

## USDA Urban Agriculture Committee Candidates

- Kami Pothukuchi
- Renee V. Wallace
- Kathryn Lynch Underwood
- Anthony Hatinger
- Pashon Murray
- Jerry Ann Hebron
- Erin Cole

1. Name: Kami Pothukuchi

2. Organizational Affiliation:

SEED Wayne, Wayne State University

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

I have worked for almost 25 years to develop sustainable and just community food systems, through activities related to research, teaching, and community engagement. I have helped develop several youth and community gardens in southeastern Michigan, led for 9 years the 22-week Wayne State University Farmers Market, co-founded the Detroit Food Policy Council, and collaboratively created other programs related to urban agriculture and healthy eating. I have also participated on several advisory and governance boards locally and nationally, served on review panels for several USDA-NIFA programs, and implemented training and technical assistance to community groups nationwide.

4. Why do you want to be selected for the USDA Urban AG Advisory Committee?

This is a critical time to lift up Detroit's urban agriculture movement and share its lessons more broadly. I also believe I have the requisite experience to contribute meaningfully to the committee, and remain committed to a transparent two-way process of providing input and reporting back, and to being accountable to Detroit's urban agriculture community.

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1. Name: Reneé V. Wallace

2. Organizational Affiliation:

FoodPLUS Detroit

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

I have worked alongside food system leaders and practitioners in Detroit for over a decade. That work includes policy advocacy, strategic action planning, operations analysis and improvement, farm food safety process development for GAP certification (for Detroit's only GAP certified farm); youth food entrepreneurship program development; farmers market start-up; public and community engagement. Current food system initiatives include 1) Modeling the Food System in Flint MI to identify leverage points to improve community outcomes; 2) facilitating a national racial equity in the food system work group and hosting webinars; 3) The Peoples Compost Initiative cultivating development of a decentralized city-wide network of community-scale composting in Detroit using a pilot approach.

4. Why do you want to be selected for the USDA Urban AG Advisory Committee?

Being on the committee would be a way to further contribute to urban food system change and transformation. I am versed in working across boundaries and would take a systems approach to work collaboratively with other committee members, to gain an understanding of how each position is designed to influence and inform USDA decision-making; strategically working to integrate and advance an urban agenda. It would be a privilege to actively work to identify and address racialized inequities in USDA food system policies, processes and practices to help foster change at the national level. I am committed to actively engaging with fellow Detroiters to inform how I represent our community's vision, conditions, and needs; and to reporting back to facilitate collective thinking and decision-making.

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1. Name: Kathryn Lynch Underwood

2. Organizational Affiliation:

City of Detroit City Planning Commission

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

I have approximately 30 years of experience and involvement in urban agriculture in Detroit ranging from having an urban garden and working with other producers; being an activist such as being a founding member of the Detroit Agriculture Network, the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network and the Detroit Food Policy Council; to being a city planner, understanding the needs and concerns of city government and devising Detroit's urban agriculture ordinance.

4. Why do you want to be selected for the USDA Urban AG Advisory Committee?

My extensive knowledge of urban agriculture from a variety of perspectives, and specifically for this role, my experience in developing urban agriculture policy, gives me a perspective that will provide critical information on how to create environments conducive for food and farming businesses in urban areas.

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1. Name: Anthony Hatinger

2. Organizational Affiliation

Detroit Ento, an urban farming endeavor exploring sustainable insect protein production, and formerly Central Detroit Christian's urban farms and fishery.

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

I have been engaged in various forms of urban, indoor, and industrial agriculture in Detroit since 2013, after acquiring a degree in Religion, Horticulture, and Sustainable Ag and Food Systems from Michigan State University. I formerly managed just over an acre of diverse fruit, vegetable, and apothecary herb production, as well as Detroit's first indoor aquaponics facility for Central Detroit Christian CDC. I then founded Detroit Ento in 2015, the state's first sustainable insect production farm, until late 2019.

