

[Second Reprint]
ASSEMBLY, No. 5377

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 23, 2021

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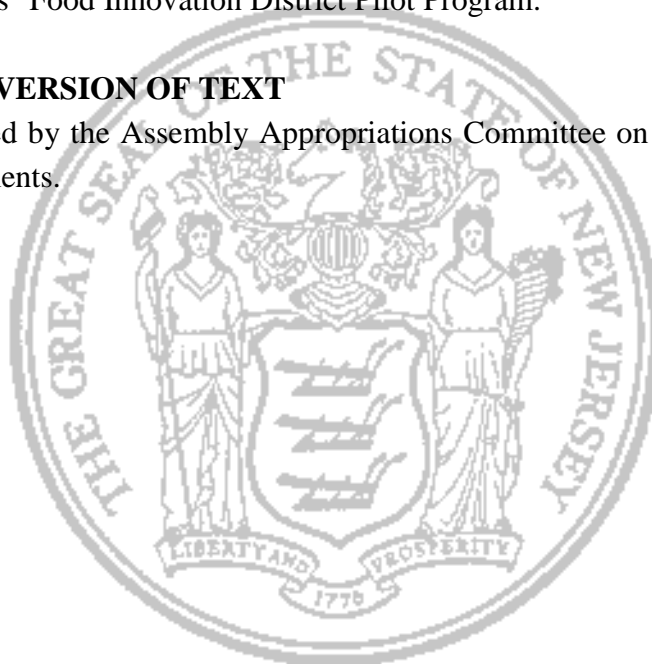
**Assemblyman Verrelli, Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson, Vainieri
Huttle, Quijano, Assemblymen Conaway, Johnson, Space, Wirths and
Armato**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes "Food Innovation District Pilot Program."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on June 16, 2021,
with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the “Food Innovation District ²Pilot²
2 Program” and supplementing Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. With respect to the modern food system, which consists of
9 mass production, processing, transporting, and consumption, most
10 food moves from farm to plate through long and complex global
11 supply chains;

12 b. The standardization and large volumes these supply chains
13 demand do not accommodate the more diverse range of products
14 and companies within the State’s emerging local and regional food
15 sector;

16 c. This leaves the State’s small- and mid-size farms and food
17 businesses without appropriate-scale storage, packaging,
18 processing, and other facilities and services, known as “food system
19 infrastructure”; and

20 d. It is, therefore, in the interest of the residents of the State to
21 establish a program to bring together complementary community
22 and entrepreneurial activities for synergistic business and
23 development in the State’s food system infrastructure.

24
25 2. a. The "Food Innovation District ²Pilot² Program" is ²a
26 three-year pilot program² established within the Division of ¹**[Food**
27 **and Nutrition]** Marketing and Development¹ in the Department of
28 Agriculture. The purpose of the program is to encourage the
29 development of food innovation districts within New Jersey. A
30 food innovation district is a geographic concentration of food-
31 oriented businesses, services, and community activities that are
32 supported through planning and economic development initiatives
33 in order to promote a positive business environment, spur regional
34 food system development, ²**[and]**² increase access to local food ²,
35 and support the transition to healthy and environmentally-friendly
36 alternatives to single-use plastic packaging².

37 b. The division, in consultation with the Department of Labor
38 and Workforce Development, the Department of Community
39 Affairs, and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority,
40 shall establish criteria for the designation of food innovation
41 districts. Criteria for the food innovation district designation shall
42 include, but not be limited to:

43 (1) accessibility to mass transportation facilities and services;

44 (2) zoning or a redevelopment plan that permits mixed-use
45 development; and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly ACE committee amendments adopted May 5, 2021.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted June 16, 2021.

1 (3) a cluster of interconnected food businesses, suppliers, and
2 associated institutions.

3 c. The division shall establish an application form and
4 procedure for municipalities to apply for designation of an area as a
5 food innovation district. An application shall include, but not be
6 limited to:

7 (1) the boundaries of the proposed food innovation district;
8 (2) an inventory of existing and proposed food-oriented
9 businesses; regional food hubs; community kitchens ²and ghost
10 kitchens²; farmers markets; warehousing, processing, distribution,
11 and related facilities; and other food system infrastructure;

12 (3) a plan for the development or redevelopment of the proposed
13 food innovation district, which shall include ²], but not be limited
14 to,]² plans for:

15 ²[(a) attracting food-oriented businesses to locate within the
16 district;

17 (b) regional food hubs;

18 (c) community kitchens;

19 (d) farmers markets;

20 (e) warehousing, processing, distribution, and related facilities;

21 (f) urban agriculture production;

22 (g) healthy food assistance;

23 (h) programming, events, and community building;

24 (i) improvements or developments of public spaces;

25 (j) marketing and outreach;

26 (k) other food system infrastructure; ²]

27 (a) community kitchens and ghost kitchens;

28 (b) warehousing, processing, distribution, and related facilities;

29 (c) supporting the food industry in its transition to the use of
30 healthy and environmentally-friendly alternatives to single-use
31 plastic packaging;² and

32 (4) any other information required by the division.

33 d. The division shall publicize the Food Innovation District
34 Program, and provide links to the application form and procedure
35 on the division's Internet website.

36 e. A municipality may apply to the division for designation of
37 all or part of the municipality as a food innovation district. Two or
38 more municipalities may jointly apply for designation of an area as
39 a food innovation district. An application shall not be submitted
40 unless authorized by adoption of a resolution of the governing body
41 of the municipality, or, in the event of a joint application, the
42 adoption of parallel resolutions by the governing bodies of the
43 municipalities.

44 f. Within 60 calendar days of its receipt of a complete
45 application for designation of an area as a food innovation district,
46 the division shall approve, conditionally approve, or deny the
47 application.

1 g. In consultation with the Department of Community Affairs
2 and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the division
3 shall adopt guidance and standards for municipalities to promote
4 food innovation districts as places for businesses to locate. A
5 municipality may advertise or otherwise use the food innovation
6 district designation in accordance with the adopted guidance or
7 standards.

8 h. ²The division, in conjunction with the Rutgers Agricultural
9 Research and Extension Center, shall provide resources and
10 technical assistance to at least one food innovation district in the
11 central region of the State and to at least one food innovation
12 district in the southern region of the State to enhance the efficacy of
13 the pilot program.

14 i. Within six months prior to the expiration of the three-year
15 pilot program, the division shall submit a report to the Governor,
16 and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
17 (C.52:14-19.1), on the effectiveness of the program, including an
18 assessment concerning the continuation of the program. When
19 measuring the efficacy of the program, the report shall include, but
20 is not limited to, the following metrics for each food innovation
21 district:

22 (1) the rate of change in the number of businesses;

23 (2) the rate of change in the number of businesses developing
24 new products or services;

25 (3) the rate of change in the number of new partnerships with
26 industry specific businesses, companies, or institutions;

27 (4) the rate of change in entrepreneurship;

28 (5) the amount of venture capital or generalized funding
29 received from private investors;

30 (6) the amount of access to qualified personnel and the number
31 of job candidates with relevant skills, education, and training; and

32 (7) the amount of local sourcing of personnel.

33 j. ² In accordance with the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
34 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the Commissioner of
35 Agriculture may adopt the rules and regulations necessary to
36 effectuate the purposes of this section.

37

38 3. This act shall take effect immediately ²and shall expire three
39 years thereafter².