

1 AN ACT concerning agriculture.

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 AgrAbility Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds the
7 following:

8 (1) Illinois is one of the leading
9 agricultural-producing states in the nation. By being
10 involved in such a diverse and highly mechanized industry,
11 the more than 500,000 agricultural workers in Illinois are
12 susceptible to any one of a number of work-related injuries
13 and chronic health problems that limit an individual's
14 ability to safely continue farming.

15 (2) Available estimates indicate that, each year in
16 Illinois, more than 200 farm workers sustain injuries,
17 which result in permanent physical disabilities affecting
18 their future income.

19 (3) It is estimated that nationwide more than 200,000
20 farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers
21 experience injuries that result in lost work time. Of these
22 injuries, 5% have serious or permanent results.

23 (4) According to the most recent census data,
24 approximately 5,000 Illinois farmers have permanent
25 disabilities as a result of accidents, health related
26 ailments, and age.

27 (5) Farm operators and workers are typically highly
28 skilled individuals and the loss of these individuals to a
29 disability negatively impacts the Illinois farm economy.
30 The AgrAbility Project established by the U. S. Department
31 of Agriculture has been successful in helping agricultural
32 workers who suffer from a disability continue to farm. A

1 similar program established by the State and working with
2 the existing AgrAbility Unlimited Program will assist even
3 more Illinois citizens in receiving the assistance that
4 they need and will benefit the State agriculture industry.

5 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

6 "AgrAbility Unlimited" means the joint program of the
7 University of Illinois Extension and the Easter Seals of
8 Central Illinois established in accordance with the AgrAbility
9 Program established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

10 "Department" means the Department of Agriculture.

11 "Director" means the Director of Agriculture.

12 "Production agriculture" has the meaning set forth in
13 Section 3-35 of the Use Tax Act.

14 Section 15. Illinois AgrAbility Program established.

15 (a) Subject to appropriation, the Department, in
16 cooperation with the University of Illinois Extension, shall
17 contract with a non-profit disability service provider or other
18 entity that assists disabled farmers, to establish and
19 administer the Illinois AgrAbility Program in order to assist
20 individuals who are engaged in farming or an
21 agriculture-related activity and who have been affected by
22 disability.

23 (b) Services provided by the Illinois AgrAbility Program
24 shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

25 (1) A toll-free information and referral hotline.

26 (2) The establishment of networks with local
27 agricultural and rehabilitation professionals.

28 (3) The coordination of community resources.

29 (4) The establishment of networks with local
30 agricultural and health care professionals to help
31 identify individuals who may be eligible for assistance and
32 to help identify the best method of providing that
33 assistance.

34 (5) The provision of information on and assistance

1 regarding equipment modification.

2 (6) Job restructuring.

3 (7) The provision of information on and assistance
4 regarding the development of alternative jobs.

5 In order to provide these services, the Illinois AgrAbility
6 Program shall cooperate and share resources, facilities, and
7 employees with AgrAbility Unlimited, the University of
8 Illinois Extension, and the Office of Rehabilitation Services
9 of the Department of Human Services.

10 The costs of the program, including any related
11 administrative expenses from the Department, may be paid from
12 any funds specifically appropriated or otherwise available to
13 the Department for that purpose. The Department may pay the
14 costs of the Illinois AgrAbility program by making grants to
15 the operating entity, by making grants directly to service
16 providers, by paying reimbursements for services provided, or
17 in any other appropriate manner.

18 (c) The Department has the power to enter into any
19 agreements that are necessary and appropriate for the
20 establishment, operation, and funding of the Illinois
21 AgrAbility Program. The Department may adopt any rules that it
22 determines necessary for the establishment, operation, and
23 funding of the Illinois AgrAbility Program.

24 Section 20. Eligibility. To be eligible to receive
25 assistance under this Act, an individual must meet all of the
26 following:

27 (1) Be a resident of Illinois.

28 (2) Derive at least a portion of his or her income from
29 production agriculture.

30 (3) Be affected by a disability.

31 (4) Meet any additional eligibility requirements set
32 forth by the Department, in conjunction with the University
33 of Illinois Extension.

34 Section 25. The Illinois AgrAbility Fund.

1 (a) The Illinois AgrAbility Fund is created as a special
2 appropriated fund within the State treasury. The Director shall
3 also accept and deposit into the Fund all gifts, grants,
4 transfers, and other amounts from any legal source, public or
5 private, that are designated for deposit into the Fund. All
6 interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall be deposited into
7 the Fund.

8 (b) Subject to appropriation and as directed by the
9 Director, moneys in the Illinois AgrAbility Fund may be
10 expended for the Illinois AgrAbility Program and for no other
11 purpose. No more than 15% of the moneys expended in a fiscal
12 year for the Program may be expended for administrative costs.

13 Section 30. Reports. Unless otherwise required by federal
14 law, the University of Illinois Extension must provide the
15 Department with a copy of any report or other document that it
16 provides to the U.S. Department of Agriculture concerning
17 AgrAbility Unlimited. The non-profit disability service
18 provider or other entity awarded a contract under Section 15
19 must annually up-date the University of Illinois Extension and
20 the Department in writing on the status of the Illinois
21 AgrAbility Program.

22 Section 95. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
23 Section 5.640 as follows:

24 (30 ILCS 105/5.640 new)

25 Sec. 5.640. The Illinois AgrAbility Fund.

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