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H.703

Introduced by Representatives McGill of Bridport, Anthony of Barre City,
Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Brumsted of
Shelburne, Casey of Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of
Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Lincoln, Dodge of
Essex, Elder of Starksboro, Farlice-Rubio of Barnet, Garofano
of Essex, Gregoire of Fairfield, Krasnow of South Burlington,
Lalley of Shelburne, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of
Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Minier of South Burlington,
Pajala of Londonderry, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of
Burlington, Rice of Dorset, Small of Winooski, and Williams of
Barre City

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; food insecurity; 3SquaresVT; Restaurant Meals
Program; benefit calculation

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to implement the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program’s Restaurant Meals Program in
Vermont. It further proposes to require the Department for Children and
Families to submit a transition plan for using the U.S. Department of
Agriculture’s moderate-cost plan to calculate minimum 3SquaresVT benefits.

1 An act relating to 3SquaresVT

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

3 * * * Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Generally * * *

4 Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 1701 is amended to read:

5 § 1701. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

6 (a) The State of Vermont ~~may~~ shall participate in the federal Supplemental
7 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pursuant to 7 U.S.C. chapter 51. The
8 purpose of SNAP is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition among households
9 with low income by increasing their food purchasing power and access to
10 nutritious, safe food.

11 * * *

12 * * * Restaurant Meals Program * * *

13 Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 1704 is added to read:

14 § 1704. RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM

15 (a) The State shall participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
16 Program's Restaurant Meals Program. The Restaurant Meals Program shall be
17 administered by the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the
18 Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

19 (b) Restaurant participation in the Restaurant Meals Program shall be
20 voluntary. The Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Agency of
21 Commerce and Community Development, shall develop and publish on its

1 website a list of eligibility criteria for restaurant participation in the Restaurant
2 Meals Program, including that participating restaurants are licensed pursuant to
3 18 V.S.A. chapter 85. The eligibility criteria shall advance the following
4 goals:

5 (1) Locally produced foods are widely available to Restaurant Meals
6 Program clients.

7 (2) Restaurants serving foods that represent diverse cultural traditions
8 participate in the Restaurant Meals Program.

9 (3) Participating restaurants are located in geographically diverse
10 regions of the State.

11 (c) The Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Agency of
12 Commerce and Community Development, shall provide technical assistance to
13 those restaurants applying to and participating in the Restaurant Meals
14 Program.

15 Sec. 3. POSITION AUTHORIZATION; APPROPRIATION; RESTAURANT
16 MEALS PROGRAM

17 (a) In fiscal year 2025, one new permanent classified position, Restaurant
18 Meals Program navigator, is authorized for establishment within the Agency of
19 Human Services.

20 (b) In fiscal year 2025, \$85,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund
21 to the Agency of Human Services to support the position established in

1 subsection (a) of this section. The position shall provide technical assistance to
2 restaurants applying to and participating in the Restaurant Meals Program
3 pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act.

4 * * * Calculation of Minimum 3SquaresVT Benefit; Transition Plan * * *

5 Sec. 4. TRANSITION PLAN; 3SQUARESVT BENEFIT CALCULATION

6 On or before January 1, 2025, the Department for Children and Families
7 shall submit a transition plan to the House Committees on Appropriations and
8 on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on
9 Health and Welfare detailing the process and resources necessary to calculate
10 the minimum benefit for 3SquaresVT participants at 30 percent of the U.S.

11 Department of Agriculture’s moderate-cost food plan, including:

12 (1) the nature, cost, and timeline of any information technology changes
13 needed to implement the new benefit calculation;

14 (2) the annual cost of implementing the increased 3SquaresVT benefit;

15 (3) the number and type of additional staff positions necessary to
16 implement the new benefit calculation; and

17 (4) any statutory changes or federal approvals necessary to implement
18 the new benefit calculation.

19 * * * Effective Date * * *

20 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

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