

# ADVANCER

NEWSLETTER

January 2026



[The Miraculous Pollinators].  
arkansasstateparks.com, <https://www.arkansasstateparks.com/articles/miraculous-pollinators>



[Monarch butterfly drinking nectar from milkweed plant.]. (n.d.). gardenia.net. <https://www.gardenia.net/guide/monarch-nectar-plants-for-arkansas>

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## Letter from the President

Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) and Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation (ALCDC)

Dear Members, Partners, and Supporters,

As we step into 2026, I want to extend my warmest wishes to each of you for a happy and prosperous New Year. Reflecting on 2025, we are deeply grateful for your steadfast support and dedication to the mission of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC). Your involvement has been the cornerstone of our progress, and your special contributions over the past year have truly made a difference in the lives of the communities we serve.

Thanks to your membership and partnership support with ALCDC. Because of you, we have been able to continue offering vital services and support to underserved populations and communities throughout Arkansas. Your generosity and commitment empower us to create lasting impact and foster meaningful change. As we look ahead to the coming year, we ask for your continued support to help us expand our reach and deepen our service for those who need it most.

I want to share with you the following universal ALCDC 2026 Resolution.

**This New Year 2026, be it resolved to nurture hope in my heart, allowing it to be strengthened and sustained by unwavering faith. No matter the challenges that come my way, I will hold onto the belief that brighter days are ahead, trusting that faith will guide me through every uncertainty and help me inspire hope in those around me.**

Thank you once again for being part of the ALCDC family. Together, we are building stronger and more vibrant communities for all.

With sincere appreciation,

*Calvin R. King, Sr*

President, Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation

## Letter from the Vice-President

Dear Members, Partners, and Supporters,

As the Vice-President for Planning, Policy, Reporting, and Resource Development at Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC), I am writing to inform you of an important update regarding the distribution of our Advancer Newsletter. Beginning with our next issue, we will transition to electronic distribution of all future newsletters. This change will allow us to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and ensure timely delivery of news and updates to our valued community.

If you would prefer to continue receiving a hard copy of the Advancer Newsletter by mail, please notify us at your earliest convenience. Unless we hear from you, you will automatically receive the newsletter electronically using the email address we have on file. We believe this change will help us better serve our mission and strengthen our communication with you.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. If you have any questions or need assistance updating your contact preferences, please feel free to contact our office at (870) 734-3005 or by mail at PO Box 907, Brinkley, AR. 72021.

Sincerely,

*Janie Williams*

Vice-President for Planning, Policy, Reporting, and Resource Development  
Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation

Return the following to PO Box 907 Brinkley, AR. 72021

1. I would like to continue receiving the hard copy newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

2. I would like to receive electronic and hard copy newsletters \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

# TALK OF THE LAND

## Family Farmers: The Heart of Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture

### How Conservation Programs Empower Rural Communities and Secure Our Land's Future

Across America, family farmers have long been the backbone of rural communities, shaping not only the agricultural landscape but also the social fabric of the nation. Their commitment to stewardship, tradition, and innovation is pivotal in maintaining healthy soils, clean water, and abundant wildlife habitats for generations to come.

Conservation programs are making a significant difference in how family farmers manage their land. These initiatives, such as cover crop incentives, wetland restoration projects, and technical assistance for sustainable tillage practices, provide practical support for farmers seeking to balance productivity with environmental care. By participating, family farmers can improve soil fertility, reduce erosion, increase water retention, and boost biodiversity all while enhancing the resilience of their farming operations.

Beyond environmental benefits, conservation programs yield economic advantages for family farmers. Improved land health often leads to higher yields, lower input costs, and greater long-term profitability. Additionally, access to conservation funding and resources can help small operations weather market fluctuations and unexpected challenges, making them more competitive and sustainable in the modern agricultural landscape.

As stewards of the land, family farmers are uniquely positioned to implement conservation practices that align with both their heritage and the future needs of our planet. By embracing these programs, they ensure that rural communities continue to thrive, local economies remain strong, and America's natural resources are protected for generations to come.



