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S.42

Introduced by Senators Hardy, Clarkson, Gulick, Major, Plunkett, Vyhovsky,
Watson and White

Referred to Committee on

Date:

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

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to implement the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program’s Restaurant Meals Program in
Vermont.

An act relating to implementing the Restaurant Meals Program

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

* * * Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Generally * * *

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

§ 1701. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

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* * * Restaurant Meals Program * * *

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

§ 1704. RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

1 (3) Participating restaurants are located in geographically diverse
2 regions of the State and in areas with significant populations of eligible
3 program participants.

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

8 Sec. 3. ADOPTION OF RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM

9 The Agency of Human Services shall work in collaboration with the U.S.
10 Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service to adopt the
11 Restaurant Meals Program in Vermont pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 1704.
12 Documents submitted to the Food and Nutrition Services shall include a
13 comprehensive implementation plan describing criteria for participating
14 restaurants and a template of the memorandum of understanding that shall be
15 used by the Agency and participating restaurants.

16 Sec. 4. POSITION AUTHORIZATION; APPROPRIATION; RESTAURANT
17 MEALS PROGRAM

18 (a) In fiscal year 2026, one new permanent classified position, Restaurant
19 Meals Program Coordinator, is authorized for establishment within the Agency
20 of Human Services.

1 (b) In fiscal year 2026, \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund
2 to the Agency of Human Services to support the position established in
3 subsection (a) of this section. The position shall provide technical assistance to
4 restaurants applying to and participating in the Restaurant Meals Program
5 pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act and to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
6 Program retailers generally.

7 (c) In fiscal year 2026, \$75,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund
8 to the Agency of Human Services to cover equipment and restaurant start-up
9 costs related to restaurant participation in the Restaurant Meals Program
10 pursuant to Sec. 2 of this act.

11 * * * Effective Date * * *

12 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

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