

**LEAD SPONSOR**

Representative Sonya M. Harper | 6th District
Chairperson of the Agriculture & Conservation Committee

BACKGROUND

The **Good Food Purchasing Policy** provides a metric-based, flexible framework that creates greater transparency and accountability in public food procurement and commits large public institutions to direct their food spend toward five core values, local & community-based economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and community health & nutrition, which are anchored in a framework of equity, accountability, and transparency. As of 2024, 63 institutions in 25 cities and counties were enrolled in the GFPP, representing over \$1.1 billion in annual food spend.

In 2017 and 2018 respectively, the City of Chicago (Chicago City Council, Chicago Park District, and Chicago Public Schools) and Cook County Government adopted the Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP). In 2018, the City of Chicago and Cook County collectively purchased over \$118 million in food through public meal programs, and project researchers estimate that over \$300 million is purchased when vending, concessions, and special public events are included in the analysis. In 2021, Public Act 12-1101 got rid of the lowest bidder requirement to allow for values-based procurement in schools and summer feeding programs at the state level. Through the Illinois Food Justice Alliance, momentum is gathering to advocate for the adoption of GFPP on the state level.

WHY WE NEED THIS BILL

The Good Food Purchasing Program leverages the power of institutional purchasing to transform food systems and address systemic inequities. With nearly 75% of Illinois covered in farmland, and yet less than 3% of food consumed in Illinois coming from local farms, the state can leverage their purchasing dollars to invest in local producers and help transition the state to a more diverse and resilient agriculture. The proactive use of public food procurement dollars is an essential step in ensuring higher wages for workers in the food service industry, the state's largest employer, and more nutritious, higher quality food for the state's most food insecure. Additionally, locally-driven food production and supply chains increase investments in local economies and improve the health of community members by giving them access to fresh produce as opposed to processed foods. This framework supports opportunities for local farmers and food businesses, with an emphasis on supporting operations that are owned by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Our food system can be one where Illinois residents are empowered, healthy, and safe if we can shift our supply chains toward local economies and this food system of the future is achievable through the implementation of GFPP.

EQUITY

Our food system should be one where all Illinois residents, regardless of race, class, gender, and/or social identity, have the right to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through community-driven, ecologically regenerative, and economically viable processes. However, low-income communities of color face extreme environmental injustices, often preventing safe farming practices and increasing the incidence of disease among community members. Food apartheid often occurs in low-income communities and communities of color. Alongside these injustices, communities of color face legislation and economic systems rooted in racism and exclusion. Thus, empowering these communities to be self-autonomous begins with a fair and equitable food system.

The food system should not be monopolized by an agricultural system that creates environmental devastation, inequitable outcomes for communities, and poor working conditions for workers. Small and local farms allow for profits to be invested in local economies and sustainable practices to be more easily adopted. Local farms coupled with collaborative, democratic policy-making ensures the safety and dignity of frontline workers, family farmers, and communities of color.

THE BILL

The Good Food Purchasing Act aims to establish a comprehensive framework for implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) in Illinois.

Key components of the bill include:

- Ensuring that our state agencies and facilities prioritize local economies, environmental sustainability, workforce rights, animal welfare, and nutrition in their food purchasing practices via defining these five core values within a framework of equity, accountability, and transparency.
- Mandating baseline assessments, multi-year plans, and transparent reporting to hold institutions accountable for meeting GFPP standards.
- Allowing for the awarding of contracts using multi-criteria RFPs to bidders who align with GFPP criteria, promoting fair competition and ethical procurement practices.
- Establishing oversight mechanisms through the Good Food Purchasing Task Force.
- Providing ongoing financial support via the new Good Food Purchasing Fund which can be funded by state, federal, and private funds to create a Good Food Purchasing office within the Department of Agriculture, hire staff, and facilitate program implementation.

WHO WE ARE: ILLINOIS FOOD JUSTICE ALLIANCE (IFJA) is an intergenerational, multicultural, multi-sectoral coalition that utilizes and leverages our collective voice to bring forward a just food system in Illinois.



To cosponsor the Good Food Purchasing Law (HB5052) or for questions, please contact Kiara Jackson, Director of the Illinois Food Justice Alliance and Good Food Purchasing Policy Campaign, at kiara@ilstewards.org