grants. Collaboration grants provide up to \$50,000 in matching funds for cooperative or regional efforts to share resources, support community development, and combine products of small farmers, building collective power to supply fresh food in underserved neighborhoods.

The **Fresh Food Financing Initiative** is another Shapiro Administration investment working to expand access to fresh, affordable food across Pennsylvania to be

highlighted this week. Since 2024, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has secured **\$6 million for the program** and invested [\\$3.4 million into strengthening local markets for fresh, locally sourced food](#) across 23 counties. Applications for \$2 million in funding are under review for the program, which reimburses producers and retailers for new or expanded grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other food enterprises. The program prioritizes businesses [located in food deserts](#) — areas designated by the USDA as having limited access to fresh food — are given priority consideration, as well as women-, minority-, and veteran-owned businesses.

Supporting Farmers and Making Critical Investments in the Future of Pennsylvania Agriculture and Food Security

Pennsylvania's agriculture sector is the backbone of the Commonwealth, with more than 48,800 farms contributing over \$132 billion a year to the economy and supporting nearly 600,000 jobs in Pennsylvania. **Governor Shapiro** has prioritized strengthening both agriculture and food security — helping farmers, families, and communities thrive.

The [2026-27 budget Governor Shapiro signed Sunday](#) continues this work with:

- **\$10 million** to create **Fruit Grower Freeze Impact Grants**, supporting farmers who were impacted by this year's devastating spring freeze — in addition to [USDA streamlined assistance](#) secured after the Shapiro Administration [called for federal support](#) in May.
- **\$5 million** from the existing [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) fund](#) to expand education for farmers working to combat the spread of HPAI.
- **\$10 million to continue the [Agricultural Innovation Grant Program](#)** to drive innovation in Pennsylvania agriculture.
- **\$13.8 million** to fully fund the [Pennsylvania Farm Bill](#) to support business planning, infrastructure, and workforce development.

This budget also invests **\$7 million** to modernize Pennsylvania's **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, upgrading SNAP EBT cards from magnetic stripes to chip-enabled cards. Modernizing the Commonwealth's SNAP EBT cards will strengthen food security in Pennsylvania by using technology to randomize transaction numbers, protecting SNAP recipients against fraud and theft and preventing benefits loss.

Read more about investments to keep Pennsylvania agriculture competitive and thriving in the [2026-27 Budget](#) and continued support for Pennsylvania farmers at pa.gov/governor.

Learn how **Governor Shapiro's** [Economic Development Strategy](#) recognizes agriculture as key to our future economic success.

Photos of this week's tour are [here](#) and video and photos of today's wrap-up are on [PAcast](#).

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