



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4590

Introduced 2/3/2026, by Rep. Sonya M. Harper, Sharon Chung and Katie Stuart

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 205/205-455 new

Amends the Department of Agriculture Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules establishing, implementing, and administering the Illinois Down Payment Assistant Grant Program to offer up to \$20,000 grants for eligible applicants purchasing their first farms that are eligible farm purchases. Provides that, if more eligible applicants apply than grants are available, then the recipients shall be chosen with a random lottery process determined by the Department, with priority given to priority applicants. Defines terms.

LRB104 17461 BDA 30887 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

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

4 Section 5. The Department of Agriculture Law of the Civil
5 Administrative Code of Illinois is amended by adding Section
6 205-455 as follows:

7 (20 ILCS 205/205-455 new)

8 Sec. 205-455. Illinois Down Payment Assistant Grant
9 Program.

10 (a) In this Section:

11 "Eligible applicant" means a natural person who:

12 (1) is a resident of Illinois;

13 (2) demonstrates knowledge of the type of farming the
14 eligible applicant intends to do on the farm;

15 (3) earns less than and is expected to earn less than
16 \$250,000 annually in gross agricultural sales;

17 (4) has never owned a farm and whose spouse has never
18 owned a farm;

19 (5) is not applying for a grant under this Section or
20 rules adopted under this Section for the purchase of the
21 farm from a direct family member as defined in Section
22 267(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code;

23 (6) will provide the majority of labor and management

1 on the farm;

2 (7) will commercially farm the land for at least 5
3 years;

4 (8) is in good standing with the State of Illinois;
5 and

6 (9) has not been convicted of a crime related to a
7 State grant agreement.

8 "Eligible farm purchase" means a purchaser's first farm
9 that is purchased within the borders of the State of Illinois
10 and that is purchased within a designated timeframe, as
11 determined by the Department. "Eligible farm purchase"
12 includes farmland or other agricultural real estate, with
13 tillable acres, a hog barn, a commercial greenhouse, or other
14 similar agricultural real estate.

15 "Priority applicant" means an eligible applicant who:

16 (1) earns less than and is expected to earn less than
17 \$100,000 annually in gross agricultural sales; or

18 (2) produces or plans to produce one or more of the
19 following crops:

20 (A) industrial hemp;

21 (B) cannabis; or

22 (C) fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried
23 fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including
24 floriculture, and other specialty crops as defined by
25 the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United
26 States Department of Agriculture.

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2 (b) For the purposes of helping emerging farmers buy their3 first farms, supporting farm succession, and increasing access4 to land for new farmers, the Department shall adopt rules5 establishing, implementing, and administering the Illinois6 Down Payment Assistant Grant Program under this Section. The7 Illinois Down Payment Assistant Grant Program shall offer up8 to \$20,000 grants for eligible applicants purchasing their9 first farms that are eligible farm purchases. If more eligible10 applicants apply than grants are available, then the11 recipients shall be chosen with a random lottery process12 determined by the Department, with priority given to priority13 applicants.