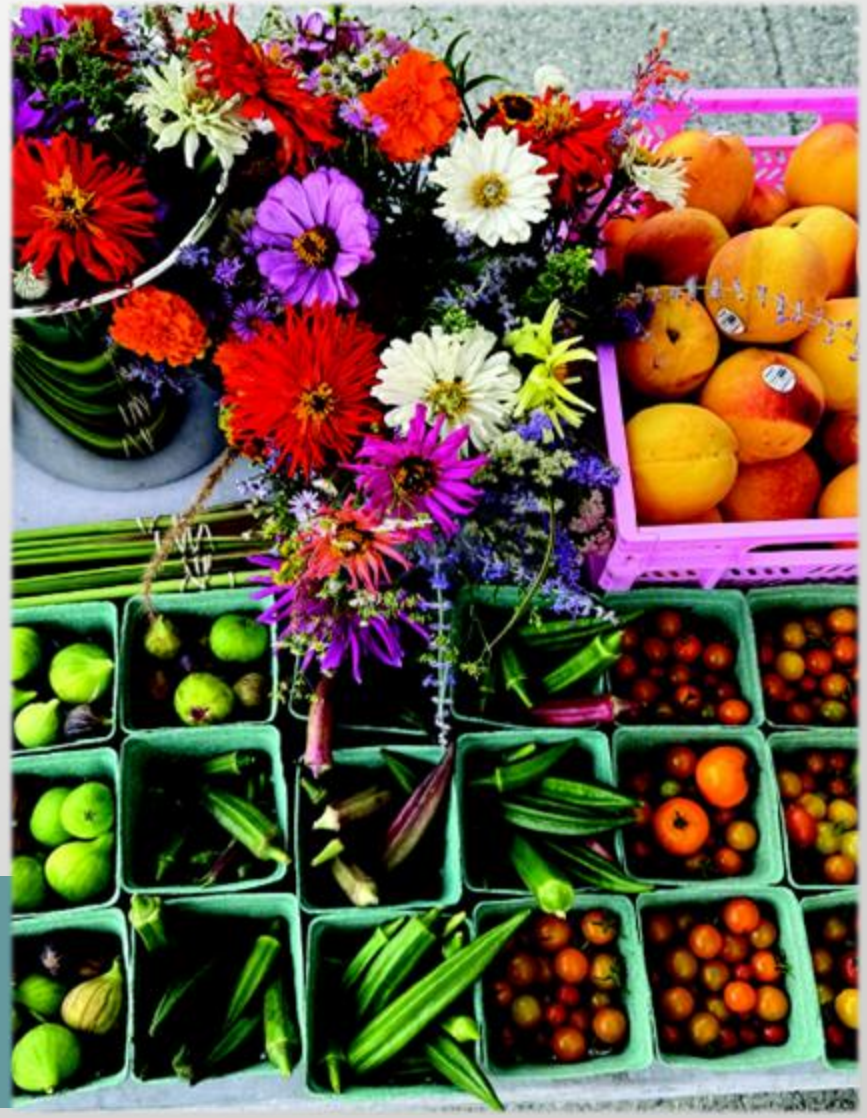
NEW YORK STATE | Department of Agriculture and Markets

