

**No. 34. An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.**

(H.167)

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

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Food insecurity in Vermont, and across the country, has increased in recent years after a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) Increased access to produce improves health outcomes for individuals.

(3) For local food purchased from Vermont farms, every dollar spent contributes an additional \$0.60 to the local economy.

(4) Vermont Foodbank has been administering the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program since 2018, injecting \$9.5 million dollars into the Vermont agricultural economy since 2018 by purchasing over 5.7 million pounds of local food and supporting 299 farms in 2024.

(5) The General Assembly should ensure the continued operation of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program by Vermont Foodbank by establishing a grant program at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to provide ongoing, annual appropriations to the Program.

Sec. 2. 6 V.S.A. chapter 207, subchapter 4 is added to read:

Subchapter 4. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program

§ 4631. VERMONTERS FEEDING VERMONTERS GRANT PROGRAM

(a) As used in this section, “local food” has the same meaning as “local” in 9 V.S.A. § 2465a(b).

(b) There is created in the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program to provide grants to Vermont Foodbank to:

(1) purchase local food directly from Vermont farms to distribute through Vermont Foodbank’s distribution channels; and

(2) offer subgrants to:

(A) Vermont Foodbank’s network partners to buy directly from local farms of all sizes a variety of agricultural commodities and products; and

(B) Vermont Foodbank’s partners that buy directly from local farms of all sizes with a focus on providing culturally preferred foods or local relationships.

(c)(1) The Vermont Foodbank, after consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, shall report annually on or before March 1 to the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and the Senate Committee on Agriculture regarding implementation and administration of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program. The report shall include:

(A) the total amount of food purchased with grants from the Program;

(B) the total number of farms purchased from;

(C) the total number of sites where food purchased under the Program was distributed; and

(D) if grants from the Program are used to purchase farm shares, the total number of shares.

(2) When the Vermont Foodbank reports under this section, information regarding persons receiving food under the Program shall be provided in a form that does not disclose the identity of the individual persons, households, or businesses from whom the information was obtained or whose characteristics, activities, or products the information is about.

### Sec. 3. CONTINGENCY ON FUNDING

The duty of the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets to implement Sec. 2 of this act, Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program, is contingent upon an appropriation in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund for the specific purposes described in Sec. 2 of this act.

### Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Date Governor signed bill: May 27, 2025