4. Why do you want to be selected for the USDA Urban AG Advisory Committee?

It is paramount to continue building and expanding resilient agricultural economies in the urban cores of our country, as a way of broadening and strengthening our ecosystemic resiliency, in the face of climate change, racism, food apartheid, and extinction. I think my assets would prove indispensable to either the innovative technologies and/or emerging agriculture committee positions, and I would be honored to represent Detroit, and serve the Nation in this capacity.

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1. Name: Pashon Murray

2. Organizational Affiliation:

- a. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab Fellow
- b. Zero Foodprint board member
- c. Detroit Dirt Foundation board member
- d. City of Detroit's Green Task Force Climate Action Committee Co-Chair
- e. Center of Complex Interventions (CCI), member
- f. past and present brand ambassador and strategist (optional)

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

The establishment of Detroit Dirt LLC and the foundation (DDF), is one of the leading models in the country for organic waste recovery and reuse. Our model was designed for the purpose of replication which led to a vast network. Our platform and byproducts became a solution for urban agriculture, regenerative farming, Carbon cycling and healthy soils.

4. Why would I want to be selected USDA Urban Ag Committee?

I truly believe that my experiences with waste diversion, composting and the development of byproducts is pivotal for future innovation. Building a company from the ground up and sustaining over a decade led to board invitations and consulting contracts nationally. Sharing my experiences, strategies, processes and being a resource for Detroit's urban ag community and communities across the country is top priority.

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1. Name: Jerry Ann Hebron

2. Organizational Affiliation:

Executive Director Oakland Avenue Urban Farm

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

Born in Tennessee where my family were legacy farmers and sharecroppers. I joined the passion of farming first as a family farmer and then in 2009 joined the Food Justice Movement addressing the food insecurity in Detroit. Today we operate a 3.5 acre of food production within the 6 acres of land we currently own.

4. Why do you want to be selected for the USDA Urban AG Advisory Committee?

I am interested in being a part of the Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee because Detroit is the mecca for Urban Agriculture. We have the largest number of urban farms and gardens on a national level and a large percentage of our growers are Black and Brown. I want to be a voice for our growers here in Detroit and on a national scale. I had the privilege of testifying on behalf of Urban Agriculture for the 2018 Farm Bill. I spoke to the work being done in our communities to address food insecurity, stabilizing our communities and developing employment opportunities for our community. I also spoke to the inequity funding support for Urban Farmers by USDA and how that needed to change. I will always speak on behalf of our needs and will listen to our community.

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1. Name: Erin Cole

2. Organizational affiliations: In the community,

I wear many hats: Mathematician, Educator, Urban Farmer, Community organizer...

3. What is your urban ag related experience?

My name is Erin Cole, and this food journey started as a hobby and a concern- we needed our Great Aunt to have fresh food which we couldn't find in local grocers in Detroit- so we planted her food and flowers. By planting, I was deciding to become a food justice advocate for my health and my community from rotten veggies and spoiled meat. After 10 years, this rebellion has contributed to an inspirational movement in transforming local food systems; and myself blossoming into a food justice warrior. I am the co-founder of a non-profit organization, Nurturing Our Seeds, that is a farm and community garden space in Detroit that seeks to educate, empower and unify our community by providing accessibility to nutritious products. I work daily to rebuild families, health, and community engagement. I focus on community partnerships and have built working relationships within my community with ALL education stakeholders including hosting a retreat for educators worldwide at my farm to implement a farm education curriculum (Big Picture Learning). My education background includes: Master of Education: Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; and my farm background experience includes Farm Immersion experiences (domestic and international) and facilitator and student to multiple conferences and workshops.

4. Why do you want to be selected for the USDA Urban AG Advisory Committee?

Being selected as a USDA Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee member will give me the opportunity to represent and express concerns for (urban, farmers of color) farmers in equity and accessibility; and in regards to emerging agriculture production such as soil conservation, climate, and cultivation practices. Ultimately, removing historical barriers in farming by continuing to be an advocate for change.