Great Blue Heron in a wetland environment. URL.<https://www.camphall.com/news/camp-hall-successfully-completes-phase-1-of-its-wetland-restoration-project/>. camphall.com



Wheat and clover used as cover crops "Cover Crops," URL. <https://www.sare.org/resources/cover-crops/>. www.sare.org

# **USDA's Pollinator Conservation Program: Protecting Nature, Benefiting Communities**

## **How the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Supports**

### **Pollinators and Public Welfare**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has long recognized the vital role pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and other insects play in sustaining healthy ecosystems and supporting agricultural productivity. Through dedicated conservation programs, the USDA is working to protect these essential species, promoting biodiversity and ensuring the continued availability of many foods Americans rely on.

One of the core strategies of the USDA's NRCS pollinator conservation efforts involves partnering with farmers, ranchers, and landowners to restore native habitats. By encouraging the planting of wildflowers, maintaining hedgerows, and reducing pesticide use, these initiatives help create safe havens for pollinators across the country. Additionally, the USDA provides technical and financial assistance for projects that prioritize pollinator-friendly practices, making it easier for individuals and communities to participate in conservation.

The benefits of these programs extend far beyond the agricultural sector. Healthy pollinator populations are linked to increased crop yields, which support food security and lower prices for consumers. Pollinators also contribute to the beauty and diversity of natural landscapes, enhancing recreation opportunities and improving overall ecosystem resilience. By supporting the NRCS pollinator conservation efforts, the public enjoys cleaner air, richer biodiversity, and a stronger, more sustainable food system.

As awareness grows about the challenges facing pollinators, USDA's NRCS leadership in this area continues to make a positive impact. Their conservation programs not only protect vital species but also foster stronger communities and a healthier environment for all.

Looking ahead, the USDA NRCS is exploring innovative approaches to further strengthen pollinator habitats and promote sustainable land management. These efforts include research into pollinator health, developing best practices for habitat restoration, and expanding educational outreach to empower more individuals to take action. By investing in the future of pollinators, the USDA is helping to ensure that generations to come will benefit from the ecological and economic advantages these remarkable creatures provide.

Community involvement remains a key component of successful pollinator conservation. Through collaboration with schools, local governments, and environmental organizations, the USDA encourages grassroots participation and fosters a culture of stewardship. As more people recognize the importance of pollinators, collective efforts can lead to lasting positive change for both nature and society.

# USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Updates to Urban Farm Program

## New Changes Aim to Expand Support for City-Based Agriculture Initiatives

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced significant changes to its Urban Farm Program, aiming to enhance support and access for urban and suburban agricultural operations. These updates are intended to address the growing demand for local food production and to empower communities in cities and metropolitan areas with additional resources and technical assistance.

Key changes to the program include streamlined application processes, expanded eligibility for new and existing urban farmers, and increased access to microloans and conservation resources. The FSA has also introduced new educational initiatives and outreach efforts to ensure that urban growers are aware of available services, such as risk management tools, disaster assistance, and business planning support.

Officials emphasized that these revisions reflect input from stakeholders, including community organizations and urban farming advocates, and are part of a broader USDA effort to promote food security, sustainability, and economic opportunities in urban environments. The changes are expected to make it easier for more city-based producers to participate in USDA programs and to contribute to resilient local food systems across the nation.

Urban farmers interested in learning more about the updated program can visit the USDA FSA website or contact their local FSA office for guidance on eligibility and application procedures. The USDA encourages feedback as it continues to refine its approach to supporting urban agriculture in the years ahead.

In addition to program updates, the USDA Farm Service Agency has officially rebranded its Urban Farm Program, now known as the USDA Urban Agriculture Initiative. This name change is designed to better reflect the program's expanding focus on a wide range of agricultural activities within city and metropolitan settings. By adopting the new title, the USDA aims to foster inclusivity and highlight the diversity of urban farming practices, from community gardens to commercial rooftop operations. Stakeholders are encouraged to look for updated materials and resources under the new program name as the agency continues to evolve its support for urban agriculture.





# ALFDC/ALCDC Partnership Membership

Renewal From

**October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Individual Membership \$25.00** \_\_\_\_\_ **Partnership Membership \$40.00**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Organization Membership \$200.00**

**Check one of the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Renewal Membership** \_\_\_\_\_ **New Membership** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contribution to Organization \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Paid: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

## Member Benefits

**Advocacy and Public Relations** -ALCDC/ALFDC participates in federal and state hearing sessions that focus on policy development for its members, farmers, youth, and rural and urban residents.

