

1 H.550

2 Introduced by Representative Pearl of Danville

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Agriculture; Farm-to-School; eligible activities

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to increase the
7 activities and equipment that are eligible for a grant under the Local Foods
8 Grant Program.

9 An act relating to expanding eligibility under the local foods grant program

10 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

11 Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. § 4721 is amended to read:

12 § 4721. LOCAL FOODS GRANT PROGRAM

13 (a) There is created in the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets the
14 Rozo McLaughlin Farm-to-School Program to execute, administer, and award
15 local grants for the purpose of helping Vermont schools develop farm-to-
16 school programs that will educate children regarding farming and nutrition,
17 sustain relationships with local farmers and producers, enrich the educational
18 experience of students, improve the health of Vermont children, and enhance
19 Vermont's agricultural economy.

1 (b) A school, a teacher within a school, a school district, a consortium of
2 schools, a consortium of school districts, a registered or licensed child care
3 provider, or an organization administering or assisting the development of
4 farm-to-school programs may apply to the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and
5 Markets for a grant award to:

6 (1) fund equipment, resources, training, and materials that will help to
7 educate children regarding farming and increase use of local foods in child
8 nutrition programs;

9 (2) fund items, including local food products, gardening supplies,
10 kitchen wares, cooking equipment, field trips to farms, gleanings on farms, and
11 stipends to visiting farmers, that will help educators to use hands-on
12 educational techniques to teach children about nutrition and farm-to-school
13 connections;

14 (3) fund professional development and technical assistance, in
15 partnership with the Agency of Education and farm-to-school technical service
16 providers, to help teachers, child nutrition personnel, organizations
17 administering or assisting the development of farm-to-school programs, and
18 members of the farm-to-school community educate students about farming,
19 nutrition, and farm-to-school connections and assist schools and licensed or
20 registered child care providers in developing a farm-to-school program; and

1 (4) fund technical assistance or support strategies to increase
2 participation in federal child nutrition programs that increase the viability of
3 sustainable meal programs.

4 (c) The Secretaries of Agriculture, Food and Markets and of Education and
5 the Commissioner of Health, in consultation with farmers, child nutrition staff,
6 educators, organizations administering or assisting the development of farm-to-
7 school programs, and farm-to-school technical service providers, jointly shall
8 adopt procedures relating to the content of the grant application and the criteria
9 for making awards.

10 (d) The Secretary shall determine that there is significant interest in the
11 school community before making an award and shall give priority
12 consideration to schools, school districts, and registered or licensed child care
13 providers that are developing farm-to-school connections and education, that
14 indicate a willingness to make changes to their child nutrition programs to
15 increase student access and participation, and that are making progress toward
16 the implementation of the Vermont School Wellness Policy Guidelines
17 developed by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the Agency of
18 Education, and the Department of Health, updated in June 2015 or of the
19 successor of these guidelines.

20 (e) No award shall be greater than 20 percent of the total annual amount
21 available for granting except that a grant award to the following entities may,

1 at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, exceed the
2 cap:

3 (1) Farm-to-School service providers; or

4 (2) school districts or consortiums of school districts that completed

5 merger under 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, 2012 Acts and Resolves No.

6 156, or 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46 on or before July 1, 2019, provided

7 that the grant is used for the purpose of expanding Farm-to-School projects to

8 additional schools within the new school district.

9 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

10 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.