



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Raised Bill No. 7013

LCO No. 5088



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

***AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCEMENTS TO THE LOCAL FOOD FOR
SCHOOLS INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND THE CT GROWN FOR CT
KIDS GRANT PROGRAM.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-215m of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

3 (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) "Local farm" means a farm, farmers' cooperative, food hub or
5 wholesale distributor located in Connecticut.

6 (2) "Regional farm" means a farm, farmers' cooperative, food hub or
7 wholesale distributor located in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode
8 Island, Vermont, New Hampshire or Maine.

9 (3) "Locally sourced food" means produce and other farm products
10 that have a traceable point of origin within Connecticut that are grown
11 or produced at, or sold by, a local farm and includes, but is not limited
12 to, value-added dairy, fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs, fruits, vegetables

13 and minimally processed foods.

14 (4) "Regionally sourced food" means produce and other farm
15 products that have a traceable point of origin within New York,
16 Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire or Maine that
17 are grown or produced at, or sold by, a regional farm and includes, but
18 is not limited to, value-added dairy, fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs, fruits,
19 vegetables and minimally processed foods.

20 (5) ["Eligible board of education"] "Eligible entity" means a local or
21 regional board of education that is participating in the National School
22 Lunch Program or a provider of child care services, as described in
23 section 19a-77.

24 (6) "Eligible meal program" means a meal program provided by an
25 eligible [board of education] entity to its children or students or a meal
26 provided as part of such [board's] entity's participation in the National
27 School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Seamless Summer
28 Option, After School Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program or
29 the Child and Adult Care Food Program administered by the United
30 States Department of Agriculture, including the At-Risk Afterschool
31 Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program,
32 [administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.]

33 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2024] 2026, and each fiscal year
34 thereafter, the Department of [Agriculture] Education, in consultation
35 with the Department of [Education] Agriculture, shall administer the
36 local food for schools incentive program. Such program shall provide,
37 utilizing state and federal funds, reimbursement payments to eligible
38 [boards of education] entities for the purchase of locally sourced food
39 and regionally sourced food that may be used as part of such [board's]
40 entity's participation in an eligible meal program. An eligible [board of
41 education] entity shall be entitled to receive reimbursement payments
42 in accordance with the guidelines developed pursuant to subsection (e)
43 of this section and in an amount equal to (1) one-half of such [board's]

44 entity's expenditures for locally sourced foods, and (2) one-third of such
45 [board's] entity's expenditures for regionally sourced foods.

46 (c) (1) The department shall receive requests from eligible [boards of
47 education] entities for reimbursement payments under the program in
48 a manner similar to how the department receives applications under
49 section 10-215b.

50 (2) Each eligible [board of education] entity shall (A) maintain a
51 record of such [board's] entity's expenditures for all locally sourced food
52 and regionally sourced food, as well as documentation confirming the
53 place of origin of such food, as prescribed by the department, and (B)
54 submit, upon request of the department, such records and
55 documentation to the department for review.

56 (d) Any locally sourced food or regionally sourced food for which an
57 eligible [board of education] entity seeks reimbursement payments
58 under this section shall comply with the nutrition standards established
59 by the department pursuant to section 10-215e.

60 (e) The department shall develop guidelines for the implementation
61 of the program. Such guidelines shall (1) establish a maximum
62 reimbursement amount based on total [student] enrollment for each
63 eligible [board of education] entity, (2) assist eligible [boards of
64 education] entities in participating in the program, and (3) promote
65 geographic, social, economic and racial equity, which may include a
66 preference for [socially disadvantaged farmers, as defined in 7 USC
67 2279(a), as amended from time to time,] historically underserved
68 farmers or small farm businesses.

69 (f) The department shall develop a survey to be distributed annually
70 to any eligible [board of education] entities that receives reimbursement
71 payments under this section. Such survey shall be designed to collect
72 information to assist the department in implementing and improving
73 the program.

74 (g) In addition to the reimbursement payments otherwise provided
75 pursuant to this section, the department [may, within available
76 appropriations, provide supplemental grants to eligible boards of
77 education. Such supplemental grant funds may be expended for the
78 purpose of purchasing kitchen equipment, engaging with school
79 nutrition or farm-to-school consultants or training relating to the
80 processing, preparation and serving of locally sourced food and
81 regionally sourced food. In awarding supplemental grants under this
82 subsection, the department shall give priority to an eligible board of
83 education for a town designated as an alliance district pursuant to
84 section 10-262u] shall use at least twenty per cent of the annual
85 appropriation for the local food for schools incentive program to engage
86 with external partners to provide supplemental services. Such
87 supplemental services may include, but need not be limited to, school
88 nutrition or farm-to-school consultants, technical assistance, outreach,
89 training or evaluation relating to the core elements of farm-to-school
90 programming, such as procurement, processing, preparation, serving
91 and education of locally sourced food and regionally sourced food.

92 (h) The department may accept gifts, grants and donations, including
93 in-kind donations, for the administration of the local food for schools
94 incentive program and to implement the provisions of this section. The
95 department shall seek and maximize existing federal funding available
96 for purposes of administering the local food for schools incentive
97 program.

98 (i) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
99 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
100 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

101 (j) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, for the fiscal year
102 ending June 30, [2024] 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount
103 of reimbursement payments payable to eligible [boards of education]
104 entities shall be reduced proportionately if the total of such
105 reimbursement payments in such year exceeds the amount

106 appropriated for such reimbursement payments for such year.

107 (k) Not later than January 1, [2025] 2026, and annually thereafter, the
108 department shall submit a report on the local food for schools incentive
109 program to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
110 having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with
111 the provisions of section 11-4a. Such report shall include, but need not
112 be limited to, an accounting of the funds appropriated and received by
113 the department for the program, descriptions of the reimbursement
114 payments made under the program and an evaluation of the program.

115 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026,
116 the Department of Education shall hire one full-time employee to
117 administer the local food for schools incentive program described in
118 section 10-215m of the general statutes, as amended by this act. Such
119 employee shall be responsible for (1) identifying and promoting the
120 critical components of individual farm-to-school programs and
121 advising the Commissioner of Education on strategies to implement the
122 program, (2) supporting partnerships with public and nonprofit
123 organizations to establish a structure to facilitate communication
124 between farmers and school district officials, (3) conducting workshops,
125 training sessions and technical assistance to school food service
126 directors, school personnel, farmers, produce distributors and
127 processors regarding the demand for and availability of Connecticut
128 farm products, (4) identifying grants, donations and other funding
129 sources to assist in funding the program, and (5) seeking available
130 federal funding, including making application to the United States
131 Department of Agriculture for grants and other federal financial
132 assistance.

133 Sec. 3 (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of one million five hundred
134 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Department of Education from
135 the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for (1)
136 administration of the local food for school incentive program, described
137 in section 10-215m of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and

138 (2) the hiring of a full-time employee described in section 2 of this act.

139 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of one million dollars is
 140 appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund,
 141 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for administration of the CT
 142 Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215/ of the
 143 general statutes.

144 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of one million dollars is
 145 appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund,
 146 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for administration of the CT
 147 Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215/ of the
 148 general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-215m
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To replace the Department of Agriculture with the Department of Education as the lead agency responsible for administering the local food for schools incentive program, to expand eligibility in such program to include providers of child care services, and to provide support and funding for such program and the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]