



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Fighting for Pennsylvania Farmers: Governor Shapiro Files Lawsuit Against USDA's Unlawful Termination of Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program

The USDA abruptly and unlawfully canceled Pennsylvania's agreement under the Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program — cutting \$13 million in federal funding over the next three years that would have supported 189 Pennsylvania farms and 14 food banks.

The Shapiro Administration is taking formal [legal action](#) against the USDA's unlawful decision to terminate this critical funding.

The USDA ignored the Shapiro Administration's repeated efforts to appeal the agreement's termination — leaving Governor Shapiro and Secretary Redding with no other choice but to file a lawsuit.



Philadelphia, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** announced that his Administration has [filed a lawsuit](#) against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for unlawfully terminating Pennsylvania’s **Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) Program** agreement — a \$13 million commitment that directly supports 189 Pennsylvania farms and supplies 14 food banks with fresh, locally grown food.

Speaking at the **Share Food Program in Philadelphia**, the Governor was joined by **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** and local farmers to announce the legal challenge and reaffirm his Administration’s commitment to defending Pennsylvania’s agricultural producers and ensuring continued access to healthy food for families in need.

The **Shapiro Administration** tried to appeal the USDA’s unlawful termination of the LFPA25 agreement, filing an administrative appeal through the USDA, reaching out to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, and even traveling to Washington, D.C. to meet with USDA leadership. Despite those efforts, the USDA ignored Pennsylvania’s requests to support farmers across the Commonwealth — leaving the Shapiro Administration with no other choice but to sue.

“Pennsylvania farmers do the noble work of putting food on our tables – and for the last three years, they’ve been paid to provide fresh, local food to food banks across our Commonwealth as part of a successful federal initiative,” said **Governor Shapiro**.

“When the USDA abruptly terminated our agreement without cause, they ripped away a reliable source of income for 189 Pennsylvania farms — and cut off funding that would have helped provide over 4.4 million meals to families across the Commonwealth. That’s not just bad policy — it’s a broken promise. A deal is a deal, and I’ve taken legal action today to ensure the federal government honors its commitment to Pennsylvania.”

Since 2022, the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA)** has administered more than \$28 million in federal LFPA funding, helping food banks reduce waste, distribute local produce, and strengthen the state’s food system. The most recent three-year contract, signed in December 2024, was abruptly canceled in March 2025 — without explanation.

Following the USDA’s notice of termination in March, **Governor Shapiro** [directed](#) Secretary Redding to [immediately challenge](#) the decision. Despite multiple appeals and direct outreach, USDA officials failed to provide any justification or engage in the formal appeals process. On May 7th, USDA officially terminated the agreement.

In public statements, USDA officials falsely claimed Pennsylvania was “sitting on tens of millions” in unspent LFPA funds — despite the fact that the program operates on a reimbursement basis. PDA pays vendors up front and is reimbursed by the federal government once expenses are incurred.

“The USDA’s decision was not just unexpected — it was unlawful, and it has already caused serious harm to Pennsylvania’s agriculture industry,” said **Secretary Redding**. “This is about real people — the farmers, producers, and rural communities who are now facing uncertainty as a result. These are hardworking men and women who put food on our tables, support local economies, and preserve our farmland for future generations. Governor Shapiro is fighting for our farmers because the stakes are far too high.”

At [Share Food Program](#) — one of the Commonwealth’s largest emergency food providers — food security leaders and farmers described how the sudden loss of funding has disrupted operations and left food banks scrambling to fill critical gaps. The unexpected cut in funding broke trust, derailed long-term planning, and left small producers without a clear path forward.

“I started providing fresh fruits and vegetables to Pennsylvania food banks several years ago — from Share in Philadelphia to food banks in Pittsburgh, Mercer County, and across Central PA. That work gave me a deep appreciation for what food insecurity really looks like. Whether someone is going through a tough time or has long struggled to make ends meet, the need is real — and the people who dedicate their time to helping others are truly inspiring,” said **Brian Campbell, Owner and Founder of Brian Campbell Farms**. “It’s not just about putting food on the table — it’s about providing healthy, nutritious options that can change lives. Programs like LFPA made it possible for farmers to cover the basic costs of harvesting, packaging, and delivering fresh

produce to food banks. It was enough support to make it doable, and that made all the difference for the people we serve.”

“Thanks to LFPA, we’ve grown our giving program from 8,000 pounds in 2017 to over 26,000 pounds in 2024,” said **Julie McCabe, Executive Director of Pennypack Farm & Education Center**. “In some food pantries, we’re the only source of fresh produce. These programs don’t just feed people — they connect people. Governor Shapiro’s support means everything.”

Share is the largest-serving hunger relief organization in the Greater Philadelphia region. In 2024 alone, Share distributed over 30 million meals to individuals, families, and food pantries. Through its wide network of community organizations and school districts, Share also delivered more than 83,000 Senior Food Boxes through USDA programs, rescued nearly 6 million pounds of food from going to waste, and delivered more than 47,000 free home food packages to vulnerable residents.

“Since 1986, our mission has been to feed the region’s most vulnerable families — and today, we’re serving nearly one million people each month, with more than half of them children,” said **George Matysik, Executive Director of Share Food Program**. “At Share, we believe food is a human right and hunger is a solvable problem — principles we live by every day. The LFPA program helped us source nutritious food from local farms — but now, with demand at record highs, this cut will hurt real people and damage trust. At a time when demand at our food bank has risen 120 percent in just three years, losing LFPA hurts real people — and breaks a promise that should have been kept.”

Pennsylvania is one of the only states in the country that uses LFPA funding exclusively to support in-state farmers — ensuring every federal dollar stays local and directly supports Pennsylvania’s agricultural economy. With food banks experiencing record-high demand and agricultural producers facing the toughest market conditions in decades, the USDA’s action is not only unjustified — it’s deeply harmful to working families and farming communities.

The Governor’s [2025-26 budget proposal](#) builds on this commitment by increasing funding for the **Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS)** and the **State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)** by \$4 million each — bringing total state support for the two programs to \$34.6 million. His broader efforts to reduce food insecurity include addressing its root causes, including raising the minimum wage and cutting costs for working families across the Commonwealth.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Pennsylvania’s economy, with over 53,000 farms generating \$132.5 billion annually and supporting 600,000 jobs. **Governor Shapiro’s** [Economic Development Strategy](#) places agriculture at the forefront, recognizing it as essential to the Commonwealth’s growth. Since taking office, he has prioritized funding to strengthen the industry and enhance Pennsylvania’s national agricultural reputation. The Governor’s investments, including the creation of the [nation’s first Agricultural Innovation Grant](#) and the revival of the Fresh Food

Financing Initiative, are key to ensuring a stable, sustainable food system in Pennsylvania and [supporting Pennsylvania's farmers](#).

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