

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 415

BY SENATOR ABRAHAM

HEALTH DEPARTMENT. Creates the Empower Louisiana Food Purchase Program.
(8/1/26)

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AN ACT

To enact Subpart E of Part II of Chapter 3 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 46:290, relative to food purchase cards; to create the Empower Louisiana Food Purchase Program; to provide for the duties of the Louisiana Department of Health; to provide for criteria for nonprofit organization participation; to provide for funding; to provide for records; to provide for reporting; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. Subpart E of Part II of Chapter 3 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 46:290, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

SUBPART E. EMPOWER LOUISIANA FOOD PURCHASE PROGRAM

§290. Empower Louisiana Food Purchase Program; Louisiana Department of Health

A. The Louisiana Department of Health shall establish and administer the Empower Louisiana Food Purchase Program. The program shall make restricted-use food purchase cards available for issuance through qualified nonprofit organizations.

1 **B.(1) The department shall partner with qualified nonprofit**
2 **organizations that operate food assistance programs in Louisiana.**

3 **(2) To qualify for participation in the program, the organization shall be**
4 **recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, execute a**
5 **participation agreement, and comply with reporting requirements established**
6 **by the department.**

7 **(3) The department may implement the program as a pilot program in**
8 **one administrative region of the state and may expand the program as**
9 **determined by the secretary. Upon statewide implementation, the program shall**
10 **include at least one participating qualified nonprofit organization in each**
11 **administrative region of the department.**

12 **C. Each qualified nonprofit organization shall:**

13 **(1) Be responsible for funding any purchase cards issued by the**
14 **organization.**

15 **(2) Accept charitable contributions to support the program.**

16 **(3) Establish a process to allow individuals to provide funding for cards.**

17 **Cards may be issued directly to the individual providing the funds or to another**
18 **person identified by the individual providing the funds for the card.**

19 **D.(1) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to create a public**
20 **entitlement, require participation, authorize federal funding, or merge the**
21 **program with SNAP.**

22 **(2) Benefits provided pursuant to this Section shall be considered**
23 **charitable food assistance and shall not be construed as wages, compensation,**
24 **or remuneration to the recipient.**

25 **E. The department shall establish uniform guidelines and operating**
26 **standards for the program.**

27 **F. The program shall:**

28 **(1) Operate under a program identifier separate from SNAP.**

29 **(2) Align food items that are allowable for purchase with food items that**

1 are eligible for purchase through SNAP.

2 (3) Prohibit cash withdrawals and transfers.

3 (4) Not access SNAP eligibility or recipient data.

4 G. Transaction records shall be generated automatically by the payment
5 processor. The department shall generate aggregate annual transaction reports,
6 which participating nonprofits shall reconcile to their internal records. The
7 department may review, monitor, and inspect records as necessary for the
8 provisions of this Section. Any recipient information collected pursuant to this
9 Section shall be confidential and shall not be used for solicitation, marketing,
10 or any purpose not related to the program.

11 H. No later than March 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report
12 evaluating the program to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and the
13 House Committee on Health and Welfare.

14 I. The department shall promulgate rules in accordance with the
15 Administrative Procedure Act to implement the provisions of this Section.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

SB 415 Engrossed	DIGEST 2026 Regular Session	Abraham
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Present law places the administration of SNAP under the La. Dept. of Health.

Proposed law retains present law and creates a separate SNAP-like program administered by the La. Dept. of Health.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health to establish and administer the Empower Louisiana Food Purchase Program to make restricted-use food purchase cards available for issuance through qualified nonprofit organizations.

Proposed law provides for requirements for nonprofit organizations to qualify to participate in the program.

Proposed law requires each nonprofit organization to provide funding for cards issued by the organization and to accept charitable contributions to support the program.

Proposed law requires each nonprofit organization to establish a process to allow individuals to provide funding for cards that may either be issued directly to the individual or to another person identified by the individual that provided funding for the card.

Proposed law provides that benefits received through the program are considered charitable food assistance and shall not be construed as wages, compensation, or remuneration.

Proposed law provides for administrative requirements for the program, including the limitation of purchases to food items that are eligible for purchase in SNAP.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health to submit a report evaluating the program to the Senate and House committees on health and welfare no later than March 1, 2027.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health to promulgate rules to implement proposed law.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Adds R.S. 46:290)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill

1. Provides that benefits received pursuant to the program are charitable food assistance and not considered wages, compensation, or remuneration.
2. Provides for additional programmatic requirements.
3. Moves the report date from March 1, 2028 to March 1, 2027.