Community Gardens Task Force



Meeting 9 Discussion Guide

NOVEMBER 6, 2025

Opening Remarks

Commissioner Richard Ball

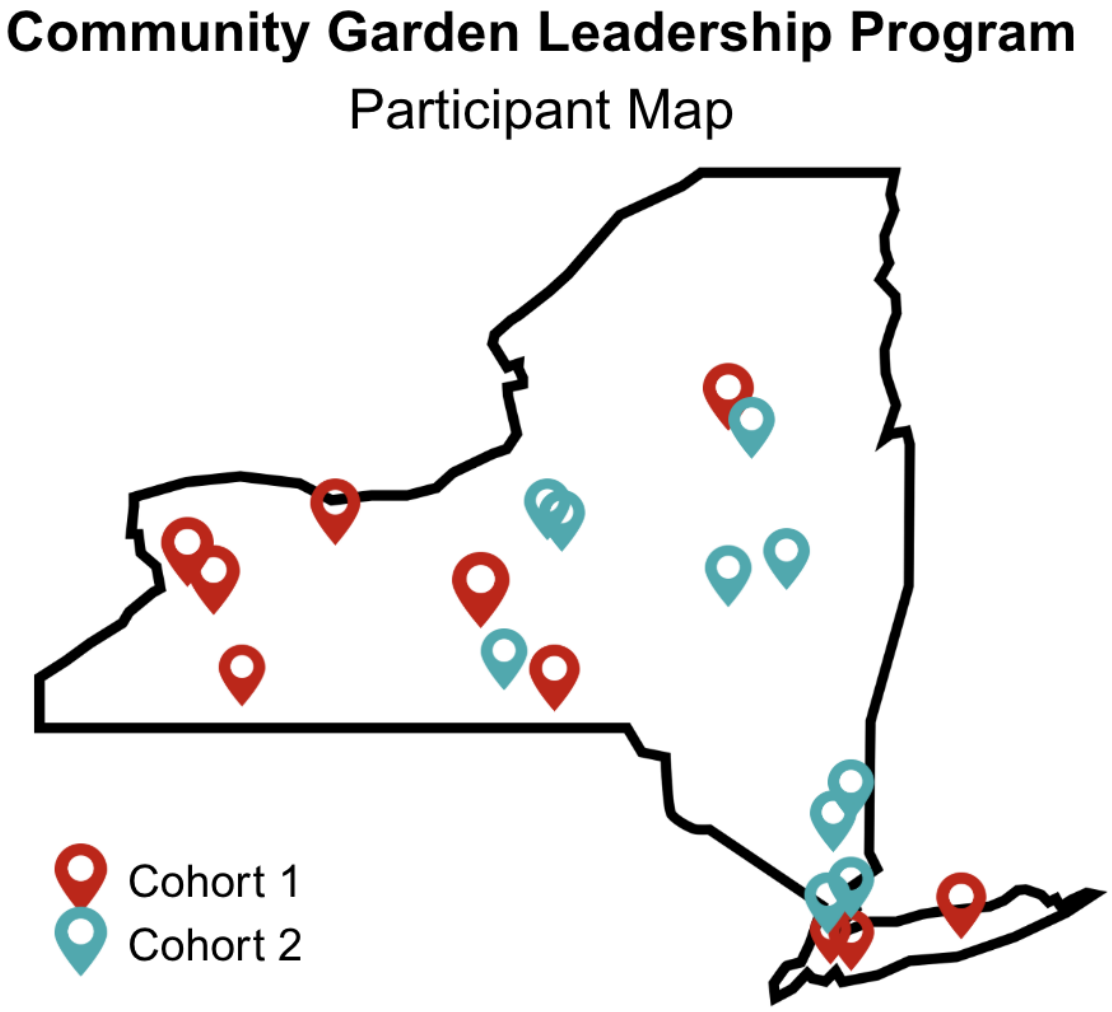
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Member Updates

State Program Updates

COMMUNITY GARDENS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES

- **Program Updates**
  - 2 ongoing cohorts – *extended access for cohort 1*
  - 40 participants currently enrolled
- **Key Takeaways**
  - Self-paced; live-sessions schedule
  - Updated outreach strategy
- **Growth Opportunities**
  - Regional gatherings
  - Cornell PWT – *stakeholder engagement*
  - Resilient Gardens Symposium – ***September 2026***



