



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB2879

Introduced 2/16/2023, by Rep. Sonya M. Harper

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program Act. Establishes the Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program within the Department of Human Services to help expand the availability of nutritious, locally grown, raised, or processed foods for Illinois's emergency food system. Provides that the program shall (1) acquire and distribute agricultural products from Illinois agricultural entities or aggregators to Illinois's 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. Provides that the program shall target fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry, dairy, and eggs produced in Illinois. Provides that foods shall be surplus, seconds, or market-grade quality levels and must be safe for consumption. Provides that the program is subject to appropriation and shall dedicate no less than 75% of available funds to acquisition and distribution of food. Requires the Secretary of the Department of Human Services to engage a not-for-profit entity from Illinois's emergency food system to administer the program. Requires the administering entity to 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. Contains provisions concerning the duties of the administering entity. Creates the Farm to Food Bank Advisory Council to provide support to the program through facilitating relationship-building and partnerships between the Illinois agricultural sector and the emergency food system and other matters. Provides that the program may distribute food to those food banks with the infrastructure to accept, store, and distribute foods through the emergency food system and with the capacity to serve significant geographic areas within Illinois. Provides that the program shall distribute capacity-building grants for facility upgrades, equipment, or other investments necessary to support the objectives of the program. Requires the Department of Human Services to adopt rules. Effective immediately.

LRB103 29913 KTG 56325 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning hunger relief.

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 Illinois Farm to Food Bank Program Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

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

11 "Department" means the Department of Human Services.

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

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

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

23 "Secretary" means the Secretary of Human Services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 Section 15. Administering entity.

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

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

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

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

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

14 (3) identifying program participants and their food
15 needs;

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

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

21 (6) distributing capacity-building grants.

22 Section 20. Advisory Council.

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

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

1 designee, who shall serve as chair.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 (4) promoting the program; and

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

1 Section 25. Participation requirements.

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

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

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

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

24 Section 35. Rulemaking. The Department shall adopt rules

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

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

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

8 (3) food quality standards;

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

12 (5) contracting requirements and purchasing options;

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

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

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

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