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Healthy Incentives Program Report

July 2023



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE HEALTHY INCENTIVES PROGRAM REPORT

JULY 2023

OVERVIEW

Line Item 4400-1004 of the FY23 GAA (Chapter 126 of the Acts of 2022) 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).

TABLE I HIP MAXIMUM MONTHLY INCENTIVES EARNED	
Number of Household Members	HIP Monthly Cap
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 ended in 2019 and the program has since been funded through the state's annual GAA.

OUTREACH AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

In 2020, the Administration invested additional funds for HIP as recommended by the state's COVID-19 Command Center's Food Security Task Force. Thirty-nine new farm vendors were added to the program through a Notice of Opportunity (NOO) to help combat food insecurity and equitably expand support for the local food supply system.

In 2022, DTA and MDAR opened a second NOO that facilitated program expansion in a strategic and equitable way, utilizing a data-informed approach. HIP serves as a tool to achieve economic mobility for both SNAP recipients and HIP vendors, and as such DTA took a strategic approach to the NOO evaluation process. This involved a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative review resulting in the selection of 123 new vendors. The selection process prioritized accessibility and equity, innovative strategies to provide culturally relevant foods to SNAP clients, and support for farmers who live and work in the high-need, priority communities they serve.

In developing the NOO, DTA used internal and external quantitative data sources from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to identify priority communities and priority populations. Priority communities are defined by relation to or prevalence of Food Deserts, classification as an Environmental Justice community, and/or are a city or town with less HIP access relative to their SNAP population. Priority populations are defined as historically experiencing lower access to HIP locations and/or higher rates of diet-related chronic disease. Priority populations specifically identified as part of the NOO were Black SNAP recipients¹ and SNAP recipients with disabilities².

DTA also reviewed the qualitative portion of vendor applications for their ability to serve identified priority populations. Factors used in evaluating the applications included:

1. Ability to establish HIP access point(s) in priority communities as defined above
2. Ability to reach priority populations as defined above
3. Feasibility of action plan for serving populations especially impacted by food insecurity.
This action plan may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Home delivery models

¹ Underrepresented among HIP users by 10%

² Obesity rates for adults with disabilities are approximately 57% higher than for adults without disabilities, [obesityfactsheet2010.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/factsheet2010.pdf)

- b. Mobile farmers' markets
 - c. Farm stands with multiple days of open hours at one location, particularly in priority communities
 - d. Coordination with community partners and government agencies
4. Demonstrated capacity and commitment to serve SNAP clients in culturally appropriate ways, including but not limited to:
- a. Cultural competence and cultural humility of business owner and staff
 - b. Ability to provide service in languages spoken by community members
 - c. Historical presence and familiarity with community
 - d. Cultural relevance of produce for community served

The new vendors selected in 2022 represent an expansion of HIP access to 41 towns that previously had no HIP access and to 67 towns that had very low HIP access relative to their SNAP client population. Selected vendors will collectively offer HIP access in 25 languages and serve 25 Gateway Cities when onboarding is completed at the end of FY23.

Since 2019, DTA has expanded the department's evaluation capabilities by matching EBT transaction data to geolocated HIP transaction data. This allowed DTA to identify areas with low HIP access and informed the selection of priority communities for the 2020 and 2022 vendor selection processes.

HIP Utilization Data: Overview

HIP has been continually operating since March 2020, with the highest rates of vendor and client participation during the peak growing months of June to November. DTA publishes [publicly available data](#) every month that include the number of households who participate, high-level demographics of participants, and geographic data on usage by county.

TABLE 2 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS UTILIZING HIP		
	Dates	Number of Households
All time	April 1, 2017 to December 31, 2022	185,742
Calendar Year 2022	January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022	77,770

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF HIP TRANSACTIONS		
	Dates	Number of Transactions
All time	April 1, 2017 to December 31, 2022	2,351,084
Calendar Year 2022	January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022	589,397

TABLE 4		
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NUMBER OF HIP VENDORS WHO PROCESSED TRANSACTIONS, BY USDA BUSINESS		
	Dates	Number of Vendors
Calendar Year 2022	January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022	255

Household Demographics for Calendar Year 2022

TABLE 5 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS UTILIZING HIP BY SNAP HOUSEHOLD SIZE	
Household Size	Number of Households
1	47,752
2	15,328
3	7,258
4	4,515
5	1,786
6	675
7+	456

TABLE 6 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS UTILIZING HIP BY AGE OF SNAP HEAD OF HOUSEHOLDS	
Age	Number of Households
19 and under	99
20-29	6,570
30-39	12,510
40-49	10,859
50-59	11,925
60-69	15,524
70-79	12,433
80-89	6,355
90 and above	1,495

TABLE 7 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS UTILIZING HIP BY RACE/ETHNICITY OF SNAP HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	
Race/Ethnicity	Number of Households
American Indian or Alaska Native	616
Asian	12,047
Black or African American	6,523
More than 1 race	370
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	171
White	35,179
Information Unavailable	22,864

