



# Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) Kickoff Meeting April 23, 2010

Healthy food, healthy you.

FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

Believing you can.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE



When times are tough,  
we're here to help.

FOOD ASSISTANCE • JOB ASSISTANCE • CASH ASSISTANCE

Believing you can.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE



Let's work together.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING • JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE • POST EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Believing you can.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE





# Welcome!

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- Thank you for joining us today. We are excited to announce that DTA will be submitting a proposal for USDA's Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) grant.
- Before we talk about HIP, we will give a brief overview of DTA and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).





# DTA Overview

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**The Department's mission is to assist low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life.**

**DTA's goals are:**

- **Ensuring access to basic benefits; and**
- **Increasing employment of TAFDC recipients.**





## Who We Serve

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# **DTA serves one out of every nine people in the Commonwealth**

- Our clients include working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities.
- Our primary objective is to provide the right resources to the right people at the right time.
- Our 24 Transitional Assistance Offices around the state allow us to use creative outreach efforts and flexible service delivery models to ensure that our resources are accessible to—and work effectively for—our clients.





# Our Programs

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## Food

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP,** formerly Food Stamps) provides food and nutritional benefits and is federally-funded.

## Cash

- **Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)** provides cash assistance to families within 185% of the FPL.
- **Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC)** provides limited cash assistance to elderly and disabled persons, as well as children, who are not covered by our other programs.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** provides cash assistance in addition to federal Social Security benefits for elders and people with disabilities.

## Job Assistance

- **Employment Services Program (ESP)** provides job search, job training, and related support services to TAFDC recipients.



## How to Apply

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- Visit [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) for program-specific eligibility criteria, to apply for SNAP benefits online, and more.
- Call one of our toll-free hotlines:
  - 1-866-950-FOOD for SNAP.
  - 1-800-249-2007 for information about our other programs.
- Visit your local DTA office. DTA has 24 offices across the state with case workers familiar with all of our programs.





# SNAP Overview

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps), is a federally-funded program that provides a monthly benefit to buy nutritious food. Eligibility guidelines are developed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

## **DTA issues nearly \$100 million in SNAP benefits monthly.**

This represents more than \$2 billion per year in local production, sales, and jobs for the Commonwealth, since each dollar in SNAP assistance generates nearly \$2 in economic activity for the state.

**As of February 2010, there are more than 400,000 households (over 740,000 individuals) in Massachusetts receiving SNAP benefits.**





# SNAP (continued)

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## Basic Eligibility Criteria

- Household income may not exceed:
  - 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for families with dependent children and pregnant women (The maximum gross monthly income for a family of three is \$3,052).
  - 130% of the Federal Poverty Level for households without children (The maximum gross monthly income for a family of three adults is \$1,907).
- There are no gross income limits for households with only elders and/or persons with disabilities.
- Citizenship or legal noncitizen status (e.g. legal adult permanent residents must live in the US for 5 years before they are eligible, unless disabled).

