Department of Transitional Assistance

Notice of Opportunity (NOO) to Serve as a Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) Vendor and Increase HIP Access Points

COMMBUYS BID NUMBER: BD-27-1112-WEL60-60000-135335

Release Date: November 10, 2026

Responses Due: December 10, 2026, at 11:59 pm EST

I. OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is the state agency responsible for administering transitional assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of low-income families so they can buy healthy foods. As part of the SNAP program and in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), DTA also operates the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP).

HIP is a Massachusetts state program that helps SNAP clients pay for fruits and vegetables purchased from participating HIP farm vendors, up to a monthly limit.

Participating HIP vendors include farms, farmers' markets, mobile farmers' markets, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Pilot programs that are authorized to accept SNAP benefits by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. CSA Pilot programs may be operated by direct marketing farms, farmers' markets, or nonprofit buying cooperatives.

DTA seeks to add HIP access points to its existing network of vendors so that more SNAP clients can use HIP to purchase fruits and vegetables. Through this NOO, DTA is accepting proposals from eligible local produce vendors that want to participate in HIP. This opportunity is open to both new and existing HIP vendors.

DTA will select a group of eligible vendors that, together, expands HIP access where it is most needed in communities across Massachusetts. DTA will consider:

- where the proposed HIP locations are,
- how well the vendor is prepared to serve SNAP and HIP customers,
- how the vendor's business model helps address barriers to food access,
- the vendor's connection to the community, and
- how the vendor would contribute to a strong statewide mix of HIP vendors within available funding.

II. WHO CAN APPLY

New vendors applying to participate in HIP must sell fruits or vegetables directly to Massachusetts consumers and either a) be able to obtain federal authorization to accept SNAP or b) already have an active federal authorization to accept SNAP with one of the following USDA Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) classifications:

- Direct-marketing farms
- Farmers' markets
- Delivery routes (mobile farmers' markets)
- Nonprofit buying cooperatives
- Fruit/vegetable specialty vendors

Applicants do not need to be SNAP-authorized before responding to this NOO, but if selected, must become authorized before processing HIP. For more information about how to become a SNAP authorized retailer, visit https://www.fna.usda.gov/snap/retailer/apply-to-accept. SNAP authorization support for eligible farm retailers is available at www.marketlink.org.

Existing HIP vendors can also apply to offer HIP at additional locations through this opportunity.

III. HOW TO APPLY

A. Submitting an Application

Interested vendors must submit their application via the HIP Vendor Notice of Opportunity webpage at www.mass.gov/hipnoo by December 10, 2026. Vendors will be notified of selection or non-selection via email by early winter. Selected vendors will be expected to begin program operations within six months after selection.

B. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding the application or selection process may be submitted to DTA.HIP@mass.gov during the open application period. DTA will not respond to emails directly but will post both questions and responses on the HIP Vendor Notice of Opportunity webpage on a rolling basis at www.mass.gov/hipnoo.

To request a reasonable accommodation, see Appendix A, Section 1.

IV. HOW DTA WILL CHOOSE VENDORS

A. Priority Communities

For the purposes of this NOO, Priority Communities are areas identified based on HIP usage relative to the SNAP population as well as the share of residents in the area receiving SNAP, as higher SNAP participation may indicate greater economic barriers to healthy food access.

Priority Communities include, but are not limited to, the following regions: *Cape & Islands, New Bedford, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Fall River, Southbridge, Brockton, North Adams, Pittsfield, Salem, Attleboro, Randolph, Milford, Waltham, Taunton, Springfield, Dorchester, Mattapan, Norwood, Gardner, Lynn, Worcester, Gloucester, Athol, Marlborough, Framingham, Lawrence, Holyoke, Orange, Fitchburg, and Ware.*

Vendors are not required to sell in a Priority Community to apply for this opportunity.

B. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

A panel of reviewers including representatives from DTA and MDAR will review and score applications. The evaluation panel may request additional information from an applicant.

DTA will select a group of eligible vendors that, together, best meets the goals of this opportunity, including:

- **Expand equitable geographic coverage within available funding**
  DTA seeks to add access points especially in Priority Communities, identified based on:
  - HIP usage rates are low relative to the SNAP population of community, and
  - SNAP participation rates are high compared to overall population of community.

- **Select vendors that are a strong fit for HIP and their communities**
  Reviewers will consider whether applicants:
  - Understand barriers to food access and show responsiveness to community need,
  - Provide a respectful and inclusive customer experience, and
  - Demonstrate community connection and fit.