Clients and Vendors with HIP transactions, by Municipality, in Calendar Year 2022

Table 8 Number of Clients and USDA-Registered Vendors by Municipality		
Municipality	Number of Vendors* (USDA Registered Address)	Number of Clients (Residence Address)
ABINGTON		159
ACTON		167
ACUSHNET		165
ADAMS	2	339
AGAWAM	4	2,427
AMESBURY		259
AMHERST	4	1,044
ANDOVER		548
ARLINGTON		668
ASHBURNHAM	2	110
ASHBY		81
ASHFIELD		83
ASHLAND		182
ATHOL		648
ATTLEBORO		529
AUBURN		340
AVON		78
AYER		159
BARNSTABLE	1	356
BARRE	1	145
BECKET		75
BEDFORD		109
BELCHERTOWN	1	550
BELLINGHAM		141
BELMONT		334
BERKLEY		122
BERLIN	1	42
BERNARDSTON	2	144
BEVERLY	1	719
BILLERICA		286
BLACKSTONE		117

BLANDFORD		21
BOLTON	1	29
BOSTON	15	41,625
BOURNE		126
BOXBOROUGH		33
BOXFORD	1	43
BOYLSTON		78
BRAINTREE	1	649
BREWSTER		36
BRIDGEWATER		347
BRIMFIELD	1	110
BROCKTON	3	4,623
BROOKFIELD		115
BROOKLINE		1,128
BUCKLAND	1	14
BURLINGTON		120
CAMBRIDGE	1	2,375
CANTON	1	234
CARLISLE		20
CARVER		158
CHARLEMONT	1	85
CHARLTON		218
CHATHAM		15
CHELMSFORD		288
CHELSEA		1,104
CHESHIRE	1	103
CHESTER		33
CHESTERFIELD	2	19
CHICOPEE	2	7,613
CHILMARK		25
CLARKSBURG	2	
CLINTON		441
COHASSET		<12
COLRAIN		158
CONCORD	3	97
CONWAY	2	88
CUMMINGTON		30
DALTON	1	223
DANVERS		185
DARTMOUTH	4	465

DEDHAM		333
DEERFIELD	6	242
DENNIS	1	136
DIGHTON	3	228
DOUGLAS		238
DOVER	1	<12
DRACUT	2	694
DUDLEY	2	216
DUNSTABLE		23
DUXBURY		59
EAST BRIDGEWATER	2	245
EAST BROOKFIELD		70
EAST LONGMEADOW	2	413
EASTHAM		33
EASTHAMPTON	3	739
EASTON	1	379
EDGARTOWN	1	48
EGREMONT	1	<12
ERVING		90
ESSEX		31
EVERETT	1	715
FAIRHAVEN		345
FALL RIVER		3,115
FALMOUTH		282
FITCHBURG	2	2,719
FLORIDA		<12
FOXBOROUGH		117
FRAMINGHAM		941
FRANKLIN	1	194
FREETOWN		150
GARDNER		921
GEORGETOWN		111
GILL	1	71
GLOUCESTER	1	764
GOSHEN		17
GRAFTON		408
GRANBY	3	288

GRANVILLE		42
GREAT BARRINGTON	1	188
GREENFIELD	1	2,143
GROTON	2	49
GROVELAND		67
HADLEY	5	169
HALIFAX	1	70
HAMILTON		134
HAMPDEN	1	142
HANOVER		46
HANSON		62
HARDWICK	2	73
HARVARD		35
HARWICH		69
HATFIELD	1	82
HAVERHILL	3	3,498
HAWLEY	1	
HEATH		45
HINGHAM		44
HINSDALE		51
HOLBROOK		171
HOLDEN		154
HOLLAND		66
HOLLISTON	2	84
HOLYOKE	2	4,286
HOPEDALE		52
HOPKINTON	1	71
HUBBARDSTON		64
HUDSON		221
HULL		63
HUNTINGTON		181
IPSWICH	2	384
KINGSTON		80
LAKEVILLE	1	407
LANCASTER	2	167
LANESBOROUGH	2	92
LAWRENCE	1	19,895

LEE	1	128
LEICESTER	3	464
LENOX		84
LEOMINSTER	3	1,629
LEVERETT		95
LEXINGTON	1	420
LINCOLN	1	28
LITTLETON		90
LONGMEADOW		226
LOWELL	2	8,868
LUDLOW		874
LUNENBURG	4	380
LYNN	2	7,734
LYNNFIELD		56
MALDEN		2,701
MANCHESTER		48
MANSFIELD		169
MARBLEHEAD	1	193
MARION		46
MARLBOROUGH		507
MARSHFIELD	1	214
MASHPEE		114
MATTAPOISETT		32
MAYNARD		88
MEDFIELD		50
MEDFORD		645
MEDWAY	2	149
MELROSE		371
MENDON		51
MERRIMAC		222
METHUEN		3,535
MIDDLEBOROUGH	2	940
MIDDLETON		30
MILFORD		311
MILLBURY		435
MILLIS	2	99
MILLVILLE		79

