



## 101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2019 and 2020

HB2539

by Rep. Sonya M. Harper

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Healthy Food Program Development Act. Provides that the Department of Agriculture may coordinate with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to establish a Healthy Food Development Program to expand access to healthy foods in eligible areas in the State by providing assistance to grocery stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and other small food retailers. Provides that the benefits provided shall be awarded to grocery stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and other small food retailers in eligible areas on a competitive basis, with priority given to projects with the greatest potential impact on expanding access to healthy foods in eligible areas that are underserved by retail sales of healthy food in the State. Provides requirements for participation in the program. Provides that the Department shall designate a grocery ambassador to assist retailers of healthy foods in this State by: (1) providing research and data on eligible areas with insufficient grocery access; (2) coordinating with the Department and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and other relevant State agencies; (3) providing assistance to small grocery retailers in this State, including obtaining and expediting regulatory procedures; and (4) providing other assistance as needed. Provides that the Department, in coordination with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, shall convene a working group to develop a plan for establishing a commercial distribution system, for fresh produce and healthy foods to corner stores and other small food retailers.

LRB101 07452 SLF 52494 b

1 AN ACT concerning healthy food access.

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

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Healthy Food Program Development Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions.

7 In this Act:

8 "Corner store" means a retail establishment that sells  
9 grocery products and has less than 5,000 square feet of selling  
10 area.

11 "Department" means the Department of Agriculture.

12 "Eligible area" means a historically underutilized  
13 business zone, as defined by 15 U.S.C. 632(p) (1).

14 "Farmers' market" means a public market at which farmers  
15 and other producers sell fresh produce and healthy foods.

16 "Grocery store" means a retail establishment that has a  
17 primary business of selling grocery products; has at least  
18 5,000 square feet of selling area that is used for a general  
19 line of food and non-food grocery products; and meets the  
20 eligibility requirements for the federal Supplemental  
21 Nutrition Assistance Program.

22 "Small food retailer" means a small business that is not a  
23 grocery store.

1 Section 10. Healthy Food Development Program.

2 (a) The Department may coordinate with the Department of  
3 Commerce and Economic Opportunity to establish a Healthy Food  
4 Development Program to expand access to healthy foods in  
5 eligible areas in the State by providing assistance to grocery  
6 stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and other small food  
7 retailers.

8 (b) The Department of Public Health, Environmental  
9 Protection Agency, and other relevant State agencies shall  
10 coordinate with the Department and the Department of Commerce  
11 and Economic Opportunity upon request to establish the Healthy  
12 Food Development Program.

13 Section 15. The Healthy Food Development Program benefits.

14 (a) The Healthy Food Development Program may provide a  
15 combination of any or all of the following benefits to grocery  
16 stores, corner stores, farmer markets, or other small food  
17 retailers in eligible areas:

- 18 (1) grants;
- 19 (2) loans;
- 20 (3) State tax credits;
- 21 (4) equipment;
- 22 (5) other financial assistance; and
- 23 (6) technical assistance.

24 (b) The benefits provided in subsection (a) shall be

1 awarded to grocery stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and  
2 other small food retailers in eligible areas on a competitive  
3 basis, with priority given to projects with the greatest  
4 potential impact on expanding access to healthy foods in  
5 eligible areas that are underserved by retail sales of healthy  
6 food in this State.

7 (c) Grocery stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and  
8 other small food retailers are encouraged to work cooperatively  
9 to expand access to healthy foods in eligible areas in this  
10 State.

11 (d) The Department and the Department of Commerce and  
12 Economic Opportunity may contract with non-profit  
13 organizations to promote and implement this program.

14 Section 20. Requirements.

15 (a) Grocery stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and  
16 other small retailers participating in the Healthy Food  
17 Development Program shall be strongly encouraged to:

18 (1) apply and accept benefits from the federal  
19 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);

20 (2) apply and accept benefits from the federal Women,  
21 Infants, and Children (WIC) program;

22 (3) employ residents of this State.

23 (b) Resources may be provided to assist grocery stores,  
24 corner stores, farmers' markets, and other small food retailers  
25 in acquiring the necessary technology to accept SNAP and WIC

1 benefits.

2 (c) As a condition of participating in the Healthy Food  
3 Development Program, persons or entities operating grocery  
4 stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and other small food  
5 retailers shall agree in writing to sell produce or other  
6 healthy foods for at least 3 years; provided that this  
7 requirement is not applicable if the individual or entity, or  
8 its successor ceases all of its retail food sales operations.

9 Section 25. Grocery ambassador and working group.

10 (a) The Department shall designate a grocery ambassador to  
11 assist retailers of healthy foods in this State by: (1)  
12 providing research and data on eligible areas with insufficient  
13 grocery access; (2) coordinating with the Department and the  
14 Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and other  
15 relevant State agencies; (3) providing assistance to small  
16 grocery retailers in this State, including obtaining and  
17 expediting regulatory procedures; and (4) providing other  
18 assistance as needed.

19 (b) The Department, in coordination with the Department of  
20 Commerce and Economic Opportunity, shall convene a working  
21 group to develop a plan for establishing a commercial  
22 distribution system for fresh produce and healthy foods to  
23 corner stores and other small food retailers. These businesses  
24 shall be encouraged to work cooperatively to maximize their  
25 buying power.

- 1 (c) The working group shall include representatives from:
- 2 (1) the Department and the Department of Commerce and
- 3 Economic Opportunity and other relevant State agencies;
- 4 (2) the grocery ambassador designated in subsection
- 5 (a);
- 6 (3) non-profit organizations;
- 7 (4) urban framers and community gardeners;
- 8 (5) corner stores and their trade associations; and
- 9 (6) produce wholesalers.
- 10 (d) The working group shall issue a report, including its
- 11 recommendations to the General Assembly on or before December
- 12 31, 2021.
- 13 (e) The Department and the Department of Commerce and
- 14 Economic Opportunity may issue grants, on a competitive basis,
- 15 for the establishment of a commercial distribution system for
- 16 fresh produce and healthy foods.