

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 8533

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to expand the provision of farmer-led technical assistance, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 27, 2026

Mr. VASQUEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to expand the provision of farmer-led technical assistance, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Farmer to Farmer
5 Education Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

7 Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16
8 U.S.C. 3842) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)—

1 (A) by redesignating paragraph (2) as
2 paragraph (3); and

3 (B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the
4 following:

5 “(2) FARMER-TO-FARMER NETWORK.—The
6 term ‘farmer-to-farmer network’ means any affili-
7 ation or association of farmers that share informa-
8 tion, technical assistance, or any other type of mutu-
9 ally beneficial support.”;

10 (2) in subsection (f)(1), by inserting “and for
11 the purpose of carrying out subsection (j)” before
12 the period at the end; and

13 (3) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(j) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO FARMER-TO-
15 FARMER NETWORKS.—

16 “(1) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this sub-
17 section are—

18 “(A) to build capacity for farmer-to-farmer
19 networks, connect farmers with mentors or
20 group learning opportunities, and support goal
21 setting to increase long-term adoption of con-
22 sistent, science-based, site-specific practices de-
23 signed to achieve conservation objectives on
24 land active in agricultural, forestry, or related
25 uses;

1 “(B) to increase the provision of technical
2 assistance that meets the specific needs of, and
3 is accessible to, farmers, ranchers, and forest
4 owners using different farming models, prac-
5 tices, and scales;

6 “(C) to establish and steward farmer-to-
7 farmer networks; and

8 “(D) to establish reporting requirements
9 for activities carried out under this subsection.

10 “(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
12 enter into cooperative agreements with eligible
13 entities to carry out the purposes described in
14 paragraph (1).

15 “(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity eligi-
16 ble to enter into a cooperative agreement with
17 the Secretary under subparagraph (A) is—

18 “(i) a nonprofit entity described in
19 section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
20 Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation
21 under section 501(a) of that Code;

22 “(ii) a farmer-to-farmer network;

23 “(iii) an Indian Tribe or a Tribal or-
24 ganization (as those terms are defined in
25 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination

1 and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C.
2 5304));

3 “(iv) a unit of local government (in-
4 cluding a conservation district and a con-
5 servation district association);

6 “(v) an institution of higher edu-
7 cation;

8 “(vi) a State; and

9 “(vii) any other entity designated by
10 the Secretary.

11 “(C) PRIORITIZATION.—In selecting eligi-
12 ble entities with which to enter into cooperative
13 agreements under subparagraph (A), the Sec-
14 retary shall give priority to eligible entities that
15 seek to meet the specific needs of, and are ac-
16 cessible to—

17 “(i) historically underserved farmers,
18 ranchers, and forest owners, including lim-
19 ited-resource farmers, ranchers, and forest
20 owners (as determined by the Secretary);
21 or

22 “(ii) farmers, ranchers, and forest
23 owners operating in high-poverty areas (as
24 determined by the Secretary).

1 “(3) RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVIDERS OF AS-
2 SISTANCE TO FARMER-TO-FARMER NETWORKS.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible entity
4 provides assistance to establish a farmer-to-
5 farmer network using assistance provided
6 through a cooperative agreement under para-
7 graph (2), the eligible entity shall be responsible
8 for not less than 2 of the following actions:

9 “(i) Facilitating and increasing farm-
10 er access to farmer-to-farmer networks.

11 “(ii) Facilitating mentor and mentee
12 matchmaking among farmers.

13 “(iii) Coordinating training and re-
14 sources to build the skills of farmer-to-
15 farmer network leaders and participants
16 for effective education, grassroots-based
17 learning, and cross-training with respect to
18 the facilitation of, information about, and
19 other skills with respect to building effec-
20 tive farmer-to-farmer networks.

21 “(iv) Maintaining and promulgating a
22 list of relevant entities, associations, and
23 individuals that are supporting, or have an
24 interest in supporting, farmer-to-farmer
25 networks.

1 “(v) Administering subawards to in-
2 crease farmer access to farmer-to-farmer
3 assistance in accordance with paragraph
4 (4).

5 “(vi) Other actions determined appro-
6 priate by the Secretary.

7 “(B) LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE.—If an eligi-
8 ble entity provides assistance described in sub-
9 paragraph (A) to a non-English speaking farm-
10 er, rancher, or forest owner, the eligible entity
11 shall, to the greatest extent practicable, provide
12 that assistance in the native language of the
13 farmer, rancher, or forest owner.

14 “(C) REPORTING.—An eligible entity that
15 enters into a cooperative agreement under para-
16 graph (2) shall annually submit to the Sec-
17 retary a report describing—

18 “(i) the conservation activities carried
19 out under the cooperative agreement; and

20 “(ii) any subawards administered pur-
21 suant to subparagraph (A)(v).

22 “(4) SUBAWARDS.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible entity
24 awards a subaward pursuant to paragraph
25 (3)(A)(v) to an eligible subawardee described in

1 subparagraph (B), the eligible subawardee shall
2 use that award—

3 “(i) to plan and conduct events, and
4 identify and develop innovative activities,
5 to support building capacity for farmer-to-
6 farmer networks, connecting farmers with
7 mentors or group learning opportunities,
8 and supporting goal setting to increase
9 long-term adoption of consistent, science-
10 based, site-specific conservation objectives
11 on land active in agricultural, forestry, or
12 related uses; and

13 “(ii) to compensate participants in the
14 events and activities described in clause (i)
15 at market rates.

16 “(B) ELIGIBLE SUBAWARDEES.—An entity
17 eligible for a subaward under paragraph
18 (3)(A)(v) is—

19 “(i) a nonprofit entity described in
20 section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
21 Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation
22 under section 501(a) of that Code;

23 “(ii) a farmer-to-farmer network;

24 “(iii) an Indian Tribe or a Tribal or-
25 ganization (as those terms are defined in

1 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination
2 and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C.
3 5304));

4 “(iv) a unit of local government (in-
5 cluding a conservation district and a con-
6 servation district association);

7 “(v) an institution of higher edu-
8 cation;

9 “(vi) an individual; and

10 “(vii) any other entity designated by
11 the Secretary.

12 “(C) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary, in
13 conjunction with the Chief of the Natural Re-
14 sources Conservation Service, shall establish
15 any necessary additional requirements for sub-
16 awards under paragraph (3)(A)(v).

17 “(5) REPORTING.—Not later than 4 years after
18 the date of enactment of this subsection, the Sec-
19 retary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture
20 of the House of Representatives and the Committee
21 on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Sen-
22 ate a report describing the status of activities funded
23 under this subsection, including—

24 “(A) funding awarded;

1 “(B) the results of the activities, including,
2 if feasible, conservation practice adoption out-
3 comes; and

4 “(C) if applicable, outreach activities the
5 Secretary has considered incorporating into
6 other conservation technical assistance efforts
7 as a result of the program established under
8 this subsection.

9 “(6) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall use to
10 carry out this subsection such sums as are necessary
11 from annual appropriations for conservation oper-
12 ations of the Natural Resources Conservation Serv-
13 ice.”.

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