
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 713 Session of
2021

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GALLOWAY, N. NELSON, ROZZI AND PARKER, MARCH 1, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
MARCH 1, 2021

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative;
2 and imposing powers and duties on the Department of
3 Agriculture.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Fresh Food
8 Financing Initiative Act.

9 Section 2. Purpose.

10 The purpose of this act is to establish financing for a State
11 program designed to increase the availability of fresh and
12 nutritious food, known as the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing
13 Initiative, by stimulating investment of capital, job creation,
14 economic vitality and financing for the construction,
15 rehabilitation or expansion of grocery stores, farmers markets
16 or other healthy food retail establishments in underserved and

1 low-income or moderate-income communities in this Commonwealth.

2 Section 3. Definitions.

3 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
4 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
5 context clearly indicates otherwise:

6 "CDFI." A community development financial institution that
7 is certified by the United States Department of the Treasury
8 and provides credit and financial services for underserved
9 communities.

10 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
11 Development of the Commonwealth.

12 "Financing." A loan, grant or loan in which repayment may be
13 waived if certain conditions or criteria established by the
14 lender are satisfied.

15 "Food access organization" or "FAO." A nonprofit
16 organization with expertise in improving access to healthy food
17 in underserved communities.

18 "Grocery store." A for-profit or not-for-profit self-service
19 retail establishment that primarily sells meat, seafood, fruits,
20 vegetables, dairy products, dry groceries, household products
21 and sundries.

22 "Healthy food retail establishment." The term includes, but
23 is not limited to, a small-scale store, corner store,
24 convenience store, neighborhood store, bodega, food hub, mobile
25 market, farmers market and food aggregation and processing
26 center.

27 "Low-income or moderate-income community." A census tract as
28 reported in the most recently completed decennial census
29 published by the United States Census Bureau that has a poverty
30 rate of at least 20% or in which the median family income does

1 not exceed 80% of the greater of the Statewide or metropolitan
2 median family income.

3 "Program." The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative
4 established under section 4.

5 "Program administrator." The department or CDFIs selected by
6 the department.

7 "Underserved community." A census tract determined to be an
8 area with low supermarket access by either the United States
9 Department of Agriculture as identified in the Food Access
10 Research Atlas or through a methodology that has been adopted
11 for use by another governmental or philanthropic healthy food
12 initiative.

13 Section 4. Establishment.

14 The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative is
15 established.

16 Section 5. Administration of program.

17 (a) General rule.--The program shall be administered by the
18 department in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture,
19 or CDFIs selected by the department, to improve food access in
20 this Commonwealth.

21 (b) CDFIs as program administrator.--CDFIs may apply to
22 perform the duties of program administrator. The department may
23 select eligible CDFIs to perform the role of program
24 administrator. CDFI applicants shall be evaluated under the
25 eligibility requirements under subsection (c) which also may be
26 required in rules and regulations or request for proposals
27 issued by the department. Program administrators shall be
28 required to enter into a contract with the department.

29 (c) Eligibility requirements.--CDFI applicants must
30 demonstrate the following:

1 (1) Ability to administer financing programs in
2 accordance with Federal and State rules and accounting
3 principles.

4 (2) Business activity throughout this Commonwealth.

5 (3) Experience in food-based lending.

6 (4) Experience leveraging private and philanthropic
7 funding.

8 (d) Program administrator duties.--The program administrator
9 shall:

10 (1) Raise capital to leverage State funds.

11 (2) Evaluate projects.

12 (3) Underwrite and disburse financing to projects.

13 (4) Establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms
14 for projects that receive financing.

15 (5) Report the following information annually to the
16 department:

17 (i) The number of projects that receive funding.

18 (ii) The geographic distribution of the projects.

19 (iii) The administrative and financing costs of the
20 program.

21 (iv) The outcomes, including, but not limited to,
22 the number and type of jobs created and health
23 initiatives associated with the program.

24 (e) Program management.--The program administrator shall
25 identify and partner with a food access organization to manage
26 the program. The FAO, in partnership with the program
27 administrator, shall develop and establish program guidelines
28 and eligibility criteria to meet the needs of program applicants
29 and the communities served. The FAO shall conduct outreach and
30 marketing of the program to the following:

- 1 (1) Food producers.
- 2 (2) Retailers.
- 3 (3) Business entrepreneurs.
- 4 (4) Local governments.
- 5 (5) Communities in need of improved access.
- 6 (6) Other operators in communities where infrastructure
- 7 costs and credit needs are not met by conventional financial
- 8 institutions.

9 (f) Program priority.--The program shall promote local
10 agricultural products by allowing for priority to be given for
11 projects producing, aggregating, sourcing and selling
12 Pennsylvania farmed products, including the department's
13 Pennsylvania Preferred program. The program may track the sale
14 of Pennsylvania farmed products through supported retailers.

15 (g) Program applicant eligibility.--The FAO shall determine
16 applicant eligibility using maps, data tools and other forms of
17 market research to ensure projects are supported by the
18 community. The FAO shall:

19 (1) Offer grocery stores or healthy food retail
20 establishments developing in underserved communities
21 technical assistance and expertise in areas such as in-store
22 marketing, community engagement and local food procurement.

23 (2) Facilitate connections between wholesalers, grocers
24 and other technical assistance providers.

25 (3) Develop a framework for evaluating community impact.

26 (h) Administrative or operational costs.--No more than 10%
27 of the funding in section 7 may be reserved for administrative
28 and operational costs to manage the program.

29 Section 6. Financing eligibility.

30 (a) Eligible projects.--An eligible project for financing

1 includes any of the following:

2 (1) A for-profit business enterprise, including a
3 corporation, limited liability company, sole proprietor,
4 cooperative or partnership.

5 (2) A not-for-profit corporation.

6 (3) An agricultural cooperative corporation.

7 (4) A public benefit corporation municipal corporation.

8 (5) A regional market facility or cooperative.

9 (b) Eligible uses.--An eligible use for financing includes
10 any of the following:

11 (1) Predevelopment costs for project feasibility.

12 (2) Land assembly, including demolition and
13 environmental remediation.

14 (3) Site development.

15 (4) Infrastructure improvement, including renovation,
16 new construction or adaptive reuse.

17 (5) Equipment purchases that improve the availability
18 and quality of fresh produce.

19 (6) Funding of debt service.

20 (7) Innovative food access technology that assists an
21 existing or new grocery store.

22 (8) Innovative food access technology that assists the
23 healthy food efforts of a food retail establishment.

24 (9) Other healthy food initiatives.

25 Section 7. Financing.

26 (a) Establishment of account.--A restricted account is
27 established in the General Fund and shall be used exclusively
28 for the program in accordance with this act. The money in the
29 account is hereby appropriated on a continuing basis to the
30 department for the purposes of this act.

1 (b) Transfer.--Beginning July 1, 2021, and each fiscal year
2 thereafter, the sum of \$5,000,000 shall be transferred from the
3 General Fund to the restricted account established in subsection
4 (a).

5 (c) Contributions.--The department may accept gifts,
6 donations, legacies and other revenues, including Federal
7 appropriations, for deposit into the restricted account.

8 Section 8. Effective date.

9 This act shall take effect in 60 days.