

Recommended policy actions for resilient agriculture

How multi-scale policy interventions can support farmers using resilient practices



Federal legislation

Laws passed by the U.S. Congress, such as the Farm Bill.

Policy work at this level:

- Familiar, high visibility pathway, requiring the work of many
- Changes can be slow, requiring resource-intensive, long term effort by many
- When successful, impacts can be powerful across the U.S.

Recommendations:

Staffing local USDA offices: The Farm Bill includes funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency staffing levels, restored to pre-pandemic levels.

Regional Food Business Centers: The Farm Bill includes funding for the popular Regional Food Business Centers, cut in the 2025 annual budget.

Resilience CAP project partners characterize resilient agriculture as systems with high levels of diversity, perenniality, and nutrient and energy circularity. Project researchers identified policy recommendations in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. For further information, see ag-resilience.org/policy-socioeconomic.



Federal agencies

Federal agencies, such as USDA, develop rules and regulations to implement federal legislation.

Policy work at this level:

- Targets administrative staff to influence how programs work
- Helps develop programs that encourage resilient systems
- Changes may be implemented more quickly, requiring less investment of time and energy

Recommendations:

Empower nonprofits: USDA prioritizes support for cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations to strengthen technical assistance for farmers regarding resilient practices.

Microloans for diversified producers: Farm Credit Associations expand low-collateral microloan programs systemwide, targeting diversified producers and protecting innovative lenders.



State/local governments and organizations

State legislatures, county boards, city councils set policy. State/local agencies implement policies, sometimes in partnership with NGOs.

Policy work at this level:

- Counties and states may be more nimble to take action on new ideas
- More responsive to local constituents
- Innovative ideas and programs often get a start at local or state levels

Recommendations:

Information sharing: States collaborate to increase strategic information sharing and idea exchange and adapt successful programs across state lines.

Education about renting land: Farmer-supporting organizations educate farmers about renting as an effective way to access farmland and build and sustain profitable operations.

