



2021 Budget Amendment Request: Virginia Food Access Investment Fund

In 2020, Del. Delores McQuinn (HB1509) & Sen. Jennifer McClellan (SB1073) championed the Virginia Food Access Investment Program and Fund (VFAIPF). The initial ask was \$6 million for the biennium. The Fund was appropriated \$1.25M, including \$250,000 for a full-time Food Access Coordinator.

THE NEED:

- With 1 out of 9 Virginians living in poverty, it is critical to provide consistent access to nutritious fruits and vegetables.
- 69.4% of Virginia households said it was 'often' or 'sometimes' true that "I/we worried about whether my food would run out before I/we got money to buy more." (Virginia Tech survey)
- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased Virginia's food insecurity rate from 9.9% to 15.1%. (Feeding America)
- Due to COVID-19, the funding and infrastructure needs for Virginia's food supply chain has become prevalent – from under resourced farmers and food distributors to high demands on Virginia food banks.

FUND PURPOSE:

VFAIPF is important because it will increase access to healthy fresh foods in underserved communities, support local agriculture, and support economic growth and investment by:

- investing in healthy food projects and businesses by providing funding to support the establishment, construction, rehabilitation, equipment upgrades and expansion of grocery stores, small food retailers, and other innovative food retail projects in underserved communities across Virginia and
- increasing access to nutritious fruits and vegetables by increasing the number of retailers that accept the SNAP \$1 to \$1 match incentive.

ASK

Increase of \$4.75M to expand the number of retailers and entrepreneurs who will provide access to nutritious fruits and vegetables and SNAP incentives in underserved communities and bridge the gaps in our food supply system, especially in food deserts. Additional monies are critical to leveraging the remaining federally funded incentive dollars before they expire.