

# RESOURCES FOR BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR (BIPOC) FARMERS

Developed by Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
and Montgomery Office of Agriculture



A Resource for BIPOC Farmers Interested in Pursuing Agriculture in  
Montgomery County.

- Brought to You By -



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“In 1920, Black Americans owned 14 percent of all farms in the United States— there were 925,000 Black farmers. By 2017, that number had fallen below 35,000.”

Nonprofit Quarterly

Peppers from [AfriThrive Farm, Poolesville](#)

## Uniting Equality and Land Use in Montgomery County

There has been a well-documented history of discrimination and inequitable opportunity for farmers of color in America - resulting in the largest single class-action payout in history, a finding for black farmers wronged by the USDA in the *Pigford* case. However, this and other reckonings on race in agriculture have failed to make it easier for people of color to start and, importantly, sustain farms.

In 1980, Montgomery County made a bold commitment to local farms in founding the Agricultural Reserve, 93,000 acres under a zoning plan to keep the land in viable farms. This guide seeks to marry Montgomery County's dual commitments to equality and agriculture by providing farmers of color with specific resources to get growing and sustain farm ventures in the County.

New and expanded farms bring many benefits to the county, local food and food that is culturally appropriate to the many communities that make up our vibrant County. This guide contains both national and local resources for new farmers and lays out pathways to farming in the County. Staff at local nonprofits and state and local government offices stand ready to supplement the resources here and discuss your specific plans to start farming.

We welcome feedback and updates that will improve this guide.

*Let's Get Growing....*

*While 83% of farm laborers are Latinx, Latinx people only account for about 3% of farm ownership*



# SECTION ONE

Resources to better understand why BIPOC have been excluded from resources for new and aspiring farm owners and why BIPOC must be targeted to encourage participation and leadership in agribusiness.

Food, Race, and Justice Ted Talk by Malik Yankini, founder of Detroit Black Community Food Security Network

Farming While Black by Leah Penniman, founder of Soul Fire Farm  
 ·Farming While Black is the first comprehensive “how-to” guide for aspiring Black farmers, focusing centrally on recognition of the immense contributions by African-descent farmers to concepts and technologies for sustainable agriculture. This book includes practical guides, highlights the work of Black farming activists, and explores the food justice movement. Perfect for beginning and intermediate farmers.

Leveling the Fields  
 Policy Brief by HEAL Alliance and Union of Concerned Scientists

The one thing my farm training never covered: racism - Mai Nguyen, Young Farmers

HEAL Food Alliance Growing food as BIPOC Explainer  
 An excellent article covering many topics within the food and land justice movements

Civil Eats  
 Civil Eats is an online news and journalism platform writing about the American food system. With contributions and perspectives ranging from top journalists, activists, and policy experts, their website has many articles about food and land justice, and the unique challenges facing BIPOC farmers and growers

The Counter How USDA distorted data to conceal decades of discrimination against Black farmers  
 Article by Nathan Rosenberg and Bryan Wilson Stucki

How Asian Americans Shaped US Agriculture

*Cycling plantings of legumes for soil improvement and Community Supported Ag (CSA) farms were both first promoted by black agrarians.*

# SECTION TWO

Cultural and Business Support Resources and Networks for BIPOC Farmers, and BIPOC Interested in Farming and Gardening

## HEAL Alliance

A multi-sector, multi-racial organization aimed at building collective power to transform farming and food systems. Made up of member organizations representing over 2 million fishers, farm and food chain workers, indigenous groups, community organizers, activists, and more.

## Soul Fire Farm

An Afro-Indigenous community farm and organization focused on educating and training farmers, leading workshops, and bringing diverse voices into sustainable agriculture and the food system.

## BIPOC in Agriculture and Food Resources

An exhaustive google spreadsheet of resources for BIPOC practitioners in Ag and the wider Food sector.

## Future Harvest Agriculture Leadership Development Initiative

A program meant to connect BIPOC farm managers or owners to resources to further their businesses.

## Jubilee Justice

A Southeastern Based Organization focused on Black Land Tenure and Regenerative Farming

## National Latino Farmer and Rancher Trade Organization

NLFRTA is a national DC-based member organization, focused on organizing, empowering, and assisting the Latinx farming and ranching community.

(202) 628-8833

## Farming While Black Public Facebook Page



Farm manager Alicia at [Afrithrive Farm](#), Poolesville )

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# SECTION THREE

## Resource Information for BIPOC Farmers Located in the DMV Area

### Montgomery Countryside Alliance Land Link Program

Land Link Montgomery aims to match beginner and experienced farmers with available land and farms within Montgomery County, Maryland, and the Greater D.C. Region. Launched in late 2011, we are proud to work toward a vibrant, working landscape in our region.

