

FY25 Agriculture Infrastructure & Equipment Grant Impact Report

In 2025, the Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities (HSHC) Lab at American University launched the Agriculture Infrastructure and Equipment (AIE) grants to support small and mid-sized farms across the mid-Atlantic region to increase their production capacity, thereby increasing local produce distribution to Washington, DC and other areas in the region. Awarded farms demonstrated both clear need and strong commitment to increasing local, healthy food access, particularly for DC Wards 7 and 8. Total investment exceeded **\$55,000** and was used to support **12 farms**. On average, each farm received approximately **\$4,600**.

One year after receiving the requested infrastructure and equipment, recipients shared in a short follow-up report that the grant has had a strong impact on their farms.

Outcome 1: Immediate Increases in Capacity and Production

As a result of the AIE grant, farms immediately experienced increases in both capacity and production. Investments in equipment and infrastructure allowed farms to scale operations, meet growing demand, and expand seasonal output. These grants did not simply maintain operations, they enabled growth.



For Farmer Gale of Deep Roots Farm, this funding significantly improved the production of crops and reduced labor hours spent harvesting potatoes.

“The grant was key in us increasing our productivity to meet the growing demand... we expect to double our total yield for 2026.” -**EightFold Farms**

Outcome 2: Gains in Efficiency and Sustainability

A majority of farms reported that the equipment they received led to improvements in day-to-day sustainability. Equipment upgrades allowed them to spend less time on physically demanding tasks, such as fertilizer mixing and application, seeding and planting, and flipping and preparing garden beds. As a result, farmers were able to allocate time saved to planting and harvesting, allowing them to increase both production and revenue.

Beauty Blooms installed woven wire fencing that is expected to support expanded production for the next 30 years.

In addition, respondents shared that many of these grant-funded improvements – fencing, water systems, equipment – represent durable assets expected to generate impact for decades, strengthening their long-term viability. This highlights the importance of capital investments in building stability rather than short-term fixes.



For **Pleitez Produce Farm**, the addition of waterwheel has allowed them to plant more efficiently in less time.

“Tasks that previously required intensive manual labor were completed faster with less physical strain, allowing labor to be reallocated to planting, harvesting, washing, and coordinating donations rather than field preparation.” – **Marcellus Farms**

“This allowed us to grow more food on our small farm, while using regenerative farming methods, thus increasing our production, yields, and sales.”
– **Love Bug Farm**

Outcome 3: Impact Across the Community and Regional Food System

The impact of these AIE Grants extended beyond individual farm operations and generated broader community benefits. Farms reported that they have been able to provide more produce to customers and food pantries. Several farms highlighted broader community outcomes. **Asawana Farms** and **Beauty Blooms**, for example, reported that the equipment they received enabled them to increase the variety and amount of culturally-relevant crops available. Other farms reported that they trained other farmers on the equipment they received, and even lent equipment out as needed. Shared equipment and peer support help to strengthen the community of farmers and represents a meaningful ripple effect of the grant.

“The improved crop quality has opened opportunities to supply additional customers, including the Maryland Food Bank, the Capital Area Food Bank, and other cultural food networks that rely on fresh African, organic produce.” – **Asawana Farms**

This grant will enable **Franciscan Monastery Garden Guild** (pictured to the right) to expand into winter donations, providing fresh produce to local pantries such as Allen Chapel in Ward 8.



Continued Investment in Regional Farming

The FY25 AIE Grants achieved immediate gains in production for 12 local farms while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability and regional food system resilience. The impact extends across three levels, from increased farm productivity and revenue, improved operational viability, and expanded community and regional food access. By investing in infrastructure and equipment, the AIE Grants did more than support farms in the present, they positioned them for growth, efficiency, and community impact in the years ahead.

“We feed people now and invest in people who will feed their communities in the future.” –Arcadia Farm

Due to the strong interest and impact of the first round of AIE grants, a second, expanded round of grants was awarded in Spring 2026. HSHC Lab awarded over **\$72,000** in grants to **16 regional farms**.

FY25 Grant Recipients

Arcadia Farm
Asawana Farms
Beauty Blooms Farm
Deep Roots Farm
Dreaming Out Loud
EightFold Farms
Franciscan Monastery Garden Guild
Love Bug Farm
Marcellus Farms
Pleitez Produce Farm
Sean’s Veggie Garden
STRIB Flowers & Herbs

FY26 Grant Recipients

Area 2 Farms
Blue Berwyn Farm
Chicano Sol
Cultivate the City
Diddly Squat Farming
Dreaming Out Loud
EightFold Farms
Elisabeth’s Corner
Garden International
Loves Garden
My Seniors Keeper
Owl’s Nest Farm
Sligo Creek
Spice Creek
Steptoe Farms
Whitt’s Farm