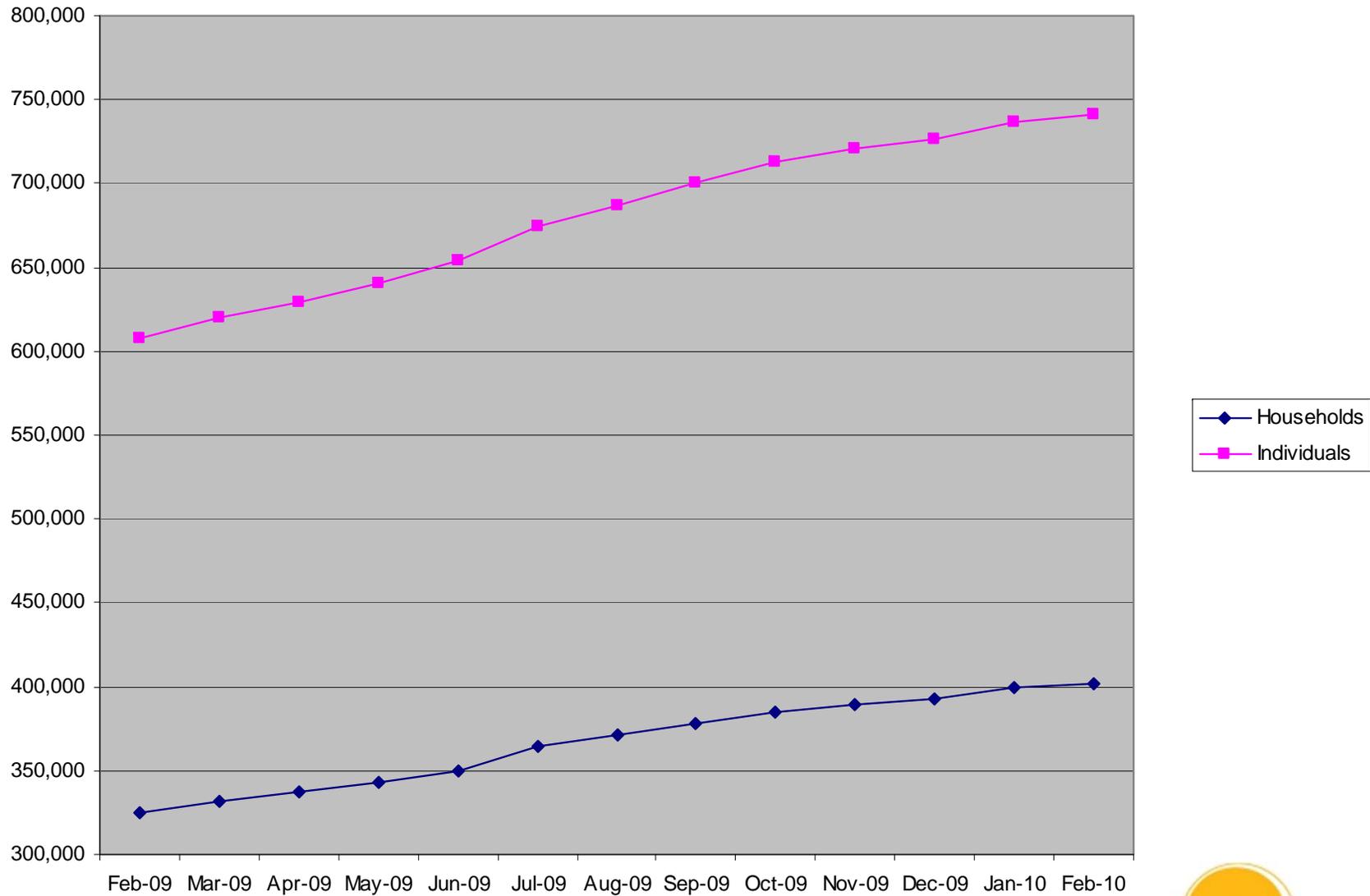
## Benefits

- An Electronic Benefits Transfer card (EBT) is used to purchase food. This is an easy and confidential way to buy groceries, much like using an ATM card.





# SNAP Caseload Growth, Feb. 2009 – Feb. 2010





# What Can You Buy with SNAP Benefits?

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- Households **CAN** use SNAP benefits to buy:
  - Foods for the household to eat, such as:
    - breads and cereals
    - fruits and vegetables
    - meats, fish and poultry
    - dairy products
  - Prepared cold sandwiches and salad bar items to be consumed outside of the store
  - Seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat
- Households **CANNOT** use SNAP benefits to buy:
  - Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
  - Any nonfood items, such as:
    - pet foods
    - soaps
    - paper products
    - household supplies
  - Vitamins and medicines
  - Prepared hot foods or prepared cold foods to be consumed in the store





# What Is HIP?

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- On 12/18/2009, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released a Request for Application (RFA) for a SNAP Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP).
- One state will be granted up to \$6.3 million to test the effects of providing a financial incentive to encourage participating SNAP households to buy fruits and vegetables.
- Obesity, poor diet, and inactivity are problematic across the US.
  - Over 17% of children are overweight
  - Over 66% of adults are overweight or obese
  - Low-income individuals and families are particularly at-risk.
- FNS is exploring new approaches that encourage low-income households to improve their health through the consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and other healthful foods.
- HIP offers the opportunity to study one such approach.