### Common Good City Farm

The Common Good City Farm is an organization based in Ledroit Park, providing both healthy locally-grown food and valuable information and support for local farmers. Through volunteering and resources for connecting, learning, and more, Common Good aims to support local and diverse farmers in the DC area.

(202) 559-7513

### The MoCo Food Council

The Food Council is the connecting point for government, businesses, and residents around food access, supply, and security. Provides Promotion opportunities for locally-grown food and resources for farmers and consumers.

### Community Gardens

Montgomery County Parks hosts opportunities all over the county to grow food in small plots. This is a great way to hone farming skills before seeking larger acreage.

### Acres4Change

Works to create economic stability through land access and ownership, professional development, and racial healing. They combat poverty by providing land and professional resources to qualifying individuals to generate income and generational wealth.

### Homestead Hustle & Healing

Homestead Hustle & Healing is an online platform with local community initiatives, whose mission is to end food insecurity among minority populations.

# SECTION FOUR

Financial resources, grant information, and business guides/tips for aspiring BIPOC farmers

## Rodale Institute Grants

Rodale Institute and the Organic Farmers Association offer micro-grants to support small-scale BIPOC farmers (for both current and aspiring farmers). Grants- up to \$18,000/year- are focused on needs such as tools, training, equipment, etc.

## The Equity Trust Fund

Supported by gifts and loans from socially motivated donors and lenders, the Equity Trust Fund makes low-interest loans to CSA farmers, community land trusts, cooperatives, and others focused on sustainable agriculture for low-income communities.

## Farm Credit Network

Providing loans in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, Farm Credit offers loan programs for young, beginning, and small farmers, and has recently recommitted to support POC in rural communities and agriculture

## Helping Maryland's Minority Small Business Owners

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin's Government & Community Programs Resource Guide includes a collection of Federal Resources

## USDA Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (The 2501 Program)

This program is focused on providing funding, outreach, and assistance for farmers and ranchers who have experienced barriers due to racial or ethnic prejudice.

Local Black Owned Business Program: Shulman Rogers Law Firm today reaffirms its commitment to the growth of minority-owned businesses with the launch of Year Two of its Black-Owned Business Program. The Program will provide free legal support for a year to a Black-Owned business in the D.C./Maryland/Virginia (DMV) region. Contact: Lori Swim, Marketing Manager - [LSwim@shulmanrogers.com](mailto:LSwim@shulmanrogers.com) - 301-255-0527



Building beds at Beauty Blooms Farm (Susan Davis)



## Financial Resources, Grant Information, and Business Guides/Tips for Aspiring BIPOC Farmers Continued

### Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority (MSBDFA)

Loans for economically and socially disadvantaged entrepreneurs for working capital, obtaining bid and performance bonds for contracts, equipment, real estate, and more.

### Fundera Resources for Latino Business Owners

A factsheet by Fundera to connect Hispanic business owners and farmers with loan options from the Small Business Administration as well as other loans and microfinance organizations like Accion and Opportunity Fund.



### Rock Creek Racial Equity Capital Fund

(RECF) was created in partnership with Exelon Utilities to strengthen communities and help minority businesses by providing affordable capital to minority-owned businesses.

## MoCo Farmers of Color

Chirandu Farm, Dickerson

YoungSohn Gardens, Derwood

Dodo Farms, Brookeville

Afrithrive, Poolesville

Button Farm Living History Center, Germantown

Beauty Blooms Farm, Damascus

Passion to Seed Gardening, Gaithersburg

Purple Mountain Organics, Takoma Park

Future Harvest's regional list of Black Farmers

# SECTION FIVE

## Step by Step Guide for Starting a Farm in Montgomery County

Starting a new business can be overwhelming. With so many things to consider, it's difficult to know exactly where to start. Montgomery County offers business starter kits to outline the path forward for new business owners. If questions come up, call the Office of Ag Services 301-590-2823.

Beyond the general steps to start a business, there are certain considerations that specifically apply to agricultural and food related businesses.

Please visit the Step-by-Step Guide for starting a farm in Montgomery County online: visit <https://bit.ly/MoCoAgSteps>. Alternate Languages can be chosen.

There you'll learn how to find land to buy or lease, what rules govern farms in the County, and how to plan your business for success.

## State of Maryland Step by Step Guides

### University of Maryland Extension Beginning Farmer Success Resources

This site includes a roadmap to farmer success, offering links to training both in-person and online with different tracks for those with experience and those without.

### Future Harvest CASA Beginning Farmer Training Program

The gold standard in sustainable farmer training. Programs are offered free throughout the region with online and in-person components.

## Other Training/Business Planning Resources

### Cornell Small Farms Program

Multiple free resources and online trainings for small farmers focused on the Northeast states.

### Land For Good

A New England Nonprofit with resources for other areas as well. Sign up for email alerts to access webinars on how to conduct a land search.



Tanya Spandhla of Passion to Seed Gardening