



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 7013

January Session, 2025



AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCEMENTS TO THE LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND THE CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS GRANT PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-215m of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

3 (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) "Local farm" means a farm, farmers' cooperative, food hub or
5 wholesale distributor located in Connecticut.

6 (2) "Regional farm" means a farm, farmers' cooperative, food hub or
7 wholesale distributor located in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode
8 Island, Vermont, New Hampshire or Maine.

9 (3) "Locally sourced food" means produce and other farm products
10 that have a traceable point of origin within Connecticut that are grown
11 or produced at, or sold by, a local farm and includes, but is not limited
12 to, value-added dairy, fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs, fruits, vegetables
13 and minimally processed foods.

14 (4) "Regionally sourced food" means produce and other farm
15 products that have a traceable point of origin within New York,

16 Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire or Maine that
17 are grown or produced at, or sold by, a regional farm and includes, but
18 is not limited to, value-added dairy, fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs, fruits,
19 vegetables and minimally processed foods.

20 (5) ["Eligible board of education"] "Eligible entity" means a local or
21 regional board of education that is participating in the National School
22 Lunch Program or a provider of child care services, as described in
23 section 19a-77.

24 (6) "Eligible meal program" means a meal program provided by an
25 eligible [board of education] entity to its children or students or a meal
26 provided as part of such [board's] entity's participation in the National
27 School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Seamless Summer
28 Option, After School Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program or
29 the Child and Adult Care Food Program administered by the United
30 States Department of Agriculture, including the At-Risk Afterschool
31 Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
32 [administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.]

33 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2024] 2026, and each fiscal year
34 thereafter, the Department of [Agriculture] Education, in consultation
35 with the Department of [Education] Agriculture, shall administer the
36 local food for schools incentive program. Such program shall provide,
37 utilizing state and federal funds, reimbursement payments to eligible
38 [boards of education] entities for the purchase of locally sourced food
39 and regionally sourced food that [may] shall be used as part of such
40 [board's] entity's participation in an eligible meal program. An eligible
41 [board of education] entity shall be entitled to receive reimbursement
42 payments in accordance with the guidelines developed pursuant to
43 subsection (e) of this section and in an amount equal to (1) one-half of
44 such [board's] entity's expenditures for locally sourced foods, and (2)
45 one-third of such [board's] entity's expenditures for regionally sourced
46 foods.

47 (c) (1) The department shall receive requests from eligible [boards of

48 education] entities for reimbursement payments under the program in
49 a manner similar to how the department receives applications under
50 section 10-215b.

51 (2) Each eligible [board of education] entity shall (A) maintain a
52 record of such [board's] entity's expenditures for all locally sourced food
53 and regionally sourced food, as well as documentation confirming the
54 place of origin of such food, as prescribed by the department, and (B)
55 submit, upon request of the department, such records and
56 documentation to the department for review.

57 (d) Any locally sourced food or regionally sourced food for which an
58 eligible [board of education] entity seeks reimbursement payments
59 under this section shall comply with the nutrition standards established
60 by the department pursuant to section 10-215e.

61 (e) The department shall develop guidelines for the implementation
62 of the program. Such guidelines shall (1) establish a maximum
63 reimbursement amount based on total [student] enrollment for each
64 eligible [board of education] entity, (2) assist eligible [boards of
65 education] entities in participating in the program, and (3) promote
66 geographic, social, economic and racial equity, which may include a
67 preference for [socially disadvantaged farmers, as defined in 7 USC
68 2279(a), as amended from time to time,] historically underserved
69 farmers or small farm businesses.

70 (f) The department shall develop a survey to be distributed annually
71 to any eligible [board of education] entities that receives reimbursement
72 payments under this section. Such survey shall be designed to collect
73 information to assist the department in implementing and improving
74 the program.

75 (g) In addition to the reimbursement payments otherwise provided
76 pursuant to this section, the department [may, within available
77 appropriations, provide supplemental grants to eligible boards of
78 education. Such supplemental grant funds may be expended for the
79 purpose of purchasing kitchen equipment, engaging with school

80 nutrition or farm-to-school consultants or training relating to the
81 processing, preparation and serving of locally sourced food and
82 regionally sourced food. In awarding supplemental grants under this
83 subsection, the department shall give priority to an eligible board of
84 education for a town designated as an alliance district pursuant to
85 section 10-262u] shall use at least twenty per cent of the annual
86 appropriation for the local food for schools incentive program to engage
87 with external partners to provide supplemental services. Such
88 supplemental services may include, but need not be limited to, school
89 nutrition or farm-to-school consultants, technical assistance, outreach,
90 training or evaluation relating to the core elements of farm-to-school
91 programming, such as procurement, processing, preparation, serving
92 and education of locally sourced food and regionally sourced food.

93 (h) The department may accept gifts, grants and donations, including
94 in-kind donations, for the administration of the local food for schools
95 incentive program and to implement the provisions of this section. The
96 department shall seek and maximize existing federal funding available
97 for purposes of administering the local food for schools incentive
98 program.

99 (i) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
100 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
101 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

102 (j) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, for the fiscal year
103 ending June 30, [2024] 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount
104 of reimbursement payments payable to eligible [boards of education]
105 entities shall be reduced proportionately if the total of such
106 reimbursement payments in such year exceeds the amount
107 appropriated for such reimbursement payments for such year.

108 (k) Not later than January 1, [2025] 2026, and annually thereafter, the
109 department shall submit a report on the local food for schools incentive
110 program to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
111 having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with

112 the provisions of section 11-4a. Such report shall include, but need not
113 be limited to, an accounting of the funds appropriated and received by
114 the department for the program, descriptions of the reimbursement
115 payments made under the program and an evaluation of the program.

116 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026,
117 the Department of Education shall hire one full-time employee to
118 administer the local food for schools incentive program described in
119 section 10-215m of the general statutes, as amended by this act. Such
120 employee shall be responsible for (1) identifying and promoting the
121 critical components of individual farm-to-school programs and
122 advising the Commissioner of Education on strategies to implement the
123 program, (2) supporting partnerships with public and nonprofit
124 organizations to establish a structure to facilitate communication
125 between farmers and school district officials, (3) conducting workshops,
126 training sessions and technical assistance to school food service
127 directors, school personnel, farmers, produce distributors and
128 processors regarding the demand for and availability of Connecticut
129 farm products, (4) identifying grants, donations and other funding
130 sources to assist in funding the program, and (5) seeking available
131 federal funding, including making application to the United States
132 Department of Agriculture for grants and other federal financial
133 assistance.

134 Sec. 3 (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of one million five hundred
135 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Department of Education from
136 the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for (1)
137 administration of the local food for school incentive program, described
138 in section 10-215m of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and
139 (2) the hiring of a full-time employee described in section 2 of this act.

140 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of one million dollars is
141 appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund,
142 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for administration of the CT
143 Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215l of the
144 general statutes.

145 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of one million dollars is
146 appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund,
147 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for administration of the CT
148 Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215l of the
149 general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-215m
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

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