

By: Representative Stamps

To: Agriculture; Public
Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 793

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD INCENTIVE PROGRAM; TO
2 PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ESTABLISHED AND ADMINISTERED BY
3 THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR THE PURPOSE OF
4 INCREASING THE PURCHASING POWER OF MISSISSIPPI RESIDENTS WITH
5 LIMITED ACCESS TO FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES; TO CREATE THE
6 "HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD INCENTIVES FUND," AS A SPECIAL FUND IN THE
7 STATE TREASURY, FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THE HEALTHY LOCAL
8 FOOD INCENTIVES PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE AN
9 ANNUAL GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500,000.00 FROM THE FUND TO A
10 QUALIFIED MISSISSIPPI NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY DESIGNATED
11 BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
12 AND COMMERCE SUBJECT TO LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATION; TO PROVIDE THAT
13 SUCH GRANT FUNDS SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPATING MISSISSIPPI
14 FARMERS MARKETS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING MATCHING DOLLAR
15 INCENTIVES FOR THE DOLLAR VALUE OF SNAP BENEFITS SPENT ON FINI
16 ELIGIBLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT PARTICIPATING MISSISSIPPI
17 FARMERS MARKETS AND DIRECT PRODUCER-TO-CONSUMER VENUES; TO SPECIFY
18 CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES
19 SELECTED AS RECIPIENT OF GRANT FUNDS; TO REQUIRE 100% OF THE
20 MONEYS DEPOSITED INTO THE FUND TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPATING
21 MISSISSIPPI FARMERS MARKETS FOR HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD INCENTIVES; TO
22 REQUIRE THE DESIGNATED QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY
23 SHALL SUBMIT A PROGRESS REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
24 WITHIN 90 DAYS AFTER THE END OF A GRANT CYCLE; TO REQUIRE THE
25 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ADOPT RULES TO IMPLEMENT THE
26 PROGRAM NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 31, 2021; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

28 **SECTION 1.** **Legislative findings.** Diet and other lifestyle
29 choices contribute to more than half of all deaths in Mississippi.
30 Health risk factors include smoking, obesity, stress, nutrition,



31 high blood pressure and alcohol and drug use. Mississippi
32 residents should be encouraged to adopt diets and lifestyles that
33 lead to wellness. The state can help provide encouragement by
34 funding wellness programs that enhance the health of Mississippi
35 residents. Healthy local food incentives encourage wellness among
36 some of the most vulnerable residents of Mississippi, particularly
37 those whose incomes are below the poverty line and who often have
38 limited access to fresh, healthy and affordable foods, by doubling
39 the purchasing power of EBT cardholders at farmers markets across
40 the state. The benefits of such a program include:

- 41 (a) An increase in population health;
- 42 (b) Medicaid health care cost savings;
- 43 (c) Decreased incidence of preventable diseases;
- 44 (d) Increased revenue for Mississippi's small farmers;
- 45 and
- 46 (e) Economic stimulus for the region.

47 **SECTION 2.** As used in this act, the following terms shall
48 have the meanings ascribed in this section, unless context clearly
49 requires otherwise:

50 (a) "Department" means the Mississippi Department of
51 Human Services.

52 (b) "EBT card" means an electronic benefits transfer
53 card issued by the Mississippi Department of Human Services for
54 the purpose of enabling a user of the card to obtain SNAP benefits
55 or cash.



(c) "FINI eligible fruits and vegetables" means any variety of fresh, canned, dried, or frozen whole or cut fruits and vegetables without added sugars, fats, or oils and salt, as defined by the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.

(d) "Fund" means the "Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund."

(e) "SNAP" means the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which enables low-income families the ability to purchase nutritious food by providing monthly food assistance benefits.

SECTION 3. (1) The Mississippi Department of Human Services shall establish a Healthy Local Food Incentives Program to double the purchasing power of Mississippi residents with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

(2) There is created as a special fund in the State Treasury, to be known as the "Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund," for the purpose of implementing the Healthy Local Food Incentives Program, and from which grants authorized by this act shall be disbursed by the department. All monies received under the authority of this section shall be deposited into the "Healthy Local Food Incentives Fund."

(3) Subject to legislative appropriation, the department shall make an annual grant of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) from the fund to a qualified Mississippi nonprofit



organization or agency designated by the department and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, which shall be distributed to participating Mississippi farmers markets for the purpose of providing matching dollar incentives, up to an amount specified by both departments for the dollar value of SNAP benefits spent on FINI eligible fruits and vegetables at participating Mississippi farmers markets and direct producer-to-consumer venues.

(4) The designated qualified nonprofit organization or agency shall have a demonstrated record of:

(a) Designing and implementing successful healthy food incentive programs that connect SNAP recipients with local producers;

(b) Implementing funds distribution and reporting processes;

(c) Providing training and technical assistance to farmers markets;

(d) Conducting community outreach and data collection; and

(e) Providing full accounting and administration of funds distributed to farmers markets.

(5) (a) One hundred percent (100%) of the monies deposited into the fund shall be distributed to participating Mississippi farmers markets for healthy local food incentives.



(b) Within ninety (90) days after the end of a grant cycle, the designated qualified nonprofit organization or agency shall submit a progress report to the Department of Human Services. The progress report shall include the following information:

(i) The names and locations of Mississippi farmers markets and direct producer-to-consumer venues that received funds distributed under the program;

(ii) The dollar amount of funds awarded to each participating Mississippi farmers market and direct producer-to-consumer venue;

(iii) The dollar amount of SNAP benefits, and funds provided under the program, that were spent at Mississippi farmers markets participating in the program, as well as the dollar amount of any unspent funds available under the program;

(iv) The number of SNAP transactions carried out annually at participating Mississippi farmers markets;

(v) The impact of the program on increasing the quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed by SNAP families, as determined by customer surveys.

(6) No later than December 31, 2021, the Department of Human Services shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.

