

# Support Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund

## HB 6027, Rep. Tryon (R, 66<sup>th</sup> District)

The proposal calls for a \$1M state investment to create a Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund. The Fund will support “Double Value Coupon Programs,” creating affordable access to healthy food at farmers markets and other direct producer-to-consumer venues for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. This has the potential to reach 2 million SNAP users.

### ***Why is the Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund (HB 6027) Needed?***

- Limited access to affordable, healthy food contributes to obesity and diabetes. These conditions are especially prevalent among low-income Illinoisans and thus costly to the State of Illinois.
- Rates of diabetes among Illinoisans with incomes below \$15,000 are three times higher than those who have an income higher than \$50,000.
- The estimated medical cost of diabetes in Illinois in 2014 was \$8.98 billion, which includes \$6.6 billion in direct medical costs and \$2.4 billion in indirect costs, such as disability, work loss and premature death.<sup>i</sup>
- Expansion of Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act will create a 97.5% overlap between SNAP and Medicaid eligibility in Illinois. A healthier SNAP population will reduce Medicaid costs.
- Approximately 1 in 5 children receives SNAP benefits<sup>ii</sup> and 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese.<sup>iii</sup>

### ***Farmers Markets Offer Healthy Food Environments and Stimulate Local Economies***

#### *Healthy Food Environments:*

- Illinois has 375 farmers markets, with more established each year; 159 of which have the capacity to accept SNAP.
- Since 2009, over 68 farmers markets and direct-to-consumer venues in Illinois have offered Double Value Coupon Programs that double the purchasing power of SNAP beneficiaries, making the healthier, locally produced foods sold at Illinois farmers markets more affordable.
- Each year, 50-58% of SNAP and Double Value Coupon benefits spent at farmers markets are spent on fresh fruits and vegetables, with another 40-45% spent on staples such as meats, cheese, eggs, bread and preserved produce.<sup>iv</sup>

#### *Stimulating Local Economies:*

- A dollar spent at a farmers market can generate \$1.80 for the community’s economy.<sup>v</sup>
- Combined SNAP, WIC and Double Value Coupon sales account for 10-25% of farmer and producer revenues at markets where the Double Value Coupon Program operates.
- Markets offering Double Value Coupon Programs have generated over \$600,000 in SNAP sales and \$372,000 in Double Value Coupon sales since 2009.

### ***Organizations that support a Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund (HB 6027):***

*(List in formation)*

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|---|--|
| ❖ American Diabetes Association   | ❖ Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity           |
| ❖ American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association   | ❖ Illinois Public Health Institute               |
| ❖ Cook County Health & Hospitals System   | ❖ Illinois Stewardship Alliance                  |
| ❖ Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago | ❖ Illinois Farmers Market Association            |
| ❖ Experimental Station  | ❖ Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law |

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<sup>i</sup> Illinois Diabetes State Plan, Illinois Department of Public Health, November 2014.

<sup>ii</sup> United States Census Bureau (2015). One in five children receive food stamps, Census Bureau reports. Retrieved March 17, 2015 from <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-16.html>.

<sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). Illinois’s response to obesity. Retrieved July 18, 2013 from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/fundedstates/pdf/illinois-state-profile.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Experimental Station, Reported data, 2015.

<sup>v</sup> Sonntag, V. “Why Local Linkages Matter: Findings from the Local Food Economy Study.” Seattle, Washington, Sustainable Seattle. April 2008.