

# HOUSE BILL 1216

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By: **Delegate Wells**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2022

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Department of Agriculture – Urban Agriculture Grant Fund**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the purpose and contents of and the requirements and  
4 qualifications under the Urban Agriculture Grant Fund; and generally relating to  
5 the Urban Agriculture Grant Fund.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
7 Article – Agriculture  
8 Section 2–2001(a) and 2–2002  
9 Annotated Code of Maryland  
10 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

11 BY adding to  
12 Article – Agriculture  
13 Section 2–2001(e) and (g)  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
17 Article – Agriculture  
18 Section 2–2001(e), 2–2003, and 2–2004  
19 Annotated Code of Maryland  
20 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Agriculture**

24 2–2001.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

**(E) “QUALIFIED APPLICANT” MEANS AN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, OR AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT MEETS THE QUALIFICATIONS ESTABLISHED IN § 2–2004 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

**[(e)] (F) “Urban agricultural producer” means any person that annually sells, or normally would have sold, \$1,000 or more of farm products in [Baltimore City] AN URBAN AREA.**

**(G) “URBAN AREA” MEANS AN AREA OF THE STATE THAT IS DELINEATED AS AN URBAN AREA BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.**

2–2002.

(a) There is an Urban Agriculture Grant Program in the Department.

(b) The purpose of the Program is to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban–grown foods.

2–2003.

(a) There is an Urban Agriculture Grant Fund.

(b) The purpose of the Fund is to provide grants to [nonprofit organizations in Baltimore City] **QUALIFIED APPLICANTS** to implement the Program.

(c) The Secretary shall administer the Fund.

(d) (1) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(2) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately, and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(e) The Fund consists of:

(1) Money appropriated to the Fund under subsection (g) of this section;  
and

(2) Any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the Fund.

(f) In accordance with this subsection, the Fund shall be used to provide grants to [nonprofit organizations that:

(1) Meet the qualifications established in § 2–2004 of this subtitle; and

(2) Distribute the grant money to urban agricultural producers in accordance with this subtitle] **QUALIFIED APPLICANTS.**

(g) **[The] FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024, THE** Governor **[may] SHALL** include in the annual budget bill an appropriation **OF \$5,000,000** to the Fund.

(h) (1) The Department shall adopt regulations, subject to the availability of money in the Fund, to provide grants under the Fund.

(2) The regulations shall:

(i) Establish a Review Board to implement:

1. A competitive grant application process that prioritizes applications that will accomplish the goals **[of the Urban Agriculture section of the 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan] UNDER A LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN** and **BENEFIT** historically disadvantaged urban farmers;

2. A system to fairly:

A. Evaluate each grant application; and

B. Award grants from money available in the Fund; and

3. A grant agreement to be used by the Review Board and grant recipients;

(ii) Require the Review Board to include **[members representing]**:

1. The **[Baltimore Office of Sustainability] SECRETARY, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

2. **[The Baltimore Development Corporation] ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE-BASED INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MARBIDCO), DESIGNATED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MARBIDCO; [and]**

3. **[The Department of Planning] ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP), DESIGNATED BY THE MARYLAND STATE CONFERENCE OF NAACP;**

4. **TWO MEMBERS WHO PROVIDE DIRECT EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO URBAN FARMERS THROUGH A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OR AN**

1 INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

2                               **5. AT LEAST FIVE MEMBERS WITH SUBSTANTIAL**  
3 **EXPERIENCE WORKING IN URBAN AGRICULTURE OR WITH SOCIALLY**  
4 **DISADVANTAGED FARMERS WHO:**

5                               **A. WORK IN CONJUNCTION TO PROVIDE EDUCATION TO**  
6 **URBAN FARMERS; AND**

7                               **B. RESIDE IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, BALTIMORE**  
8 **CITY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, OR PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY;**

9                               (iii) 1. Require that [more than 75%]:

10                              **A. AT LEAST 25%** of the Review Board be composed of staff  
11 representing an agency of Baltimore City; and