MILTON		213
MONROE		<12
MONSON		297
MONTAGUE	5	1,009
MONTEREY		13
MOUNT WASHINGTON		<12
NAHANT		37
NANTUCKET		<12
NATICK		417
NEEDHAM		251
NEW BEDFORD	4	5,063
NEW BRAINTREE	1	19
NEW MARLBOROUGH		<12
NEW SALEM		33
NEWBURY		42
NEWBURYPORT		155
NEWTON		1,178
NORFOLK		40
NORTH ADAMS	1	818
NORTH ANDOVER		714
NORTH ATTLEBOROUGH		268
NORTH BROOKFIELD		215
NORTH READING		46
NORTHAMPTON	1	1,808
NORTHBOROUGH	2	240
NORTHBRIDGE	1	1,094
NORTHFIELD		141
NORTON		205
NORWELL		24
NORWOOD		397
OAK BLUFFS		47
OAKHAM		34
ORANGE	3	644
ORLEANS	1	37
OTIS		20
OXFORD		335
PALMER		611
PAXTON	1	85

PEABODY	2	835
PELHAM	1	
PEMBROKE		92
PEPPERELL	2	219
PETERSHAM		<12
PHILLIPSTON	1	
PITTSFIELD	3	2,519
PLAINFIELD		40
PLAINVILLE		76
PLYMOUTH		693
PLYMPTON		13
PRINCETON		34
PROVINCETOWN	1	92
QUINCY		5,209
RANDOLPH		957
RAYNHAM	2	257
READING		118
REHOBOTH	3	88
REVERE		2,135
RICHMOND		15
ROCHESTER	1	56
ROCKLAND		196
ROCKPORT	1	137
ROWE		35
ROWLEY		159
ROYALSTON		25
RUSSELL		135
RUTLAND		99
SALEM		1,587
SALISBURY		178
SANDISFIELD		<12
SANDWICH		139
SAUGUS		375
SAVOY		31
SCITUATE		41
SEEKONK		121
SHARON	3	341

SHEFFIELD		54
SHELBURNE	3	426
SHERBORN	1	13
SHIRLEY		151
SHREWSBURY		477
SHUTESBURY		96
SOMERSET		221
SOMERVILLE	3	1,708
SOUTH HADLEY		925
SOUTHAMPTON		128
SOUTHBOROUGH		83
SOUTHBRIDGE		793
SOUTHWICK	1	507
SPENCER	1	872
SPRINGFIELD	6	17,309
STERLING	1	116
STOCKBRIDGE		46
STONEHAM		252
STOUGHTON		631
STOW	1	46
STURBRIDGE		180
SUDBURY	1	96
SUNDERLAND	1	151
SUTTON	1	169
SWAMPSCOTT		237
SWANSEA	2	216
TAUNTON	2	2,276
TEMPLETON		170
TEWKSBURY	1	572
TISBURY	1	145
TOPSFIELD		42
TOWNSEND	1	262
TRURO	1	20
TYNGSBOROUGH		174
TYRINGHAM		<12
UPTON		113
UXBRIDGE		467

WAKEFIELD		229
WALES		80
WALPOLE		126
WALTHAM		911
WARE		620
WAREHAM		446
WARREN		251
WARWICK		67
WATERTOWN		773
WAYLAND		96
WEBSTER		933
WELLESLEY		202
WELLFLEET		48
WENDELL		146
WENHAM		43
WEST BOYLSTON		72
WEST BRIDGEWATER	1	160
WEST BROOKFIELD	1	146
WEST NEWBURY	1	32
WEST SPRINGFIELD	1	4,636
WEST STOCKBRIDGE		21
WEST TISBURY		32
WESTBOROUGH		323
WESTFIELD	3	4,215
WESTFORD	1	186
WESTHAMPTON	2	
WESTMINSTER	1	141
WESTON		36
WESTPORT	5	278
WESTWOOD		72
WEYMOUTH		736
WHATELY		22
WHITMAN		198
WILBRAHAM	2	430
WILLIAMSBURG		217

WILLIAMSTOWN	2	107
WILMINGTON		223
WINCHENDON		472
WINCHESTER		172
WINDSOR	1	25
WINTHROP		295
WOBURN		438
WORCESTER	5	12,940
WORTHINGTON		36
WRENTHAM	2	92
YARMOUTH		273
EXCLUDED FROM COUNT	7	14
<p style="text-align: center;">“<12” reflects suppressed counts that are below 12 individuals. <i>*Farm vendors typically register their farm address with USDA. These addresses do not reflect vendors’ complete HIP service areas, as vendors may sell in multiple locations.</i></p>		

Addendum I: Top priority communities for Notice of Opportunity 2022

The list of priority communities included but was not limited to:

Brockton, Springfield, Fall River, New Bedford, Worcester, Chelsea, Randolph, Lawrence, Everett, Taunton, Lynn, Boston, Malden, Lowell, Southbridge, Revere, Holyoke, Fitchburg, West Springfield, Milford, Palmer, Chicopee, Webster, Pittsfield, and Marlborough.