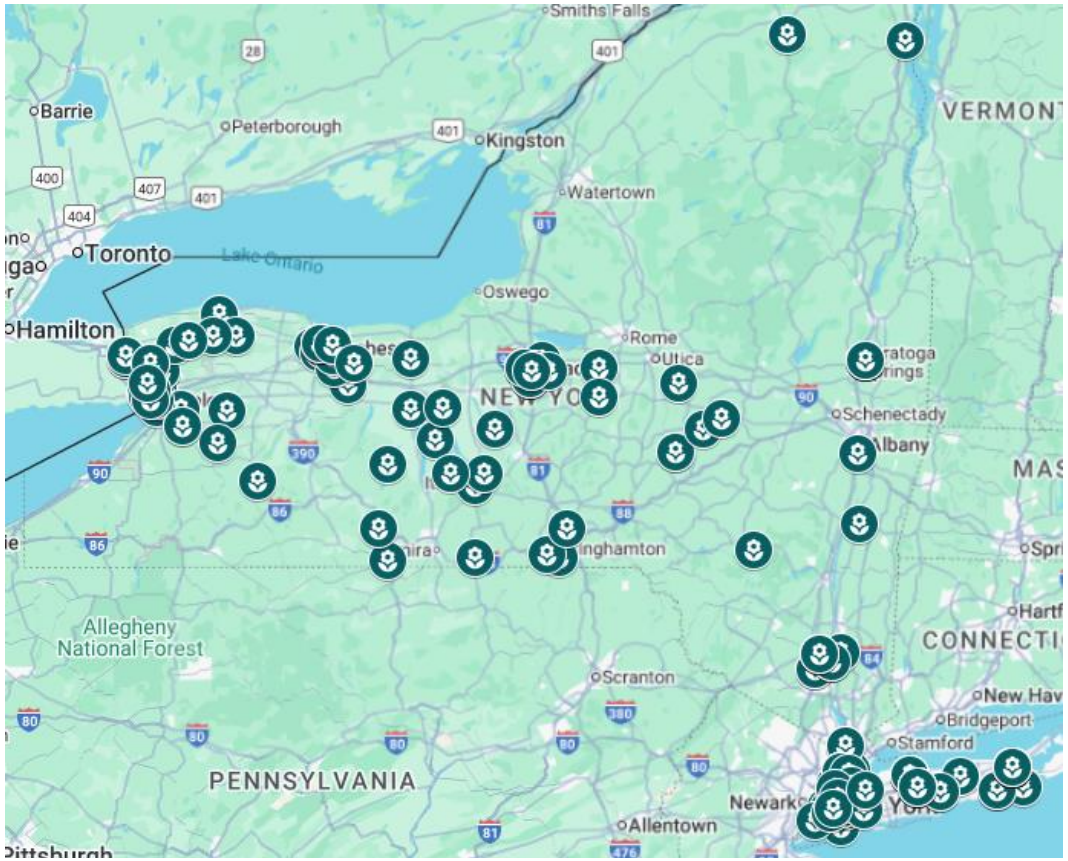
COMMUNITY GARDENS SOIL TESTING PROGRAM UPDATES

Updates under **CCE Harvest NY** Management

- Expanded eligibility guidelines
  - Additional tests for gardens with individually managed plots
  - Backyard growers with community distribution
- Streamlined application process
- Shipping Kits
- Updated soil sampling instructions & test interpretation support
- Training for local extension staff

310+ applications processed!

Participating zip codes as of October 2025



COMMUNITY GARDENS WORKBOOK UPDATES

Updates since Spring 2025

- 1,000 physical copies were printed and distributed
- Digital version and online appendix available on AGM website

Looking Ahead: Increasing Reach

- Adoption and Feedback
  - How is your community using the workbook?
  - How can we expand reach and accessibility?
- Spanish translation is complete
  - Additional languages needed?
- Online appendix
  - Please send additional resources to Steven.Affat@agriculture.ny.gov

The top 12 languages spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State are:

