

AN ACT concerning healthy food access.

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

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

Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

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

"Department" means the Department of Human Services.

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

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

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

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

Section 10. Healthy Food Development Program.

(a) The Department 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.

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

Section 15. The Healthy Food Development Program benefits.

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

- (1) grants;
- (2) loans;
- (3) State tax credits;
- (4) equipment;
- (5) other financial assistance; and
- (6) technical assistance.

(b) The benefits provided in subsection (a) 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 this State.

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

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

Section 20. Requirements.

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

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

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

(3) employ residents of this State.

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

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

Section 25. Grocery ambassador.

(a) 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.

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