

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the creation of the Philadelphia Task Force on Food Insecurity to study and develop proposals, strategies, and recommendations to alleviate hunger and increase access to high quality food in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, More than 210,000 Philadelphians, 13.6% of the city's residents, struggle with food insecurity, according to Feeding America's 2023 Map the Meal Gap report, which is based on 2021 data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The United States Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life; and

WHEREAS, Food insecurity, specifically relating to lack of access to nutritious food, is tied to a host of adverse health outcomes including increased risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity; and

WHEREAS, Children are particularly impacted as 25% of Philadelphia youth are considered food insecure which contributes to developmental adversities and reduced educational attainment; and

WHEREAS, This issue disproportionately impacts people of color as 22% of Black households and 23% of Hispanic households struggle to access enough healthy food. The concentrated impact of food insecurity compounds racial disparities that the City has consistently sought to address; and

WHEREAS, Poverty is a key driver of hunger and food insecurity, and existing assistance programs do not meet current needs. While federal income-based assistance programs, such as SNAP and WIC, provide an important safety net for low-income individuals and families, more than 32% of Philadelphians who experience food insecurity are above the income thresholds to qualify for those programs. Moreover, many individuals and families who do qualify for assistance are not currently enrolled in these programs; now, therefore, be it

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

SECTION 1. Creation of the Philadelphia Task Force on Food Insecurity. The Philadelphia Task Force on Food Insecurity (hereafter referred to as "the Task Force") is hereby created as a Council advisory body.

SECTION 2. Composition of the Task Force. The Task Force shall be composed of twenty-five (25) members appointed by the Council President. Members of the Task Force shall come from a variety of areas of expertise within the food industry, including but not limited to: agriculture and food production; grocery, farmers' markets, and other retail outlets; nutrition; food access advocacy; and marketing and business development. The Task Force shall appoint one of its members to serve as the Chair of the Task Force.

SECTION 3. Function of the Task Force. The Task Force shall consider the history of food insecurity and food access in Philadelphia, including prior governmental and non-governmental efforts to alleviate hunger, address food insecurity, and increase access to healthy food; evaluate the current state of food insecurity and food access in Philadelphia; examine other governments' efforts to reduce hunger, address food insecurity and

increase access to healthy food; and develop a strategic plan for alleviating hunger, addressing food insecurity, and increasing access to healthy food in the City of Philadelphia. The Task Force's charge shall include holding public hearings to solicit information and feedback from Philadelphians and other community stakeholders.

SECTION 4. Meetings of the Task Force. The Task Force shall be convened within 45 days of its creation and shall meet at such times as Chair of the Task Force deems necessary and appropriate.

SECTION 5. Report of the Task Force. Within one year of its first meeting, The Task Force shall prepare and distribute to the Mayor, all Members of City Council, and any interested members of the public a report of its findings and its strategic plan to address food insecurity in the City of Philadelphia.