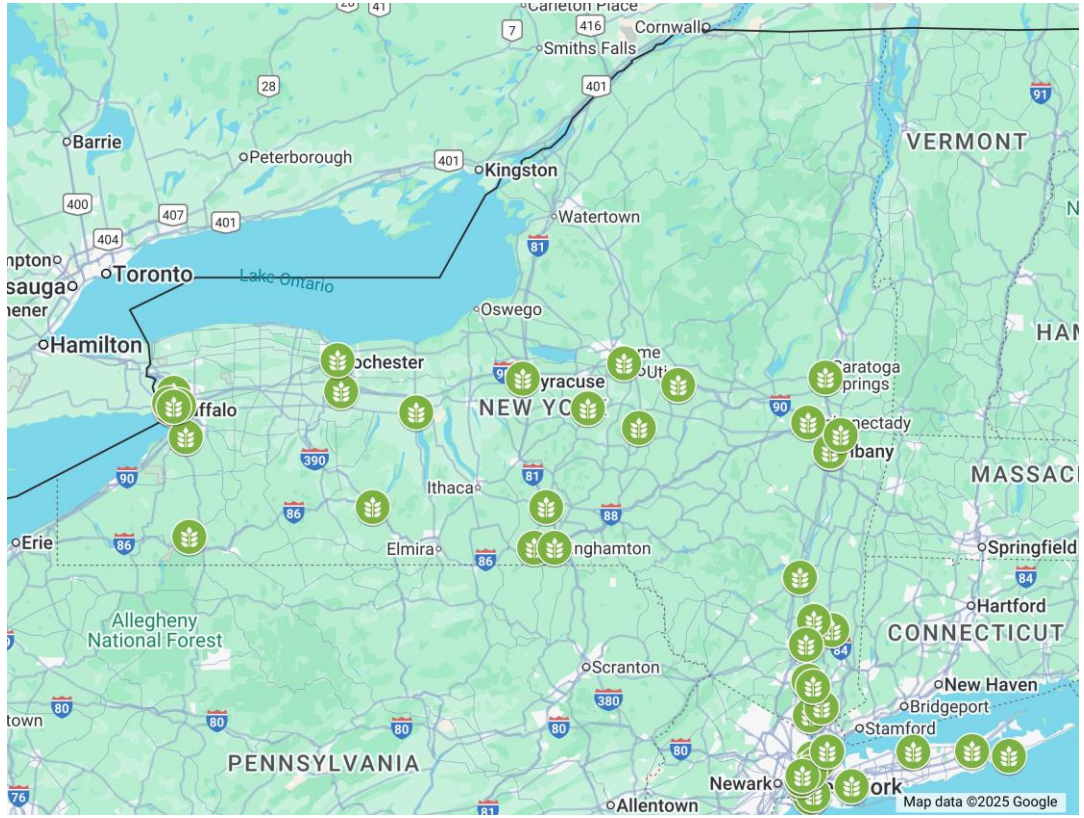
#	Language	Estimated Number of Speakers with LEP (ACS 2018-2022)
1	Spanish	1,198,032
2	Chinese	377,524
3	Russian	124,422
4	Yiddish	90,199
5	Bangla	74,342
6	Haitian Creole	51,947
7	Korean	48,581
8	Arabic	42,907
9	Italian	41,155
10	French	34,304
11	Polish	33,122
12	Urdu	29,983

Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant

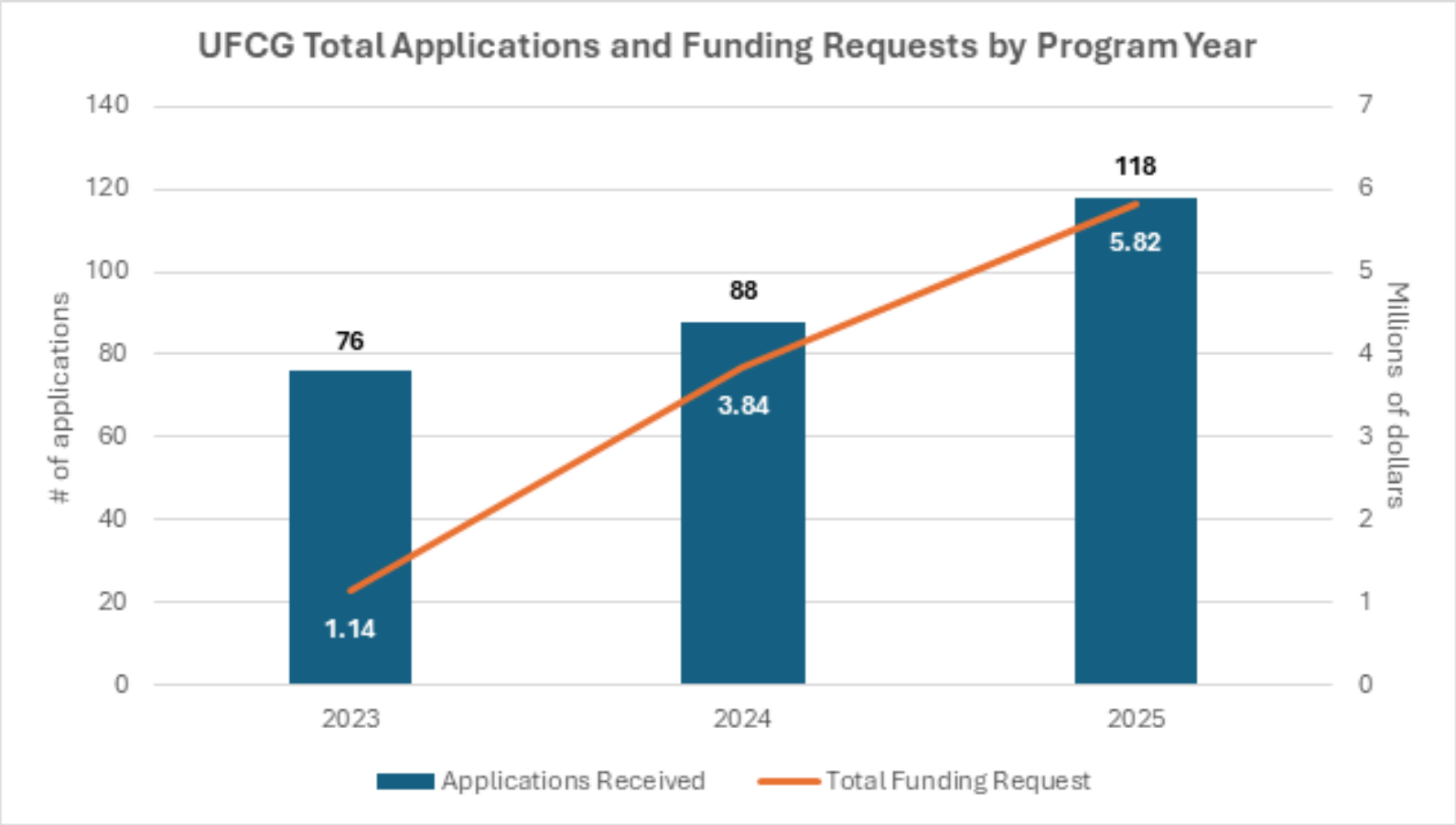
The Urban Farms and Community Gardens program supports the development and expansion of community gardens, school gardens, and urban farms across the state, focusing on **food production**, **food safety**, and **food distribution** while improving local food resiliency.

- 2025 program updates include **increased funding** and an **18-month grant term**.
- AGM received 118 applications requesting a total of **$5.9M**.
- **Required subaward** to further stretch funds across food system as part of the application.
- **51** projects funded statewide.

