



101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2019 and 2020

HB2538

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 to expand 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 the State by: (1) providing research and data on eligible areas with insufficient grocery access; (2) coordinating with the Department of Agriculture 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 of Agriculture, 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 04944 SLF 49953 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. In this Act:

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

10 "Department" means the Department of Agriculture.

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

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

15 "Grocery store" means a retail establishment that has: (1)
16 a primary business of selling grocery products; (2) has at
17 least 5,000 square feet of selling area that is used for a
18 general line of food and non-food grocery products; and (3)
19 meets the eligibility requirements for the federal
20 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

21 "Small food retailer" means a small business that is not a
22 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, farmers' 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
25 awarded to grocery stores, corner stores, farmers' markets, and

1 other small food retailers in eligible areas on a competitive
2 basis, with priority given to projects with the greatest
3 potential impact to expand access to healthy foods in eligible
4 areas that are underserved by retail sales of healthy food in
5 this State.

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

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

13 Section 20. Requirements.

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

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

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

21 (3) employ residents of this State.

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

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

8 Section 25. Grocery ambassador and working group.

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

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

25 (c) The working group shall include representatives from:

1 (1) the Department and the Department of Commerce and
2 Economic Opportunity and other relevant State agencies;

3 (2) the grocery ambassador designated in subsection
4 (a);

5 (3) non-profit organizations;

6 (4) urban framers and community gardeners;

7 (5) corner stores and their trade associations; and

8 (6) produce wholesalers.

9 (d) The working group shall issue a report, including its
10 recommendations to the General Assembly on or before December
11 31, 2021.

12 (e) The Department and the Department of Commerce and
13 Economic Opportunity may issue grants, on a competitive basis,
14 for the establishment of a commercial distribution system for
15 fresh produce and healthy foods.