

House Bill 1309

By: Representatives Thomas of the 65th, Schofield of the 60th, Lim of the 99th, and Lewis-Ward of the 109th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to agriculture, so as to
2 create and provide for an educational farming program for urban youth; to provide for a short
3 title; to provide for definitions; to provide for purpose and intent; to provide for
4 administration, term length, and availability; to provide for the intent for annual
5 appropriation funding; to provide for a pilot program; to provide for applications; to provide
6 for participant requirements; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and
7 for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to agriculture, is amended by
11 adding a new chapter to read as follows:

12 "CHAPTER 24

13 2-24-1.

14 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the 'Georgia Urban Farming Youth
15 Initiative Act.'

16 2-24-2.

17 As used in this chapter, the term:

18 (1) 'Farm land' means land that is part of a farming operation or business enterprise
19 engaged in the production of agricultural products, commodities, or livestock and is
20 operated by a person, legal entity, or joint operation that is eligible to receive payments,
21 directly or indirectly, under one or more federal Department of Agriculture programs.

22 (2) 'Initiative' means the Georgia Urban Farming Youth Initiative.

23 (3) 'Minor' means any person under the age of 18 years.

24 (4) 'Program' means the educational program that is part of the initiative. Such term shall
25 also include 'pilot program.'

26 (5) 'Urban counties' means counties having a population of more than 150,000 according
27 to the United States decennial census of 2020 or any future such census.

28 2-24-3.

29 (a) There is hereby established the Georgia Urban Farming Youth Initiative which shall
30 be administered by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension programming system
31 and its individual offices in this state as appropriate.

32 (b) Beginning July 1, 2022, the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension shall initiate
33 a pilot program in one or more individual offices. Beginning July 1, 2023, the University
34 of Georgia Cooperative Extension shall administer the initiative in all appropriate offices
35 throughout the state.

36 (c) It is the intent of the General Assembly to appropriate \$259,000.00 annually for the
37 state-wide administration of the initiative.

38 2-24-4.

39 The purpose of the initiative is to:

40 (1) Promote farming and the efficient use of land in urban counties;

41 (2) Educate program participants on all aspects of farming in an urban environment and
42 encourage other members of the community to begin and to continue farming; and

43 (3) Provide a sufficient understanding of farming operations so as to facilitate the ability
44 of graduating participants to obtain Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption (GATE)
45 identification numbers and subsequently operate successful, small-scale farms within
46 their communities.

47 2-24-5.

48 (a) The length of each term of a program shall be one year in duration and such term shall
49 begin annually in January on a date to be specified by the University of Georgia
50 Cooperative Extension programming system.

51 (b) Programs shall be under the administration of and shall be available to applicants at
52 each University of Georgia Cooperative Extension programming office located within or
53 serving an urban county of this state. Any such office may work with an existing state or
54 local agricultural organization to better provide for the administration of the initiative and
55 its program.

56 2-24-6.

57 (a) Each cooperative extension office administering a program shall accept and review
58 applications from eligible applicants. Program participation shall be at the discretion of
59 such office and shall include as many participants as is practicable on an annual basis.

60 (b) To be eligible to participate in a program, an applicant shall:

61 (1) Be between the ages of 12 and 18;

62 (2) Have fully authorized access to no less than 0.01 acres (435.6 square feet) of farm
63 land located within the jurisdiction of the cooperative extension office administering the
64 program on which to farm;

65 (3) If the applicant is a minor, identify a parent or legal guardian who shall provide
66 assistance and guidance for the applicant's participation in the program for the duration
67 of the term; and

68 (4) Be available to participate in the program for the full duration of the term."

69 **SECTION 2.**

70 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.