UFCG Program Funding Map



Urban Farms and Community Gardens Program Metrics



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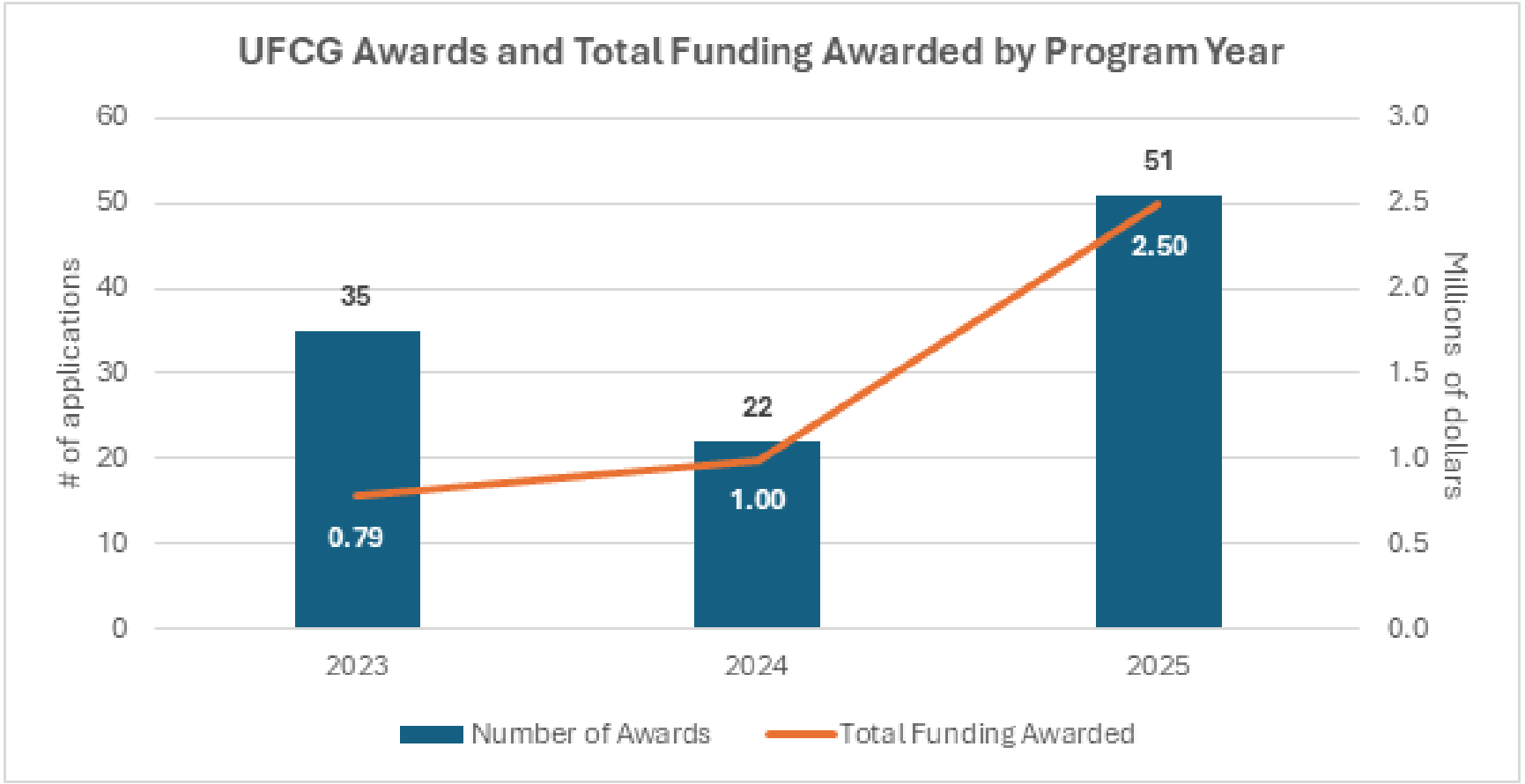
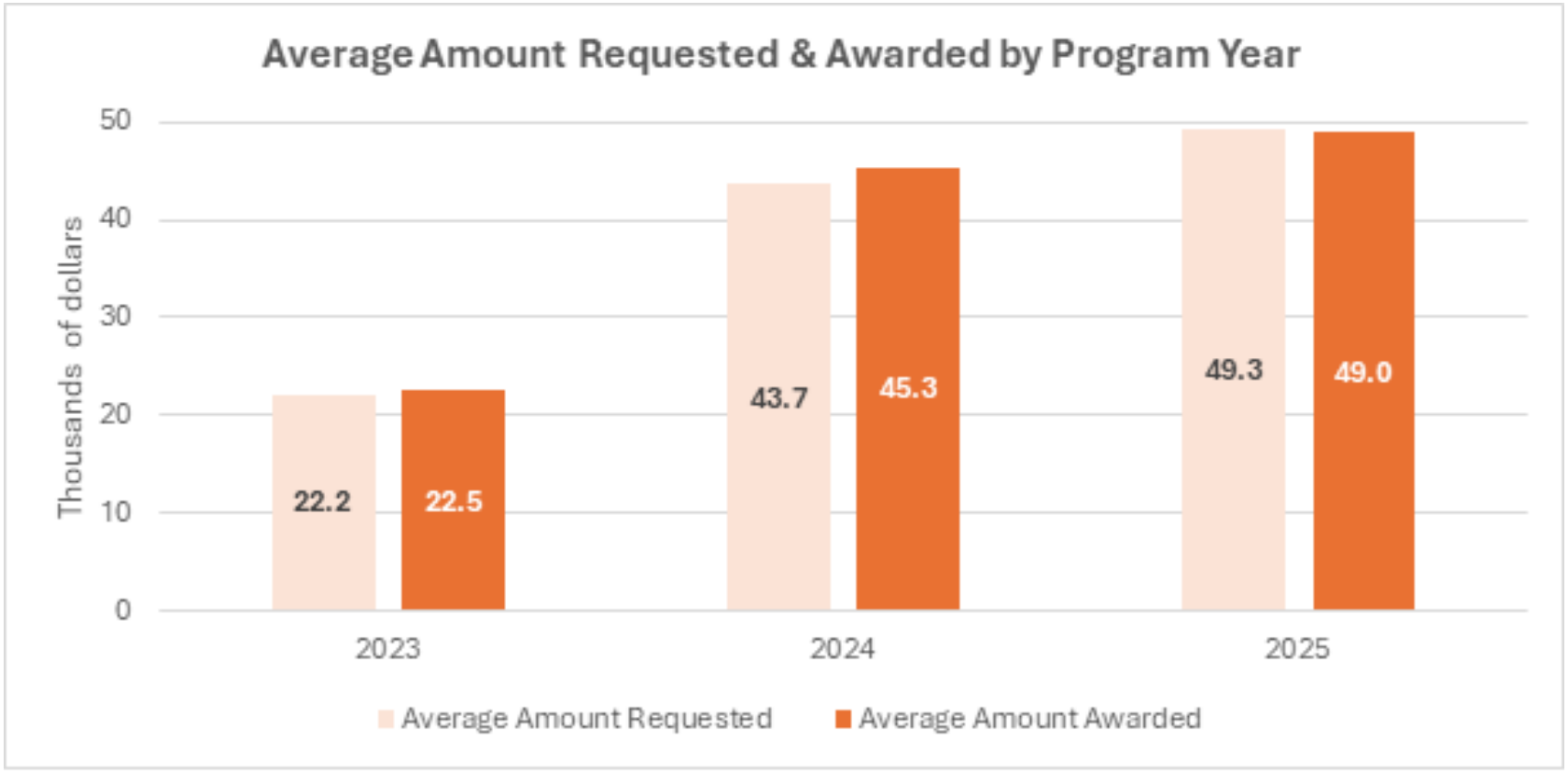


