

Illinois Fresh Food Financing Initiative (SB1221) Proposed Program Guidelines

A. Statement of Purpose

The Illinois Fresh Food Financing Initiative (IFFFI) (SB1221) is a \$10 million capitalization program designed to increase access to fresh food in underserved communities across Illinois. Improving access to healthy foods is an important response to reducing chronic diseases. Responsible use of IFFFI taxpayer dollars would simultaneously mitigate the underlying social and economic turbulence that caused a community to now have diminished access to fresh food. Current Illinois statute directs these taxpayer dollars toward building conventional groceries. Proposed changes in statute would broaden the language to include non-traditional purveyors of fresh food.

B. Mission

IFFFI funded projects should reflect a broad range of nutrition, public health, food security, economic and community development, and community resiliency objectives.

C. Implementation

Public dollars from federal, state and local authorities should be leveraged with additional funding from private financial institutions, foundations, private donations, grants, loans, and bequests.

D. Eligible Activities

This public initiative should include replicable non-traditional projects that are able to make fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, fish, and dairy products easily accessible in every Illinois community. Examples should include but not be limited to: small format grocery stores, farmers markets, farm stands, mobile processing and delivery units, co-ops, buying clubs, Community Supported Agriculture shares, corner stores, and food kiosks. Eligible projects should include land and infrastructure required for neighborhood farm production, processing, and food distribution networks. Distance as the crow flies to one grocery does not indicate access to fresh food. Transportation options, food variety, and future community development potential must be key components of any tactic used to mitigate people's struggle to access fresh food long term.

E. Project Qualifications

Eligible applicants must demonstrate experience and capacity to successfully implement and carry out fresh food projects, while eligible projects must benefit underserved communities in ways that exceed simply providing a few centralized groceries that provide low quality foods and minimum-wage jobs.

F. Administration

The Fresh Food Fund should be administered from a "center" comprised of people, organizations, and government officials with statewide expertise whose overarching goal is to build resilient communities. Food Fund projects should be considered, selected, and overseen by state authorities and citizen experts possessing an economic development, public health, and community weaving perspective who can work in collaboration with local citizens, organizations, and governments desiring to construct, expand, or replicate community-based fresh food projects.