

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2614

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to expand the provision of farmer-led technical assistance, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2023

Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mr. MORAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to expand the provision of farmer-led technical assistance, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Farmer to Farmer
5 Education Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

7 Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16
8 U.S.C. 3842) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)—

1 (A) by redesignating paragraph (2) as
2 paragraph (3); and

3 (B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the
4 following:

5 “(2) FARMER-TO-FARMER NETWORK.—The
6 term ‘farmer-to-farmer network’ means any affili-
7 ation or association of farmers that share informa-
8 tion, technical assistance, or any other type of mutu-
9 ally beneficial support.”;

10 (2) in subsection (f)(1), by inserting “and for
11 the purpose of carrying out subsection (j)” before
12 the period at the end; and

13 (3) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(j) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO FARMER-TO-
15 FARMER NETWORKS.—

16 “(1) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this sub-
17 section are—

18 “(A) to build capacity for farmer-to-farmer
19 networks, connect farmers with mentors or
20 group learning opportunities, and support goal
21 setting to increase long-term adoption of con-
22 sistent, science-based, site-specific practices de-
23 signed to achieve conservation objectives on
24 land active in agricultural, forestry, or related
25 uses;

1 “(B) to increase the provision of technical
2 assistance that meets the specific needs of, and
3 is accessible to, farmers, ranchers, and forest
4 owners using different farming models, prac-
5 tices, and scales; and

6 “(C) to establish and steward farmer-to-
7 farmer networks.

8 “(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

9 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
10 enter into cooperative agreements with eligible
11 entities to carry out the purposes described in
12 paragraph (1).

13 “(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity eligi-
14 ble to enter into a cooperative agreement with
15 the Secretary under subparagraph (A) is—

16 “(i) a nonprofit entity described in
17 section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
18 Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation
19 under section 501(a) of that Code;

20 “(ii) a farmer-to-farmer network;

21 “(iii) an Indian Tribe or a Tribal or-
22 ganization (as those terms are defined in
23 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination
24 and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C.
25 5304));

1 “(iv) a unit of local government (in-
2 cluding a conservation district and a con-
3 servation district association);

4 “(v) an institution of higher edu-
5 cation;

6 “(vi) a State; and

7 “(vii) any other entity designated by
8 the Secretary.

9 “(C) PRIORITIZATION.—In selecting eligi-
10 ble entities with which to enter into cooperative
11 agreements under subparagraph (A), the Sec-
12 retary shall give priority to eligible entities that
13 seek to meet the specific needs of, and are ac-
14 cessible to—

15 “(i) historically underserved farmers,
16 ranchers, and forest owners, including—

17 “(I) beginning farmers and
18 ranchers (as defined in section
19 2501(a) of the Food, Agriculture,
20 Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
21 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a))) and beginning
22 forest owners;

23 “(II) veteran farmers and ranch-
24 ers (as defined in section 2501(a) of
25 the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,

1 and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C.
2 2279(a)) and veteran forest owners;

3 “(III) socially disadvantaged
4 farmers and ranchers (as defined in
5 section 2501(a) of the Food, Agri-
6 culture, Conservation, and Trade Act
7 of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)) and so-
8 cially disadvantaged forest owners;
9 and

10 “(IV) limited-resource farmers,
11 ranchers, and forest owners; or

12 “(ii) farmers, ranchers, and forest
13 owners operating in high-poverty areas.

14 “(3) RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVIDERS OF AS-
15 SISTANCE TO FARMER-TO-FARMER NETWORKS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible entity
17 provides assistance to establish a farmer-to-
18 farmer network using assistance provided
19 through a cooperative agreement under para-
20 graph (2), the eligible entity shall be responsible
21 for not less than 2 of the following actions:

22 “(i) Facilitating and increasing farm-
23 er access to farmer-to-farmer networks.

24 “(ii) Facilitating mentor and mentee
25 matchmaking among farmers.

1 “(iii) Coordinating training and re-
2 sources to build the skills of farmer-to-
3 farmer network leaders and participants
4 for effective education, grassroots-based
5 learning, and cross-training with respect to
6 the facilitation of, information about, and
7 other skills with respect to building effec-
8 tive farmer-to-farmer networks.

9 “(iv) Maintaining and promulgating a
10 list of relevant entities, associations, and
11 individuals that are supporting, or have an
12 interest in supporting, farmer-to-farmer
13 networks.

14 “(v) Administering subawards to in-
15 crease farmer access to farmer-to-farmer
16 assistance in accordance with paragraph
17 (4).

18 “(vi) Other actions determined appro-
19 priate by the Secretary.

20 “(B) LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE.—If an eligi-
21 ble entity provides assistance described in sub-
22 paragraph (A) to a non-English speaking farm-
23 er, rancher, or forest owner, the eligible entity
24 shall, to the greatest extent practicable, provide

1 that assistance in the native language of the
2 farmer, rancher, or forest owner.

3 “(4) SUBAWARDS.—

4 “(A) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible entity
5 awards a subaward pursuant to paragraph
6 (3)(A)(v) to an eligible subawardee described in
7 subparagraph (B), the eligible subawardee shall
8 use that award—

9 “(i) to plan and conduct events, and
10 identify and develop innovative activities,
11 to support building capacity for farmer-to-
12 farmer networks, connecting farmers with
13 mentors or group learning opportunities,
14 and supporting goal setting to increase
15 long-term adoption of consistent, science-
16 based, site-specific conservation objectives
17 on land active in agricultural, forestry, or
18 related uses; and

19 “(ii) to compensate participants in the
20 events and activities described in clause (i)
21 at market rates.

22 “(B) ELIGIBLE SUBAWARDEES.—An entity
23 eligible for a subaward under paragraph
24 (3)(A)(v) is—

1 “(i) a nonprofit entity described in
2 section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
3 Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation
4 under section 501(a) of that Code;

5 “(ii) a farmer-to-farmer network;

6 “(iii) an Indian Tribe or a Tribal or-
7 ganization (as those terms are defined in
8 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination
9 and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C.
10 5304));

11 “(iv) a unit of local government (in-
12 cluding a conservation district and a con-
13 servation district association);

14 “(v) an institution of higher edu-
15 cation;

16 “(vi) an individual; and

17 “(vii) any other entity designated by
18 the Secretary.

19 “(C) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary, in
20 conjunction with the Chief of the Natural Re-
21 sources Conservation Service, shall establish
22 any necessary additional requirements for sub-
23 awards under paragraph (3)(A)(v).”.

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