- **Build a diverse mix of HIP vendors**
  DTA also seeks a selected group that, as a whole, represents a range of services, business models, and characteristics. This may include vendors that:
  - Represent different business sizes and ways of selling,
  - Have community partnerships that support outreach or distribution,
  - Provide service in the spoken language preferred by their customers,
  - Sell culturally relevant produce,

- Grow all of their own produce,
- Offer delivery,
- Sell during different months of the year,
- Are new to HIP,
- Build on existing HIP infrastructure,
- Have strong economic or community ties to Priority Communities, or
- Serve populations that experience higher rates of food insecurity.

No individual applicant is expected to meet all of these characteristics. **Eligible vendors are encouraged to apply regardless of the community they serve, the customers they serve, or how they sell their food.** In making selections, DTA will balance considerations of program budget, individual community needs, and access across the Commonwealth.

DTA may select vendors' proposals as a whole or may make a partial selection (e.g. selecting a vendor but limiting the number of HIP-compatible devices or locations they may operate).

V. HOW HIP WORKS

HIP is a Massachusetts state program that helps SNAP clients pay for fruits and vegetables purchased from participating HIP farm vendors, up to a monthly limit. DTA's HIP incentives can only be used by clients shopping with SNAP benefits issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As of the date of this NOO, the monthly limits are as follows:

Table 1. HIP Monthly Incentive Limits

Household Size	Monthly Limit
1-2 people	$40/month
3-5 people	$60/month
6+ people	$80/month

When SNAP clients use their EBT card to buy eligible fruits and vegetables from a HIP vendor, HIP covers the cost up to their monthly HIP limit. This leaves more SNAP benefits available for other food purchases.

Vendors selected through this opportunity will not receive direct payment from DTA. However, while HIP funding is available, vendors may experience increased sales when SNAP clients choose to shop at their locations to use their HIP incentives.

To process HIP benefits, retailers need specific Point of Sale (POS) hardware and software. Vendors are responsible for the costs of participating in HIP, including the hardware and software needed to process HIP transactions. Limited equipment

provisions may be available for eligible retailers through DTA, other Commonwealth programs, or the MarketLink subsidy. Visit https://www.mass.gov/info-details/equipment-options-for-processing-snap-and-the-healthy-incentives-program-hip for more information on the hardware and software options that are HIP compatible. Some vendors eligible for the SNAP CSA Pilot may be able to process SNAP/HIP without EBT equipment. Visit https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-to-participate-in-the-snap-csa-pilot for more information about the CSA Pilot.

Selected vendors may process HIP only at approved locations and using approved devices unless granted approval in writing by DTA. HIP vendors may be approved to operate a limited number of HIP-compatible POS terminals.

HIP funding depends on the annual state budget and is not guaranteed. Funding may vary from year to year, which could affect monthly HIP incentive limits or the continued operation of the program.

VI. PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Vendors who are selected through this opportunity can continue to process HIP as long as funding is available (see Section V) and the vendor continues to meet program requirements. If a vendor no longer meets program requirements, DTA may terminate their authorization to process HIP through a written notification. Vendors may also voluntarily withdraw from the HIP program at any time by notifying DTA in writing with at least 30 days' notice.

VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR HIP VENDORS

If selected, vendors must follow the HIP vendor agreement, which is attached to this NOO (see Appendix B).

Some requirements are important to know before applying:

- Vendors must keep their federal SNAP retailer authorization active to process HIP.
- Vendors are responsible for getting the equipment and software needed to process SNAP and HIP at approved locations.
- New vendors must complete required HIP training before processing HIP.
- Vendors must attend an annual meeting, sign the HIP vendor agreement, and update sales locations on DTA Finder regularly (www.dtafinder.com).
- Vendors may process HIP only at locations and with devices approved by DTA, unless DTA gives written approval for a change.
- DTA may make site visits for program monitoring of compliance requirements.
- Vendors must be in good standing with the Commonwealth to be selected. This includes being registered with the Secretary of State's office and being in

good standing with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Upon selection, vendors must attest that they can provide a Certificate of Good Standing. It is available for free through the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's MassTaxConnect service at https://mtc.dor.state.ma.us/mtc/_/.

- All SNAP and HIP transactions must comply with federal and state SNAP regulations, including but not limited to 7 CFR § 278.1, 7 CFR § 278.2, and 7 CFR § 278.6, and 7 CFR § 274.3.

Appendix A. Legal and Procurement Information

1. Reasonable Accommodation

Applicants who want to apply by phone due to a disability or hardship can schedule a call by selecting that option in the NOO application and following the prompts. Interpretation is available via phone.

Applicants who need another accommodation due to a disability or hardship can email DTA.HIP@mass.gov to request assistance. Requests for accommodations will be reviewed individually. Applicants requesting an accommodation by email must explain what they need and why. DTA may deny requests that are not reasonable.

2. Public Records

All responses and information submitted in response to this NOO are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes, including marking by potential vendors of information as confidential during the NOO submission process, shall be disregarded.

3. Costs

The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by potential vendors responding to this NOO.