

1 S.215

2 Introduced by Senators Hardy, Cummings, Gulick and Lyons

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Human services; food insecurity; 3SquaresVT; Restaurant Meals

6 Program; benefit calculation

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

12 An act relating to 3SquaresVT

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

14 * * * Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Generally * * *

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

16 § 1701. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

17 (a) The State of Vermont ~~may~~ shall participate in the federal Supplemental
18 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pursuant to 7 U.S.C. chapter 51. The
19 purpose of SNAP is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition among households

1 with low income by increasing their food purchasing power and access to
2 nutritious, safe food.

3 * * *

4 * * * Restaurant Meals Program * * *

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

6 § 1704. RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM

7 (a) The State shall participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
8 Program’s Restaurant Meals Program. The Restaurant Meals Program shall be
9 administered by the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the
10 Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

11 (b) Restaurant participation in the Restaurant Meals Program shall be
12 voluntary. The Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Agency of
13 Commerce and Community Development, shall develop and publish on its
14 website a list of eligibility criteria for restaurant participation in the Restaurant
15 Meals Program, including that participating restaurants are licensed pursuant to
16 18 V.S.A. chapter 85. The eligibility criteria shall advance the following
17 goals:

18 (1) Locally produced foods are widely available to Restaurant Meals
19 Program clients.

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

1 (3) Participating restaurants are located in geographically diverse
2 regions of the State.

3 (c) The Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Agency of
4 Commerce and Community Development, shall provide technical assistance to
5 those restaurants applying to and participating in the Restaurant Meals
6 Program.

7 Sec. 3. POSITION AUTHORIZATION; APPROPRIATION; RESTAURANT
8 MEALS PROGRAM

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

12 (b) In fiscal year 2025, \$85,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund
13 to the Agency of Human Services to support the position established in
14 subsection (a) of this section. The position shall provide technical assistance to
15 restaurants applying to and participating in the Restaurant Meals Program
16 pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act.

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

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

19 On or before January 1, 2025, the Department for Children and Families
20 shall submit a transition plan to the House Committees on Appropriations and
21 on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on

1 Health and Welfare detailing the process and resources necessary to calculate
2 the minimum benefit for 3SquaresVT participants at 30 percent of the U.S.
3 Department of Agriculture’s moderate-cost food plan, including:
4 (1) the nature, cost, and timeline of any information technology changes
5 needed to implement the new benefit calculation;
6 (2) the annual cost of implementing the increased 3SquaresVT benefit;
7 (3) the number and type of additional staff positions necessary to
8 implement the new benefit calculation; and
9 (4) any statutory changes or federal approvals necessary to implement
10 the new benefit calculation.

11 * * * Effective Date * * *

12 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

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