

1 H.167

2 An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at
3 the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

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

5 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

6 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 Subchapter 4. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program

3 § 4631. VERMONTERS FEEDING VERMONTERS GRANT PROGRAM

4 (a) As used in this section, “local food” has the same meaning as “local” in
5 9 V.S.A. § 2465a(b).

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

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

11 (2) offer subgrants to:

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

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

17 (c)(1) The Vermont Foodbank, after consultation with the Secretary of
18 Agriculture, Food and Markets, shall report annually on or before March 1 to
19 the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and the
20 Senate Committee on Agriculture regarding implementation and administration

1 of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program. The report shall
2 include:

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

5 (B) the total number of farms purchased from;

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

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

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

15 Sec. 3. CONTINGENCY ON FUNDING

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

20 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.