# Why Is DTA Applying for HIP?

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- HIP relates to our mission
  - Many of our initiatives focus on reducing hunger and improving nutrition
    - Working with the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) to expand EBT access at farmers' markets
    - Formed a Hunger and Nutrition Advisory Group along with DAR and the Department of Public Health
    - Re-examining our SNAP education programs to better target resources
- **HIP is an opportunity for DTA, its partner agencies, and its stakeholders to further unite toward the common goal of improved nutrition for residents of the Commonwealth.**



# Hampden County: HIP Pilot Site

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- The RFA requires the pilot site to be a locality with mainstream SNAP operations currently serving a SNAP caseload of 35,000 to 60,000 households.
- The nine largest areas in Hampden County (Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Agawam, Ludlow, Palmer, South Hadley, Westfield and West Springfield) together hold a SNAP caseload of about 50,000.  
Hampden County also:
  - Contains two of the lowest-income cities in the Commonwealth (Holyoke and Springfield)
  - Has urban, suburban, and rural communities
  - Has an outstanding network of nonprofits and retailers
  - Has three DTA offices.





# How Will HIP Work?

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- If DTA is selected, a random sample of 7,500 SNAP households in Hampden County will be selected to receive financial incentives through HIP.
  - Of these, 1,500 will be selected to serve as the experimental group so the impact of the incentive can be studied closely.
  - An additional 1,500 households not participating in HIP will be selected to serve as the control group so the impact of not receiving the incentive can be studied.
- The participating HIP households will receive an incentive of additional SNAP dollars (30% of purchase of eligible HIP foods) when they buy HIP-targeted fruits and vegetables using their SNAP benefits.
  - The incentive amount and accumulated monthly value of incentives will be displayed on the cash register receipts.
  - Systems changes will be required to integrate this functionality into the existing EBT system.





# What Does This Mean for You?

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- DTA seeks interested parties to partner with us on this exciting initiative.
- In order for our proposal to be competitive, we need as much support as possible.
- Involvement will vary based on your role:
  - Food retailers
  - EBT provider
  - Community partners
- Each of you is critical to the success of our pursuit of HIP.





# Food Retailers

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- HIP cannot succeed without help from supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores, and farmers' markets.
  - Your systems and inventory of fruits and vegetables will make HIP possible.
- If we receive the grant, DTA will work with you and ACS (state EBT vendor) to make all necessary modifications.
  - ACS has already committed to assist with HIP.
- Approved costs associated with HIP implementation and operation will be reimbursed by the grant award.
  - Retailers with integrated electronic cash register (IECR) systems that include scanners and point-of-sale (POS) interfaces will need to reprogram them to identify target foods, calculate and transmit their value and print resulting incentive values on receipts.
  - Retailers with stand-alone (side by side) POS terminals or vouchers will need to create and manually enter a separate subtotal of HIP target foods based on visual identification.



## Food Retailers (continued)

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- If you agree to support HIP, we will need your help, including:
  - Letters of support
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
  - Information on estimated costs of systems changes
  - Retailer characteristics (store types, numbers, locations, types of EBT processing systems, etc.)
  - Work with DTA to provide training to retail staff on HIP and the eligible foods
  - Participating in public events related to HIP



## Community Partners

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- Hampden County has a strong network of community partners, including nonprofits, health centers, and advocacy groups.
- Your assistance will help us to create a robust, well-rounded application, particularly with:
  - Letters of support
  - Information about your organizations
  - Hosting information sessions for HIP participants
  - Providing information about HIP and partner retailers to selected participants



## Next Steps

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- Let us know if you will assist us with the proposal by contacting Stephanie Brown at (617) 348-5640. Stephanie's business card is in your information packet.
- If you agree to help, you will be contacted by a representative from DTA or from Public Consulting Group (PCG) for more information.
- Note: you can review the RFA at:  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/HIP/docs/rfa.pdf>



# Dates to Remember

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- May 21, 2010:** Application due
- August 2010: Award announced
- August 2010: Cooperative agreements in place and funds available
- August 2010: Orientation conference at FNS headquarters
- August 2010 – November 2011: Planning, testing, and training of pilot systems
- December 2011 – February 2013: Operation phase of pilot (15 months)
- March 2013 – April 2013: HIP operations close out
- May 2013 – June 2013: Close out conference at FNS headquarters



# Thank You!

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- By combining our resources and expertise, we will have the opportunity to improve the nutrition of thousands of Hampden County households – and to be an example for the rest of the country.
- Thank you for your efforts to reduce hunger and increase wellness in the Commonwealth.
- We look forward to working with you!





# QUESTIONS?

