

HB 2728 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Action Date: 03/08/23

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 10-0-0-0

Yeas: 10 - Andersen, Cramer, Elmer, Hartman, Hieb, Nelson, Neron, Nguyen H, Reynolds, Scharf

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/6, 3/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Human Services (DHS) to contract with nonprofit organization that has established relationships with local food producers and outlets to operate a program that will assist recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with purchasing locally grown fruits and vegetables from participating farmers' markets, farm share sites, and retail food outlets. Appropriates \$8 million General Fund to DHS to distribute to nonprofit organization for administration of program. Requires that funds appropriated be used to match amounts that SNAP recipients spend on foods that are eligible for the program. Requires nonprofit organization to review outcomes of program and report to DHS by December 31, 2025. Sunsets January 2, 2026. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Expiring provisions of expanded SNAP benefits during COVID-19 public health emergency
- Economic benefits for local communities and farmers
- Previous legislative investment in program
- Public health benefits of expanded access to fresh produce

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called "food stamps," is a federally funded nutrition assistance program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). The program provides low-income individuals and households with financial assistance to purchase certain food items from participating retailers. According to the Legislative Fiscal Office, 708,162 Oregonians received SNAP benefits in the month of July 2021. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, Congress temporarily expanded SNAP benefit amounts via Emergency Allotments, which expired in February 2023.

Starting in 2009, a neighborhood coalition in Portland began a matching program at local farmers' markets, which doubles the value of SNAP benefit funds when used at participating retailers. Over time, the program grew and became known as "Double Up Food Bucks." The program now operates statewide at more than 75 farmers' markets. The program receives grant funding from the state and federal governments in addition to private donations. In 2019, the Legislative Assembly appropriated \$1.5 million for this program; in 2021, the investment increased to \$4 million.

House Bill 2728 directs DHS to contract with a nonprofit organization that will operate a program that matches SNAP benefits used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets and other outlets.

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

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The measure appropriates \$8 million General Fund to distribute to the organization for this purpose, requires the nonprofit organization to report to DHS on program outcomes by December 31, 2025, and sunsets January 2, 2026.