

AN ACT concerning hunger relief.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program Act.

Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

"Agricultural entity" means a grower, producer, or processor of farm or dairy products, meat, poultry, fruits and agricultural products that are grown, raised, harvested, or processed in Illinois.

"Department" means the Department of Human Services.

"Food bank" means a public or charitable institution that maintains an established operation involving the provision of food or edible commodities to food pantries, soup kitchens, hunger relief centers, or other feeding programs that, as an integral part of their normal activities, provide meals or food to needy persons.

"Program" means the Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program.

"Program participant" means a food bank that receives food under the Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program to distribute to food pantries, soup kitchens, hunger relief centers, or other feeding programs that provide meals or food to needy persons.

"Secretary" means the Secretary of Human Services.

Section 10. Establishment of the Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program.

(a) A program to help expand the availability of nutritious, locally grown, raised, or processed foods for Illinois' emergency food system, known as Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program, is hereby established within the Department of Human Services. The program shall:

(1) acquire and distribute agricultural products from Illinois agricultural entities or aggregators to Illinois' emergency food system, and

(2) provide grants to improve capacity of the emergency food system to allow for the proper transportation, storage, or distribution of agricultural products to underserved areas.

(b) The program shall target fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry, dairy, and eggs produced in Illinois. Foods shall be surplus, seconds, or market-grade quality levels and must be safe for consumption.

(c) The Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program is subject to appropriation and shall dedicate no less than 75% of available funds to acquisition and distribution of food.

Section 15. Administering entity.

(a) The Secretary shall engage a not-for-profit entity from Illinois' emergency food system to administer the

program. The administering entity shall have statewide reach and represent multiple food banks that source and distribute food to Illinois food pantries and soup kitchens under the same authorities and standards as the Emergency Food Assistance Program administered by the Department.

(b) The duties of the administering entity shall include, but are not limited to:

(1) developing an annual plan outlining anticipated needs, outreach efforts, potential challenges, and any changes that may affect the program from the prior year;

(2) issuing an annual report that summarizes the activity from the prior year, including meeting the capacity-building and equity goals of the program;

(3) identifying program participants and their food needs;

(4) building relationships with Illinois agricultural entities that address those needs, including socially disadvantaged farmers;

(5) coordinating the acquisition and distribution of agricultural commodities to food banks; and

(6) distributing capacity-building grants.

Section 20. Advisory Council.

(a) The Farm to Food Bank Advisory Council is created, consisting of the following members:

(1) The Secretary of Human Services or the Secretary's

designee, who shall serve as chair.

(2) The Director of Agriculture or the Director's designee.

(3) Three representatives from food banks, including at least 2 representatives from food banks that participate in the Emergency Food Assistance Program administered by the Department of Human Services, selected by the Department.

(4) Three representatives from the agricultural industry, selected by the Department.

(5) A representative from an academic institution with expertise in agricultural systems, selected by the Department.

(b) The Advisory Council shall provide support to the program through the following activities:

(1) facilitating relationship-building and partnerships between the Illinois agricultural sector and the emergency food system;

(2) approving of a proposed annual budget by the administering entity;

(3) reviewing and providing feedback on the administering entity's annual plans and annual reports;

(4) promoting the program; and

(5) providing feedback or recommendations as needed to the administering entity.

Section 25. Participation requirements.

(a) The Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program may distribute food to food banks with the infrastructure to accept, store, and distribute foods through the emergency food system in compliance with federal, State, or local health and food safety requirements and with the capacity to serve significant geographic areas within Illinois. Foods may be sourced directly from an agricultural entity or via Illinois-based aggregators as long as the foods meet program requirements.

(b) Program participants shall match Farm to Food Bank resources with non-state funds. The match can be met through cash or in-kind contributions.

(c) All food distributed under the program must be distributed in Illinois, regardless of the service area of the program participant.

Section 30. Capacity-building grants. The Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program shall distribute capacity-building grants for facility upgrades, equipment, or other investments necessary to support the objectives of the program and allow for the proper pickup, storage, or processing of agricultural products that expand the ability of Illinois' emergency food system to access these products and better reach underserved areas and underserved populations.

Section 35. Rulemaking. The Department shall adopt rules

to implement the program. These rules shall include, but are not limited to:

(1) eligible costs related to acquisition and distribution of food, including, but not limited to, picking, packing, processing, and transportation;

(2) health and safety requirements for program participants, farmers, and transportation;

(3) food quality standards;

(4) program requirements for the capacity-building grant program, including eligibility, allowable expenses, and reporting;

(5) contracting requirements and purchasing options;

(6) goals, preferences, and incentives to advance equity, especially racial equity, in the farm industry;

(7) data collection, evaluation, and annual plan and reporting requirements; and

(8) any other rules necessary to implement the program.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.