



Support SB 3523 & HB 5672: Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund

Include \$500,000 appropriation in FY 2021 state budget

The Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund calls for a \$500,000 state investment to double the amount that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants have available to spend on healthy food at farmers markets and other direct producer-to-consumer venues.

- The impact of COVID-19 has increased the need for food assistance to help Illinois families, with unemployment spiking and food pantries seeing unprecedented need across the state.
- The COVID-19 pandemic's impact demonstrated just how important it is to maintain a flexible, adaptive, and diversified local food supply chain that can more easily respond to national and global market disruptions. It also revealed racial disparities in health and social conditions. It's more critical than ever that Illinois invest in its local farmers and increase access to healthy food for low-income communities.
- Illinois imports more than 90% of its food and exports most of what it grows,¹ creating an unstable local food system in times of crisis. At the same time, there are approximately 1,000 farms selling their products locally and looking to grow their businesses.²
- Participating local farmers generate between 15 and 30 percent of their weekly income from these double-value programs, and one survey showed that 78% of participating consumers said the program positively impacted their fruit and vegetable intake.³
- Federal changes to the national program that supports these SNAP match incentives has created uncertainty for consumers and farmers that participate in the program.

The Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund bill was signed into law in 2017 and updated in 2018 (Public Act 100-0636). Despite overwhelming support from the Illinois General Assembly, no appropriation has been made.

“Fresh fruits and vegetables are the first things to be cut from the grocery list when money is tight. Link Match doubles our spending power and helps us make healthier choices while living within a limited budget.”

-Alton Farmers Market Customer

Potential Health Impacts and Cost-Savings: Limited access to affordable, healthy food contributes to obesity and type 2 diabetes. These conditions are especially prevalent among low-income Illinoisans and Illinoisans of color, and thus costly to the State of Illinois (i.e. low-income Illinoisans are 3 times as likely to have type 2 diabetes, which cost Illinois \$12.2 billion in 2012).

Farmers Markets Offer Healthy Food Environments and Stimulate Local Economies

- Illinois has over 375 farmers markets and farm stands; 167 of which have the capacity to accept SNAP.
- Since 2009, over 103 farmers markets and direct-to-consumer venues in Illinois have offered Double Value Coupon Programs, making the healthier, locally produced foods sold at farmers markets more affordable.⁴
- A dollar spent at a farmers market can generate \$1.80 for the community's economy.⁵
- Markets offering Double Value Coupon Programs have generated over **\$1.54 million** in SNAP+WIC sales, and over **\$1.02 million** in Double Value Coupon sales since 2009.

¹ Illinois Department of Agriculture (2011). Illinois Agriculture. Retrieved April 9, 2020 from <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Consumers/FarmersMarkets/Documents/Local%20Food%20Systems%20Presentation%20January%202011.pdf>.

² Illinois MarketMaker (2020). MarketMaker Map. Retrieved April 13, 2020 from <https://il.foodmarketmaker.com/>.

³ Experimental Station (2019). Link Up Illinois: 2019 report. *Chicago, Illinois*.

⁴ Experimental Station, Reported data, 2015.

⁵ Sonntag, V. "Why Local Linkages Matter: Findings from the Local Food Economy Study." Seattle, Washington, Sustainable Seattle. April 2008.

Organizations that Support Public Act 100-0636 Include: (List in formation)

- ❖ Advocates for Urban Agriculture
- ❖ American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc.
- ❖ American Diabetes Association
- ❖ American Farmland Trust
- ❖ American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association
- ❖ Angelic Organics Learning Center
- ❖ Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- ❖ Chicago Food Policy Action Council
- ❖ Cook County Health and Hospitals System
- ❖ Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
- ❖ Delta Institute
- ❖ Experimental Station
- ❖ FoodWorks
- ❖ Healthy Schools Campaign
- ❖ Illinois Action for Healthy Kids
- ❖ Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity
- ❖ Illinois Environmental Council
- ❖ Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP)
- ❖ Illinois Public Health Institute
- ❖ Illinois Stewardship Alliance
- ❖ Illinois Farmers Market Association
- ❖ Izaak Walton League
- ❖ Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- ❖ Seven Generations Ahead
- ❖ The Land Connection
- ❖ The Liberty Prairie Foundation

For more information, contact John Amdor (773-420-6322), Connie Spreen at Experimental Station (773-241-6044), or Julie Mirostaw at the American Heart Association (773-885-3650)