

AN ACT concerning public health.

**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 Farm Fresh Schools Program Act.

Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds all of the following:

(1) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, less than 20% of young people eat the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine finds that, unless reversed, in the next 50 years obesity will shorten life expectancy in the United States by 2 to 5 years, exceeding the impact of cancer or heart disease. Studies by the Yale University School of Public Health have found that, due to obesity and related diseases, the current generation of young people may be the first in American history whose life expectancy is projected to be less than that of their parents.

(2) Farm-to-school programs link schools with local and regional farms in order to provide schools with fresh and minimally processed farm commodities for inclusion in school meals, vending machines, salad bars, and snacks.

These programs also help children develop nutritional awareness and healthy eating habits.

(3) In addition to procuring farm fresh foods for school food offerings, farm-to-school programs often include activities that provide pupils with hands-on learning opportunities, such as farm visits, cooking demonstrations, and school gardening and composting programs, and integrate nutritional and agricultural education into school curricula.

(4) It is in the interest of this State to promote farm-to-school programs that emphasize the purchase of farm fresh foods by schools in order to improve child nutrition and strengthen local and regional farm economies.

Section 10. Farm Fresh Schools Program. The Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Health, shall create the Farm Fresh Schools Program. The intent of the Program is to reduce obesity and improve nutrition and public health, as well as strengthen local agricultural economies by increasing access to and promoting the consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables in schools and increasing physical activities and programs that promote pupil wellness.

Section 15. Grants.

(a) The Department of Agriculture and the State Board of Education shall jointly administer a process to review grant proposals and award grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants to implement the Farm Fresh Schools Program.

(b) The first 6 grants awarded pursuant to the Farm Fresh Schools Program shall be awarded in 6 different counties, including 3 urban counties and 3 rural counties with a significant agricultural economy.

Section 20. Farm Fresh Schools Program Fund. The Farm Fresh Schools Program Fund is created as a special fund in the State treasury. Moneys in the Fund shall be used, subject to appropriation, by the Department of Agriculture and the State Board of Education for the purposes of this Act.

Section 25. Rules. The Department of Agriculture, with the cooperation of the Department of Public Health and the State Board of Education, shall adopt rules for the implementation of this Act.

Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding Section 5.719 as follows:

(30 ILCS 105/5.719 new)

Sec. 5.719. The Farm Fresh Schools Program Fund.