Urban Farms and Community Gardens Program Metrics



LaGuardia Community College

Chelsea Encababian

Sustainable Urban Agriculture Program

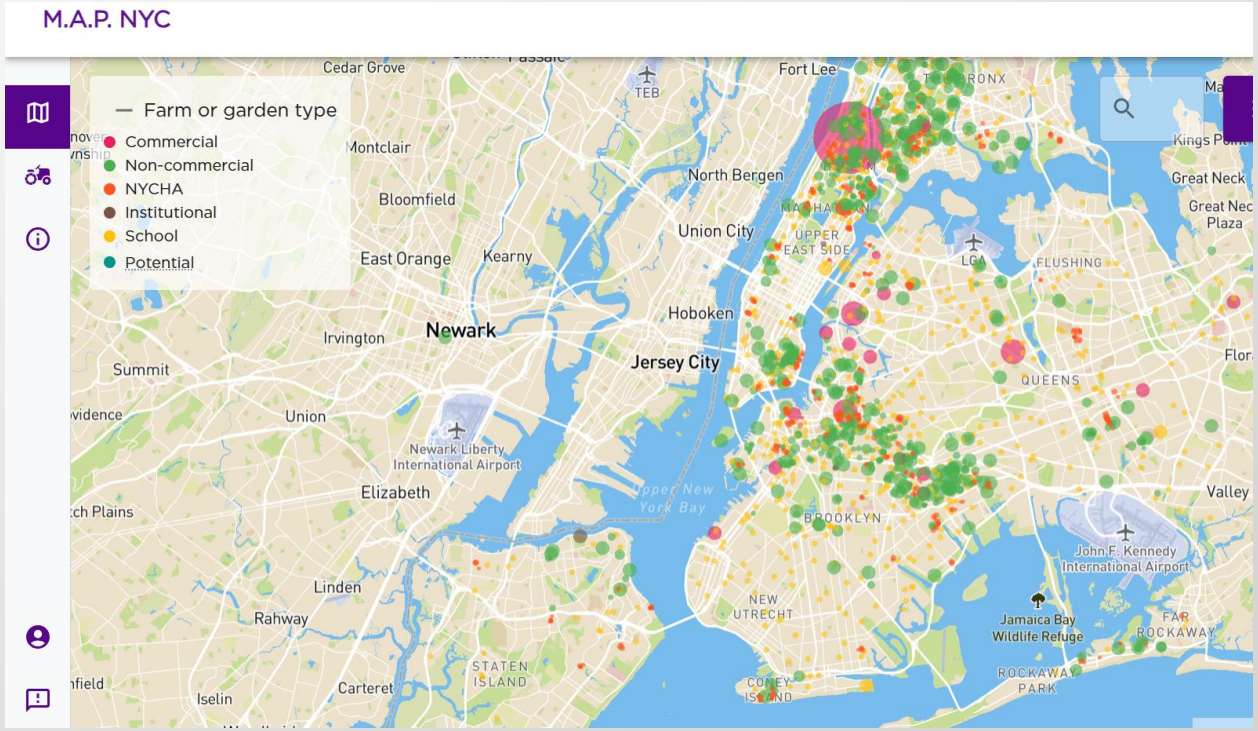
15 Minute Break

Reconvene at 1:15pm

AgriMAP

Angela Trude and Anne-Laure White

NYU Steinhardt School Department of Nutrition and Food Studies



Group Discussion

Steven Affat

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Edible Schoolyard, New York City

Future Needs of the Task Force

Task Force Interim Report

- What are the strengths of the 2023 report?
- Are there gaps in the 2023 report? (ex: missing data, perspectives)
- How can we tell a holistic story of community gardens in NYS?
- Where should we source data?
- Are you interested in joining an Interim Report working group?

Future Needs of the Task Force

Expanding AGM and NYS Community Task Force Engagement

- Are there events where AGM / CGTF should be present?
  (ex: Resilient Gardens Symposium, UAWG Spring Urban Ag Conference)
- How can we best engage with your communities?
- How can we prioritize inclusivity?

  (ex: gearing events towards growers, program staff)

Next Steps

- Staying Connected
  - Member updates and upcoming events will be shared via **monthly email**

- Next Community Gardens Task Force Meeting in **Spring** 2026
  - Fully Virtual

GrowNYC Farm on Governors Island

Closing Remarks

Commissioner Richard Ball

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Hattie Carthan Community Garden, Brooklyn

Department of Agriculture and Markets