

- b. Meat, poultry, and fish
- c. Dairy products
- d. Breads and cereals
- e. Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- f. Seeds and plants, which produce food for a household (*7 United States Code, Chapter 51, Section 2011*).

PROPOSED LAW:

This bill:

- 1) Requires CDFA, with support from CDSS and upon funds being appropriated, to establish the Local, Equitable Access to Food (LEAF) program, a non-competitive grant program to expand the use of EBT acceptance systems at certified farmers' markets or farmers' markets operated by tribal governments on Indian reservations. These grants can be used two ways:
 - a. Expand the use of EBT acceptance systems. The grants may be used for, but not be limited to:
 - i. Scaling and improving EBT processes at existing certified farmers' markets.
 - ii. Establishing new certified farmers' markets that accept payment via EBT, primarily in underserved communities, including but not limited to, those in food deserts or with high CalFresh participation.
 - iii. Operational services including, but not limited to, the hiring of individuals to operate the EBT acceptance systems and programs that expand the purchasing power of customers using CalFresh benefits at farmers' markets.
 - iv. Technical assistance, which may include, but not be limited to, employing a third party nonprofit organization to provide any back-end assistance required to help make a certified farmers' market a successful and effective EBT retailer.
 - v. Educational and outreach activities promoting the ability to use EBT cards at certified farmers' markets.
 - b. Contract with nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance for the implementation of high-quality EBT acceptance systems. The grants may be used by nonprofit organizations to:
 - i. Assist certified farmers' markets to become authorized retailers under the CalFresh program, to request free point-of-sale terminals for certified farmers' markets, and to advise certified farmers' markets on best practices.

- ii. Create materials that explain the EBT transaction process and translate those materials into every language spoken by at least 2% of the state's residents.
- 2) Requires a certified farmers' market that receives a grant to annually submit a report to CDFA documenting the use of grant funds and demonstrating that grant funds were used to expand the use of EBT acceptance systems at the farmers' market.
- 3) Requires CDFA to evaluate the program nine months after issuing sufficient grants and requires the department to submit a report to all appropriate legislative committees. The report shall include, at a minimum:
 - a. Number of grants issued
 - b. Average amount of grant funds awarded
 - c. Geographical information for grantees
 - d. Number of grantees located in a food desert, as defined in Section 49015 of the Food and Agricultural Code
 - e. Data for the 12 months prior to the grant's implementation, if available, and annually thereafter for the following metrics:
 - i. Total dollars spent by CalFresh participants per market
 - ii. Average total dollars spent at markets in food deserts and in areas with high CalFresh participation
 - iii. Estimate of the change in EBT use relative to the marketing and outreach efforts of grantees
- 4) States CDFA shall not use more than 5% of the appropriation for administrative costs associated with the LEAF program.
- 5) Requires applications for these grants to be submitted as part of a farmers' market operator's initial application or annual renewal of a certificate to operate a certified farmers' market.
- 6) Requires each county agricultural commissioner that receives a grant application to forward the application to the Department of Food and Agriculture.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:

According to the author:

“Food insecurity continues to produce negative health outcomes for low-income families and lead to lower life-expectations. SB 907 will increase access to healthy and fresh foods at CA certified farmers' markets for 4.8 million CalFresh/EBT recipients. Farmers markets provide a great source of nutritious affordable foods in communities that historically have suffered from a lack of investments in food markets. The State of California has realized the potential for markets

to improve the lives of families receiving CalFresh and made efforts to increase access.” “Unfortunately, there are still large barriers to accessing CalFresh/EBT at all CA Certified farmers’ markets because of the lack of funding for outreach, administrative hurdles, and a lack of technical assistance needed to operate these kinds of transactions. Most markets in the State currently rely on a patchwork of grant funding and other non-profits to provide these services. This model is not sustainable and ultimately, affects CalFresh recipients and their ability to purchase healthy foods. SB 907 is a sensible measure that will reduce these barriers for both farmers and CalFresh recipients, and produce healthy outcomes needed to improve the social determinants of health for an entire family and community.”

COMMENTS:

Suggested Amendment: According to CDFA’s website, initial applications and annual renewals for a certificate to operate a certified farmers’ market go to the respective county’s agricultural commissioner but grant applications for funds to operate a farmers’ market go directly to CDFA. By removing this mandate from the bill and instead utilizing the existing grant protocol for the LEAF program, the burden is removed from the agricultural commissioners.

The author’s office has agreed to remove this mandate from the bill and will be taking it as an author’s amendment. The amendment will be to strike page 3, lines 21-26 in its entirety.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

AB 537 (Chapter 435, Statutes of 2010): Required farmers’ markets, flea markets, and certified farmers’ markets to provide reasonable accommodations for food and nutrition service-authorized produce sellers who wish to operate an EBT acceptance system on behalf of its members.

SUPPORT:

Alchemist Community Development Corporation (Co-Sponsor)
NextGen California (Co-Sponsor)
Agricultural Institute of Marin
Agriculture and Land-based Training Association
American Heart Association
Angels Camp Business Association's Farmers' Market
Biology Center
Blue Zones Project Monterey County
Blue Zones Project Tuolumne County

Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley
California Association of Food Banks
California Food and Farming Network
California Fresh Farmers Market Association
Center for Land-Based Learning
Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me Wuk Indians of California
City of Sacramento
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations
Coastside Farmers' Markets
Community Alliance With Family Farmers
County of Sacramento
Ecology Center
Everyone's Harvest
Foodwise
Fresh Approach
Heart of the City Farmers' Market
Hunger Action Los Angeles, Inc.
Jefferson Economic Development Institute
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Marin Food Policy Council
Merced Certified Farmers' Market
Model Neighborhood Program
Modesto Certified Farmers Market
Monterey County Food Policy Council
Napa Farmers Market
Natural Resources Defense Council
NeighborWorks Sacramento Region
North Coast Growers Association
Office of Kat Taylor
Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association
Palm Springs Cultural Center
Peaceful Valley Farmers' Market
Roots of Change
Sacramento Food Policy Council
San Diego Farmers' Markets, LLC
San Diego Food System Alliance
Santa Cruz Community Farmers' Market
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
SPUR
Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles
The Food Initiative of Greater Stanislaus

Unseen Heroes
Urban Village Farmers' Market Association
Valley Vision

OPPOSITION:

None received

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