



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

CHRISTINA HENDERSON
Councilmember, At-Large
Chairperson, Committee on Health

Committee Member
Hospital and Health Equity
Judiciary and Public Safety
Transportation and the Environment

Statement of Introduction
Farmers Market Support Amendment Act of 2025
February 3, 2025

Today, I am pleased to introduce the Farmers Market Support Amendment Act of 2025, along with Councilmembers Charles Allen, Matthew Frumin, Brianne K. Nadeau, Zachary Parker, and Robert C. White, Jr. This legislation would establish a Farmers Market Support Program within the Department of Health to provide technical assistance, streamline permitting processes, and coordinate across agencies to support farmers markets. The legislation also creates a grant program to incentivize farmers markets to open and expand operations in low food access areas by funding operational costs, infrastructure, and year-round operations. The legislation also standardizes licensing requirements for farmers markets and offers discounted permitting fees for markets operating in low food access areas.

Farmers markets are essential for improving access to healthy, affordable food, supporting small-scale farmers and District-owned small businesses, and fostering community connections. There are currently 48 independently operated DC farmers markets operating across all 8 Wards, and almost all DC farmers markets host shoppers that use federal and local food assistance programs. The District also offers a wide-range of benefits for low-income residents to shop at farmers markets, including Produce Plus and Farmers Market Nutrition Programs for women, children, and seniors. Farmers markets are also a proven strategy to incubate District-owned small businesses, to boost the sales of nearby brick-and-mortar businesses, and to activate public spaces.

Many neighborhoods in the District do not have access to healthy food, with approximately 330,000 residents living in areas classified as low food access, including 111,000 earning less than 185% of the federal poverty line. As the District works to attract full service grocery stores to low food access areas, farmers markets can be an important part of the solution. To support farmers markets across the District, the proposed Farmers Market Support Program at DC Health will streamline the permitting process, provide technical assistance to markets, and enhance access to nutrition benefits like SNAP, WIC, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers. The Program could also provide ride-share services, home delivery, and other logistical support to reduce participation barriers.

This legislation directly supports farmers markets in low food access neighborhoods by creating a grant program to help cover operational costs, infrastructure, and extended seasonal operations, while also requiring discounted permitting fees to markets in low food access areas. These measures aim to encourage the establishment and sustainability of farmers markets in low food



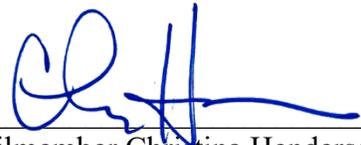
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access communities, significantly increasing access to fresh, locally grown food and promoting long-term food security.

I look forward to working with my Council colleagues to make this critical investment in food equity, economic opportunity, and public health, ensuring that all District residents—regardless of their ZIP code—can enjoy the benefits of fresh, healthy, and locally sourced food.

1 

2 Councilmember Charles Allen



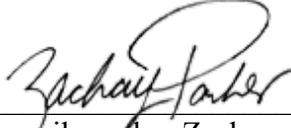
Councilmember Christina Henderson

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5 Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau



Councilmember Matthew Frumin

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9 Councilmember Zachary Parker



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

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13 A BILL

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17 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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21 To amend the Department of Health Functions Clarification Act of 2001 to establish a farmers
22 market program within the Department of Health to provide technical assistance to
23 farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile markets, to recommend improvements to
24 permitting processes and regulations, to oversee coordination between agencies
25 regulating farmers markets, to administer a farmers market grant program, and to
26 establish a farmers market grant program; and to amend the Vending Regulation Act of
27 2009 to require the Mayor to standardize licensing and permitting requirements for
28 farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile markets.

29
30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
31 act may be cited as the “Farmers Market Support Amendment Act of 2025”.

32 Sec. 2. The Department of Health Functions Clarification Act of 2001, effective October
33 3, 2001 (D.C. Law 14-28; D.C. Official Code § 7-731 *et seq.*), is amended by adding a new
34 subtitle C-ii to read as follows:

35 “Subtitle C-ii. Farmers Markets.

36 “Sec 4938. Definitions.

37 “For the purposes of this subtitle, the term:

38 “(1) “Farmer” means a person or entity that raises or produces farm products on land that
39 the person or entity farms and owns, rents, or leases in the District of Columbia, Virginia, West
40 Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, North Carolina, or New Jersey, for direct sale to
41 consumers.

42 “(2) “Farm products” means fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, herbs, nuts, shell eggs, honey
43 or other bee products, flowers, nursery stock, livestock food products, including meat, milk,
44 cheese, and other dairy products, and fish.

45 “(3) “Farmers market” means a market at a fixed location with two or more vendors,
46 open to the public, operated by a government agency, a nonprofit, a business, or one or more
47 farmers or producers, that operates at least 6 times per calendar year, and includes at least one
48 farmer, and where at least 50 percent of vendors are providing direct-to-consumer sales of locally
49 grown farm products or locally processed food products.

50 “(4) “Farm stand” means a fixed location with one vendor, open to the public, operated
51 by a government agency, a nonprofit, a business, or one or more farmers or producers, that
52 operates at least 6 times per calendar year, and where at least 50% of sales consist of direct-to-
53 consumer sales of locally grown farm products.

54 “(5) “Mobile market” means a mobile farm stand that travels to two or more fixed
55 locations and operates, in total, at least 6 times per calendar year.

56 “(6) “Locally grown” has the same meaning as in section 101(3) of the Healthy Schools
57 Act of 2010, effective July 27, 2010 (D.C. Law 18-209; D.C. Official Code § 38-821.01(3)).

