

West Michigan Environmental Council Announces USDA Community-Based Organization Micro-Grant Awardees

WMEAC is in the third year of a five-year grant with the USDA to support local urban farmers. This is part of a broader effort to ensure that producers serving urban and historically underserved communities have access to the tools, infrastructure, and technical assistance needed to thrive. By reducing financial barriers and investing in innovative farming practices, the program strengthens local agriculture while supporting healthier communities, environmental sustainability, and a more equitable regional food system.

Several of the farm partners associated with this program include Blandford Nature Center, Fresh Beets Farm, Kent County Food Policy Council, and New City Neighbors. Working together they facilitated a sub-component of the USDA grant referred to as the USDA Community-Based Organization (CBO) Micro-Grant Program. The program is designed to stimulate diverse and sustainable agricultural activity across West Michigan, and provides direct investments to producers implementing innovative, environmentally responsible farming practices. By supporting projects that strengthen farm operations and promote environmental stewardship, the program helps build a more resilient regional food system while advancing economic opportunity and community well-being.

WMEAC is proud to announce five recipients of the USDA Community-Based Organization Micro-Grant Program. Collectively the program is providing \$99,300 to five farms and agricultural businesses serving Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Alto. They are:

- ❖ Bounty on the Block
- ❖ Black Queen Bee
- ❖ Wormies LLC
- ❖ Nate Allen
- ❖ Rev. Damion Allen

The awardees are implementing projects that will:

- ❖ Increase farm productivity through new equipment and infrastructure.
- ❖ Expand season extension and year-round food production.
- ❖ Reduce operating costs through renewable energy investments.
- ❖ Improve soil health, water conservation, and environmental stewardship.
- ❖ Strengthen access to fresh, locally grown food throughout West Michigan.

"We are excited to celebrate this year's awardees and the innovative work they are leading. These investments help local producers grow stronger, more resilient operations while creating lasting benefits for our communities and the regional food system."

— Eleanor Moreno, Kent County Food Policy Council

Collectively, these projects represent an investment in the future of West Michigan agriculture, helping producers adopt climate-smart practices, build resilient businesses, and expand access to fresh, locally grown food.