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# Healthy Incentives Program Report

**April 2022**



**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE  
HEALTHY INCENTIVES PROGRAM REPORT**

*APRIL 2022*

**OVERVIEW**

Line Item 4400-1004 of the FY22 GAA (Chapter 24 of the Acts of 2021) requires the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to submit a report containing a description and usage data of the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP).

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION**

DTA’s mission is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. To do this, DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports, including food and nutritional assistance, economic assistance, and employment services and supports. DTA serves one out of every seven residents in the Commonwealth including working families, children, older adults, and people with disabilities.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

HIP is an innovative tool in the Commonwealth’s efforts to promote food security and economic development. The program incentivizes Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables at participating agriculture retailers, including farmers’ markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) farm share programs. Administered by DTA, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), HIP has garnered the support of a broad, diverse coalition of statewide community partners, including SNAP clients, the farming community, and public health organizations.

The Healthy Incentives Program credits clients’ Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) accounts for purchases made with the EBT card on fruits and vegetables at participating SNAP/HIP retailers, up to a monthly maximum amount. HIP incentives are calculated and instantly applied to the card at the time of purchase. The maximum HIP incentive that can be earned each month is based on household size (Table 1).

<b>TABLE I HIP MAXIMUM MONTHLY INCENTIVES EARNED</b>	
<b>Number of Household Members</b>	<b>HIP Monthly Cap</b>
1 -2 people	\$40
3-5 people	\$60
6+ people	\$80

HIP was originally created through an award from the federal Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant program, which was implemented in April 2017. The FINI grant was

expected to sustain the program for three years; however, participation in the program was higher than expected and required supplemental state funding to sustain the program. The state’s federal FINI grant was finalized in 2019 and the program has since been funded through the state’s annual GAA.

In 2020, following recommendations from the state’s COVID-19 Command Center’s Food Security Task Force, the Administration made a \$56 million investment in Massachusetts’ food system aimed at combating food insecurity across the Commonwealth and supporting the state’s food supply system. This included \$5 million for HIP, which enabled DTA and MDAR to add 39 new HIP vendors through a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative review process. The selection process prioritized accessibility and equity, investing in innovative strategies to provide culturally relevant foods to SNAP clients safely and supporting farmers who live and work in the high-need communities they serve. Through this process, 81 new points of access were added across the Commonwealth, 16 of which are located in Gateway Cities, with 11 new municipalities being served by the program. DTA continued supporting the onboarding of these new access points throughout FY21.

HIP has been continually operating since March 2020, with the highest rates of vendor and client participation during the peak growing months of May to November. From January to December 2021, an average of 21,606 households per month participated in HIP.

**HIP Utilization Data**

<b>TABLE 2 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS UTILIZING HIP</b>		
	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
All time	April 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021	110,362
Calendar Year 2021	January 1, 2021-December 31, 2021	60,416

<b>TABLE 3 NUMBER OF HIP TRANSACTIONS</b>		
	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Number of Transactions</b>
All time	April 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021	1,647,220
Calendar Year 2021	January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021	411,924

<b>TABLE 4 NUMBER OF HIP VENDORS</b>		
	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Number of Vendors</b>
All time	April 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021	285
Calendar Year 2021	January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021	207

**TABLE 5  
NUMBER OF HIP CLIENTS AND VENDORS BY LOCATION\***

<b>County</b>	<b>Count of HIP vendors</b>	<b>Count of HIP Households</b>	<b>Count of HIP Clients (Total household members)</b>
BARNSTABLE	4	375	557
BERKSHIRE	14	1,041	1,753
BRISTOL	23	2,943	5,116
DUKES	2	75	105
ESSEX	15	10,503	18,940
FRANKLIN	26	1,609	2,690
HAMPDEN	19	10,109	18,574
HAMPSHIRE	22	1,847	2,891
MIDDLESEX	28	7,716	12,875
NORFOLK	7	3,406	5,827
PLYMOUTH	9	1,670	2,981
SUFFOLK	13	12,115	20,793
WORCESTER	36	7,288	12,538
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>60,697</b>	<b>105,640</b>

\*Data is from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021  
Some vendors (5), Households (8) and clients (8) had no associated counties and were removed from total.