



General Assembly

## ***Substitute Bill No. 7013***

*January Session, 2025*



### ***AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCEMENTS TO THE LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS INCENTIVE 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 Section 10-215m of the general statutes is repealed and the  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] entity 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

be limited to, an accounting of the funds appropriated and received by  
the department for the program, descriptions of the reimbursement  
payments made under the program and an evaluation of the program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

**ED** *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*

**APP**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*