

AN ACT concerning State government.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Agriculture Equity Commission Act.

Section 5. Agriculture Equity Commission.

(a) There is hereby established the Agriculture Equity Commission to ensure equity in the State's top job producing industry by recognizing the loss to African American farmers and growers and the difficulties other minorities have faced in the agriculture industry and the effect those difficulties have on the food system, health, and economy of vulnerable communities.

(b) To the extent practicable, the Commission shall reflect representation of socially disadvantaged communities, businesses, and farmers, and include academics, policy experts, and legislators who are experienced in agriculture and related matters.

(c) The Commission shall consist of the following members:

(1) eight members appointed one each by the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, President of the Senate, Minority Leader of the Senate, the House of

Representatives Agriculture Chair, the Black Caucus Joint Chair, and the Latino Caucus Chair;

(2) one member of the Latino Caucus;

(3) one member of the Black Caucus;

(4) the Director of Agriculture, or his or her designee;

(5) the Director of Public Health, or his or her designee;

(6) a representative of an agribusiness or small farmer private enterprise, appointed by the Governor;

(7) two representatives of nonprofit community based organizations located in a disproportionately impacted area or food desert whose primary mission is helping minorities in the agriculture field and increasing healthy food access, appointed by the Governor;

(8) one representative of a nonprofit statewide organization dedicated to policy to improve the conditions for socially disadvantaged farmers, appointed by the Governor;

(9) one representative of a nonprofit organization whose primary mission is environmental justice and increasing healthy food access for minority populations, appointed by the Governor;

(10) six socially disadvantaged farmers or agribusiness owners from various areas of the State, including minority-owned businesses, women-owned

businesses, and businesses owned by persons with a disability, appointed by the Governor;

(11) one person with a background and work experience in journalism, public relations community outreach, and agriculture, appointed by the Governor;

(12) one representative of a nonprofit organization that trains new farmers through apprenticeship programs and increases healthy food access, appointed by the Governor;

(13) one attorney or legal expert in property law, appointed by the Governor;

(14) one representative of a Fortune 500 agribusiness or a business with a significant presence in agriculture that is headquartered or has offices in the State of Illinois, appointed by the Governor;

(15) one representative of an organization dedicated to economic and business development for minorities; and

(16) one agriculture teacher or instructor, or a person from an organization dedicated to agricultural education for minorities and underserved communities, appointed by the Governor.

(d) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation for the duration of the Commission.

(e) In the event of a vacancy, the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment or as otherwise provided under this Section.

(f) The Commission shall convene within 60 days after the effective date of this Act. At the initial meeting of the Commission, the Commission shall elect a chair from among its members. The Commission shall meet on a quarterly basis, or more often if necessary.

(g) The Department of Agriculture shall provide administrative and other support to the Commission.

Section 10. Duties of the Commission. The Agriculture Equity Commission shall have the following duties:

(1) To study and provide recommendations concerning equity for and participation of socially disadvantaged farmers and growers in the agriculture sector in Illinois.

(2) To study and provide recommendations concerning all forms of agriculture, including, but not limited to, corn and soy, small farms, specialty crops, livestock, urban farming, indoor farming, cannabis, and hemp.

(3) To provide recommendations for policies and programs in several main areas in which the Commission can address through workgroups, including, but not limited to, the following: (i) access to secure land tenure; (ii) access to capital and financial planning; (iii) access to education and training; (iv) access to resources, infrastructure, and business planning; and (v) market access and diversification.

(4) To help guide plans and policies in Illinois

agriculture industries, including, but not limited to, the following: (i) increasing outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and growers; (ii) working with the Department of Agriculture to analyze and propose legislative policy solutions and on the ground projects; and (iii) reviewing disparity studies and suggesting new areas of study or data collection.

(5) To develop an annual plan of education events, meetings, and trainings for all sectors of socially disadvantaged farmers and growers.

Section 15. Report. The Agriculture Equity Commission shall annually report to the Governor and the General Assembly on its findings, recommendations, and other relevant matters concerning and based upon its duties as prescribed under Section 10.