

The Virginia Food Access Coalition (VFAC) is a collaborative of public and private organizations advocating for improved access to nutritious, local foods for all Virginians.

Budget Amendments

346 #2h (Bennet-Parker) & #2s (Hashmi): Supplemental SNAP benefits for seniors

Effective July 1, 2023, \$20,400,000 from the general fund the second year shall be provided for a state-funded Supplemental Food and Nutrition Program (SNAP) benefit for persons age 60 and older in the amount of \$25 per month per person using eligibility criteria set forth for federal SNAP benefits.

341 #1h (McQuinn): Produce RX Program

This amendment provides \$855,000 the first year and \$844,100 the second year from the general fund to implement the Produce Rx incentive program. Produce prescriptions are used to improve health outcomes, reduce food insecurity, and decrease long-term health care costs. The produce prescriptions are redeemed for produce at food retailers, community stores, and/or farmers markets.

Bills

HB 2021 (Roem): Providing Free and Reduced-Price Meal applications at school events

Requires each school board to ensure that at any schoolwide event, to which the parents of enrolled public elementary or secondary school students are invited (e.g. back to school nights), parents have prominent access, in paper or electronic form, or both, to information about application and eligibility for free or reduced price meals for students, and a fillable free or reduced price meals application that may be completed and submitted on site.

HB 2025 (Roem): SNAP promotion at schools

Requires the Department of Social Services to develop, annually update, and provide to each school board in advance of the start of each school year an information sheet on the SNAP benefits program that sets forth the application process and such other information as the Department deems necessary or appropriate in order to properly inform the parents of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools of such program and encourage application by those who are eligible.

HB 1874 (Helmer): Prohibit state agencies from requiring in-person appointments for SNAP and WIC

Prohibits the Board of Social Services from requiring persons applying to participate or renewing their participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to appear in person. The bill also codifies the Department of Health's authority to implement a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC program), which is currently authorized by regulation, and prohibits the Department of Health from requiring persons applying to participate or renewing their participation in the WIC program to appear in person.

Bills

HB 2445 (Bennet-Parker): Wholesome food donation tax credit extended

Renews the wholesome food donation tax credit for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2023, but before, January 1, 2028. The bill allows any person engaged in the business of farming that donates wholesome food, defined in the bill, produced by the person in the Commonwealth to a nonprofit food bank to claim a tax credit for the taxable year of the donation in the amount of 50 percent of the fair market value of such donation, not to exceed \$10,000 for all such donations made by the person during such year.

HB 2430 (McQuinn): Establish Produce Rx Program

Directs the Department of Social Services to establish a Produce Rx Program as a three-year pilot program to incentivize consumption of qualifying fruits and vegetables by eligible individuals for whom increased consumption of fruits and vegetables is recommended by a qualified care provider, as such terms are defined in the bill, and to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1 of each year on the operation of the Program.

HB 2031 (Roem): Farm to School Program Task Force

Requires the Department of Education to establish and appoint such members as it deems necessary or appropriate to the Farm to School Program Task Force for the purpose of increasing student access throughout the Commonwealth to high-quality farm to school programs. The bill requires the Task Force to collaborate with local school boards, community-based organizations, farmers, relevant state and local agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

Members of the Virginia Food Access Coalition:

- 4P Foods
- ALIVE!
- American Heart Association
- Appalachian Sustainable Development - ASD
- Arlington County Department of Human Services
- Capital Area Food Bank
- City of Alexandria - Food Security Coordinator
- Eastern Food Hub Collaborative
- Federation of Virginia Food Banks
- Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore
- Loaves & Fishes
- Local Food Hub
- Lulus Local Food
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society
- No Kid Hungry VA
- Northern Virginia Food Rescue
- River Street Education
- Shalom Farms
- Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Virginia Community Capital
- Virginia Fresh Match
- Virginia Health Catalyst
- Virginia Poverty Law Center/VA Hunger Solutions
- Voices for Virginia's Children