12                              **B. AT LEAST 25% OF THE REVIEW BOARD BE COMPOSED**  
13 **OF MEMBERS REPRESENTING A LOW-INCOME CENSUS TRACT, AS DEFINED BY THE**  
14 **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; AND**

15                              2. Require the remainder of the Review Board members to be  
16 appointed by the Department, based on the member’s ability to help achieve the purpose of  
17 the Program under § 2–2002(b) of this subtitle;

18                              (iv) [Require grant recipients] **FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**  
19 **THAT RECEIVE A GRANT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISTRIBUTING GRANT MONEY TO**  
20 **URBAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS, REQUIRE THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION to**  
21 **distribute at least [70%] 85% of the amount of the grant to urban agricultural producers**  
22 **to:**

23                              1. Secure real property:

24                              **A. THAT HAS THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN**  
25 **PLACE TO GROW FOOD;**

26                              **B. FOR WHICH THE GRANTEE WILL BE THE STEWARD OF**  
27 **THE REAL PROPERTY; AND**

28                              **C. FOR WHICH NOT MORE THAN 20% OF THE GRANT**  
29 **MONEY WILL BE USED TO SECURE THE REAL PROPERTY;**

30                              2. Maintain safe, environmentally sustainable, and socially  
31 responsible practices; and

3. [Support] **MAKE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT** viable urban agriculture enterprises;

(v) Require that grant applications demonstrate a measurable impact on improving local food access or other community benefits;

(vi) [Require] **FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECEIVE A GRANT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISTRIBUTING GRANT MONEY TO URBAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS, REQUIRE** at least [70%] **85%** of the amount of each grant to be distributed to [minority-owned or operated] urban agricultural producers **LOCATED IN LOW-INCOME CENSUS TRACTS OR DESIGNATED FOOD DESERTS, OF WHICH AT LEAST 25% OF THE GRANT MONEY SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO URBAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS IN BALTIMORE CITY;** and

(vii) Prohibit grant recipients from using more than [30%] **15%** of the amount of the grant for operating expenses.

(3) In adopting regulations in accordance with this subsection, the Department shall seek and prioritize input from urban agriculture farms and farmer advocates.

(i) On or before October 15 each year, beginning in 2023 and each year thereafter, the Department shall submit a report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Appropriations Committee on the effectiveness of the funding provided under this section. 2–2004.

(a) A nonprofit organization **OR AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION** is qualified to receive a grant in accordance with this subtitle if the Department determines [that the nonprofit organization]:

(1) [Is] **WITH RESPECT TO A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, THAT THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IS** incorporated or maintains its principal place of business in [Baltimore City] **AN URBAN AREA;** [and]

(2) [Works] **THAT THE ENTITY WORKS** to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban-grown foods; **AND**

(3) **THAT THE ENTITY WILL PROVIDE DIRECT TRAINING AND ONGOING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PROGRAM THAT IS CERTIFIED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OR THE DEPARTMENT, TO URBAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS THAT RECEIVE A GRANT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

1           **(B) AN URBAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER IS QUALIFIED TO RECEIVE A**  
2 **GRANT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SUBTITLE IF THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES**  
3 **THAT THE URBAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER WILL COMPLETE:**

4           **(1) NEW FARMING TRAINING OR CONTINUING EDUCATION UNDER A**  
5 **PROGRAM THAT IS CERTIFIED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OR THE**  
6 **DEPARTMENT; AND**

7           **(2) 100 CONTACT HOURS DURING THE GRANT PERIOD TO PROVIDE**  
8 **EDUCATION AND TRAINING RELATED TO URBAN AGRICULTURE TO ELEMENTARY**  
9 **STUDENTS AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.**

10           **[(b)] (C)** Within 90 days after the end of a grant cycle, a qualified nonprofit  
11 organization that received a grant in accordance with this subtitle shall submit a report to  
12 the Department that includes the following information:

13           (1) The names and locations of urban agricultural producers that received  
14 funds under the Program;

15           (2) The dollar amount of funds awarded to each urban agricultural  
16 producer; and

17           (3) The impact of the Program on increasing the viability of urban farming  
18 and improving access to urban-grown foods.

19           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
20 October 1, 2022.