**Member Opportunities** -ALCDC/ALFDC offers leadership opportunities within the organization for our youth, farmers, and rural and urban residents. As a member you will have the opportunity to serve on advisory committees, serve as volunteer and form local volunteer working groups in support of the organization's service delivery program.

**Marketing Opportunities** -ALCDC/ALFDC offers cooperative marketing opportunities for rural and urban farmers, and businesses. As a member, we also offer the opportunity to present and set up an exhibition during our Regional Meetings and Annual Conferences, along with facility rental discounts.

**Access to Housing, Farming, and Youth Services** -ALCDC/ALFDC offers rural and urban residents technical support and training for access to affordable housing, homeownership education, business development, technical assistance and support in accessing farm financial resources for conservation practices, operating expense, youth leadership development, education enrichment, and workforce readiness.

**Information and Communication** -ALCDC/ALFDC members can communicate with an ALCDC representative via phone or website concerning their farming, housing, business and youth service's needs. Members receive ALCDC updates and news through our quarterly newsletters and weekly e-letters and website.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

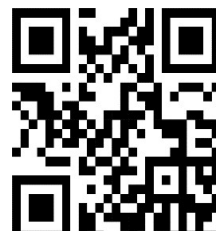
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return your application and tax-deductible contribution to:  
ALCDC/ALFDC Membership P.O. Box743 Brinkley, AR 72021**

ALCDC/ALFDC programs and services are available without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status. On your compatible Android phone, Smart phone, or tablet-open the built-in camera app. Point the camera at the QR code. Tap the banner that appears on your Android phone, Smart phone, or tablet to join or renew membership.





P.O. Box 907  
Brinkley, AR72021

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## ABOUT THE ADVANCER

The Advancer is a publication of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) printed quarterly and circulated as a public service and communication Resources for our membership and constituents. The Advancer publication reaches a broad range of organizations and residents throughout the Delta and the United States

The Advancer reflects the nature of our work-supplying self-help opportunities and support services to our farmers and others of limited Resources in our forty-two (42) county service area. ALCDC is committed to helping people become more productive and self-sufficient. We appreciate your comments and suggestions. Direct all comments and inquiries about this publication by phone to (870) 734-3005 or e-mail us at [alcldc1934@yahoo.com](mailto:alcldc1934@yahoo.com).

If your mailing address is not correct, contact Mary Harris at (870) 734-3005.

### ALCDC STAFF

Dr. Calvin R. King Sr. – President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
LaShica Miller – Vice-President and Chief Financial Operation Officer (CFOO)  
Janie Williams – Vice-President of Programs and Policy  
Larry Lofton – Vice President of ALFDC, Ag. Farm Division Director  
Barbara Erby – Director of Public Relations Marketing Administrative Service  
Michael Tucker – Farm Finance Advisor  
Ashley Crockett – Housing Director, Farm Advisor Specialist  
Mary Harris – Office Manager, Farm Admin Asst.  
Diamond Smith – Accounts Payable  
Mykaitlyn Smith – Administrative Assistant, Youth Coordinator  
Endia Rapier – Accounts Receivable, Administrative Assistant

#### Multi-Family Housing (Off-Site)

Ashley Crockett-McNeil Apartments Phase I and II, Crawfordsville, AR, Earle Duplex's,  
Pinewood Apartment Development, Brinkley, AR  
Keisha Caffey (Resident Manager)-Meadowbrook, Marianna, West Helena/Helena  
Jenifer Jones (Resident Manager) Forrest City and Wynne

## ALCDC MISSION



The mission of ALCDC is to supply advocacy outreach, technical aid, and training to limited Resources small farmers and all rural residents to alleviate poverty, enhance sustainable farming and strengthen communities' economic sustainability and workforce readiness.

ALCDC services and programs are available without regard to age, race, religion, gender, or physical handicap.

For Additional Information  
Phone (870) 734-3005

Visit Our Website

[www.arlcldc.org](http://www.arlcldc.org)