58 “(7) “Locally processed food products” means foods that have been processed, including
59 canning, cooking, dehydrating, milling, or the addition of other ingredients, in the same states
60 included in the definition of “locally grown” in subsection 6 of this section. Processed foods

61 include cooked ready-to-eat foods, bread, baked goods, pickles, jams, and farm products that
62 have been processed into value-added farm products.

63 “(8) “Low food access area” means a census tract where:

64 “(A) More than 20% of households earn 185% or less of the federal poverty line;

65 and

66 “(B) At least 500 people or 33%, whichever is greater, of the population live more
67 than 0.5 miles or a 10-minute walk from a grocery store.

68 “(9) “Producer” means a person or entity that produces locally processed food products.

69 “(10) “Value-added farm product” means any product processed by a producer from a
70 farm product.

71 “Sec. 4939. Farmers Market Support Program.

72 “(a) There is established in the Department of Health a Farmers Market Support Program
73 (“program”), which shall:

74 “(1) Provide information and technical assistance relating to permitting, licensure,
75 accepting federal and local benefits, and any other relevant support to any farmers market, farm
76 stand, or mobile market operating or seeking to operate in the District;

77 “(2) Review and provide recommendations to improve existing District licensing,
78 permitting, and processes for establishing and operating a farmers market, farm stand, or mobile
79 market;

80 “(3) Convene and coordinate with District agencies involved in permitting and
81 supporting farmers markets, including the Office of Planning, the Department of Transportation,
82 the Department of Small and Local Business Development, and the Department of Licensing and
83 Consumer Protection;

84 “(4) Establish and annually update a publicly available online map with farmers
85 market, farm stand, and mobile market locations, including locations and hours of operation;

86
87 “(5) Conduct marketing and promotion activities to encourage customers to use
88 farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile markets with a focus on those located in low
89 food access areas;

90 “(6) Administer the farmers market support grant program established under
91 subsection (c) of this section; and

92 “(7) Procure equipment and services to increase access to fresh produce and
93 improve farmers market, farm stand, and mobile market infrastructure.

94 “(b) The program may:

95 “(1) Evaluate the health and economic impacts of farmers markets, farm stands,
96 and mobile markets on customers that shop at the market and nearby businesses;

97 “(2) Apply for any federal, state, local, or private grant programs or funding
98 opportunities that would support farmers markets, farm stands, or mobile markets in the District
99 or activities of the program;

100 “(3) Assist with accepting federal and local nutrition benefits;

101 “(4) Provide vendors with assistance in obtaining equipment, technology,
102 software, or other e-commerce tools; and

103 “(5) Offer direct support to residents, including ride-share benefits, home delivery
104 services, and other programs that improve access to markets.

105 “(c) The program shall establish and administer a grant program to provide at least
106 \$250,000 in grant funding to farmers markets located in low food access areas. Eligible uses of
107 the grant funding shall include:

108 “(1) Purchasing materials to establish or expand a farmers market, farm stand, or
109 mobile market, including tables, tents, signage, storage, and marketing materials;

110 “(2) Financial assistance to an entity located in a low food access area to host a
111 farmers market, farm stand, or mobile market on its property;

112 “(3) Operational and staffing costs;

113 “(4) Extending operations for an existing farmers market, farm stand, or mobile
114 market during cold weather months outside of its normal operating season;

115 “(5) Public safety and post-market cleanup related services; and

116 “(6) Customer incentives, including matching programs for federal and local
117 benefits and coupons.

118 “(d)(1) The grant funding in subsection (c) shall be available to existing farmers markets,
119 farm stands, and mobile markets, and to entities that show sufficient proof, as established by the
120 Department of Health through rulemaking, that they intend to operate a farmers market, farm
121 stand, or mobile market in the eligible area.

122 “(2) Preference for grant funding shall be given to entities that are providing
123 locally grown fruits and vegetables, or which include District of Columbia-owned businesses as
124 vendors.”.

125 Sec. 3. The Vending Regulation Act of 2009, effective October 22, 2009 (D.C. Law 18-
126 71; D.C. Official Code § 37-131.01 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

127 (a) Section 7 (D.C. Official Code § 37-131.06) is amended as follows:

128 (1) The existing language is designated as subsection (a).

129 (2) A new subsection (b) is added to read as follows:

130 “(b) The Mayor shall post on a public facing website standardized requirements for a
131 license, permit, or authorization to operate a farmers market, farm stand, or mobile market in the
132 District.”.

133 (b) Section 8(a-1) (D.C. Official Code § 37-131.07(a-1)) is amended by adding a new
134 paragraph (2A) to read as follows:

135 “(2A) For a farmers market, farm stand, or mobile market as defined by section
136 4938 of the Department of Health Functions Clarification Act of 2001, as introduced on
137 _____ (Bill 26-___), located, or applying to locate, in a low food access area, as defined
138 by section 4938(8) of the Department of Health Functions Clarification Act of 2001, as
139 introduced on _____ (Bill 26-___), seeking to obtain or renew a license, permit, or
140 authorization under this section, the Mayor shall charge a fee that is discounted by a minimum of
141 50% from the standard cost.”.

142 Sec. 4. Fiscal impact statement.

143 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
144 impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act,
145 approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; DC. . Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

146 Sec. 5. Effective date.

147 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
148 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto) and a 30-day period of congressional
149 review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved
150 December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)).