

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry to which was
3 referred House Bill No. 167 entitled “An act relating to establishing the
4 Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food,
5 and Markets” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
6 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
7 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

20 (5) The General Assembly should ensure the continued operation of the
21 Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program by Vermont Foodbank by

1 establishing a grant program at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
2 to provide ongoing, annual appropriations to the Program.

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

4 Subchapter 4. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program

5 § 4631. VERMONTERS FEEDING VERMONTERS GRANT PROGRAM

6 (a) As used in this section, “local food” has the same meaning as “local” in
7 9 V.S.A. § 2465a(b).

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

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

13 (2) offer subgrants to:

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

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

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

1 Senate Committee on Agriculture regarding implementation and administration
2 of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program. The report shall
3 include:

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

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

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

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

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

16 Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

17 In addition to other funds appropriated in fiscal year 2026, \$2,000,000.00 is
18 appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and
19 Markets to implement the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program
20 established pursuant to 6 V.S.A. § 4631. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and
21 Markets may use up to \$67,500.00 of the appropriation under this section for

1 the purposes of administering the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant
2 Program.

3 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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11 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE