



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): HIP Community Partners

### What is HIP?

The Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) is a partnership between DTA and the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS), and is the only one of its kind in the country. The primary goal of the HIP project is to test whether providing a financial incentive to SNAP clients will encourage them to purchase more fruits and vegetables.

### How does HIP work?

There are 7,500 SNAP households in Hampden County that were randomly chosen (by computer) to be HIP participants. They will earn 30 cents for each dollar when they buy HIP target fruits and vegetables from a participating HIP retailer. This incentive will be added to the SNAP EBT accounts of the participants, to be used on any future SNAP eligible purchase. In October we will notify the HIP participants of their selection and train them on how HIP works and in which stores they can receive the benefit. A HIP participant can earn up to \$60 in HIP benefits per month by buying HIP target fruits and vegetables at participating HIP retailers.

### When does HIP start and end?

The Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) begins on November 1, 2011. Not everyone will start at the same time. HIP participant start dates are on November 1, 2011, December 1, 2011 and January 1, 2012. Each household will receive the HIP benefit for 12 months from their start date.

### What are HIP target fruits and vegetables?

HIP target foods are fresh, frozen, dried and canned fruits and vegetables without added sugar, salt, fats or oils with some exceptions. For example, while white potatoes do not count, sweet potatoes and orange yams do. Dried beans, such as pinto, kidney, black, and other beans are not HIP target foods. Vegetables such as green beans, pea pods, and snap peas are HIP target foods. Participants can see the HIP Target Food list or their HIP card sleeve for more detail. Also, the HIP target fruits and vegetables are consistent with those eligible under the WIC program.

### Will the HIP participant need a new EBT card to participate in HIP?

No, HIP participants will not need another EBT card. Their existing EBT card will work for HIP.



## **How will HIP participants know when the EBT card is working and they are earning the incentive?**

The HIP participant's store receipt for SNAP purchases will show the HIP benefit earned. They can also call 1-800-997-2555, the number on the back of their EBT card. Then they can hear their last 10 EBT transactions including HIP benefits earned.

## **Where can participants shop to earn the HIP benefit?**

There are over 100 HIP retailers across Hampden County. These include large supermarkets, convenience stores, bodegas, and farmers markets. See the HIP retailer list for details on stores in your area. You can also look for the HIP logo at a retailer near you. If you want a local store to become a HIP retailer that isn't on the list, you can contact the DTA HIP call-line 1-888-987-4487.

## **What is my role in HIP?**

Community partners have a very important role to play in HIP. You will serve as a valuable information resource and source of support to HIP participants, provide vital feedback on HIP materials and pilot implementation to DTA, and serve as a host HIP training site.

## **What do we say to SNAP clients that were not selected to participate in HIP?**

Hampden County is the only county in the United States chosen to conduct the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP). HIP is a 14-month long research study where participants are selected randomly to receive a temporary benefit. Participation has nothing to do with things like family size, income, age or primary language spoken at home. Selected SNAP recipients did not and cannot apply to participate.

## **Can HIP participants purchase culturally specific fruits and vegetables, like plantains and yucca, and earn HIP benefits?**

Yes, there is a wide range of HIP target fruits and vegetables available to HIP participants. Please refer to the HIP food list for more details. There are over 100 participating HIP retailers across Hampden County, many of which carry different ethnic foods. Participants should refer to the HIP target food list and their HIP/EBT card sleeve for more details. To find a HIP retailer see the HIP retailer list for more details.

## **Is the HIP information available in other languages?**

While all HIP materials and trainings will be offered in both English and Spanish, some materials will also be available in Russian and Vietnamese.

## **What if a HIP participant asks me a question about HIP that I cannot answer?**

You can either refer the individual to the DTA HIP call-line: 1-888-987-4487 or to the HIP staff as appropriate. If a participant has any problems using their EBT card for HIP, or if they do not see their HIP purchases being calculated into their SNAP benefits, they should call the number on the back of their EBT card (1-800-997-2555). You can also find HIP information on the web at: [www.mass.gov/dta/hip](http://www.mass.gov/dta/hip).