

Department of Transitional Assistance

HIP Notice of Opportunity

COMMBUYS BID NUMBER: [BD-22-1112-WEL-DTA01-74279](#)

Release Date: April 20, 2022

Responses Due: June 8, 2022 at 5:00 pm EST

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

OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is the state agency responsible for administering the Commonwealth's transitional assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy 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 operates the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP). HIP incentivizes clients to buy more fruits and vegetables by crediting clients' SNAP accounts with a matching incentive for each dollar spent at participating HIP vendors on eligible fruits and vegetables, up to a monthly limit.

Participating HIP vendors include SNAP-authorized farms, farmers' markets, mobile farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Pilot programs. CSA Pilot programs may be operated by direct marketing farms, farmers' markets or nonprofit buying cooperatives.

DTA is now seeking to add HIP access points where clients can maximize their SNAP dollars by earning the HIP incentive for their purchase of healthy fruits and vegetables. Accordingly, DTA is accepting proposals from eligible local produce vendors who seek to establish new access points to process HIP. This opportunity is open to both new and existing HIP vendors.

Vendors selected will not be compensated directly by DTA through this opportunity. So long as HIP funding is available, however, vendors may experience increased sales, as SNAP clients choose to shop at their locations in order to utilize their HIP benefit.

DTA will select vendors based on the vendor's ability to distribute healthy produce to Priority Communities and/or Priority Populations using targeted distribution models. However, vendors selling in any community, to any population and using any distribution model may apply.

For the purposes of this Notice of Opportunity, Priority Communities and Priority Populations are defined as follows:

Priority Communities: those living in areas designated as food deserts and/or environmental justice communities as well as areas with relatively few HIP access points relative to their SNAP client populations. This list includes but is 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.

Priority Populations: those for whom food insecurity has been historically disproportionate and rates of chronic disease high, including but not limited to, SNAP clients with disabilities¹ and/or Black SNAP clients, who have historically accessed fewer HIP locations compared to other client populations.

DTA is seeking vendors who will sell via innovative models that reach clients where they live, as well as models that provide consistency of access by being open multiple days a week at one location. Examples of distribution methods DTA is seeking include delivery, mobile markets and farm stands that serve Priority Populations and/or are located in Priority Communities.

HIP funding is subject to appropriation. DTA cannot ensure that the same level of funding will be available in the future for HIP incentives.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

New vendors applying to become HIP-authorized vendors must be SNAP-authorized farm retailers with one of the following [USDA Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\) classifications](#):

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

Existing HIP vendors can also apply to enable additional HIP terminals through this opportunity.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/documents/obesityfactsheet2010.pdf>

A panel of reviewers including representatives from DTA and MDAR will score proposals based on some or all of the below criteria. The evaluation panel may request additional information from an applicant. Vendors selling in any community, to any population and using any distribution model may apply. Applicants selected will be those best able to effectively meet the following needs:

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
 - 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

DURATION OF OPPORTUNITY

Vendors who are selected through this opportunity can expect to provide HIP benefits to eligible DTA clients so long as funding is available. **Funding is dependent on appropriation, may vary and is not guaranteed.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR HIP VENDORS

- Vendors will be responsible for obtaining [EBT-processing equipment](#) capable of processing SNAP benefits and HIP incentives, for each of the access points awarded. Alternatively, vendors classified by FNS as direct-marketing farms, farmers' markets, or nonprofit buying cooperatives may join the [SNAP CSA Pilot](#), which requires no EBT equipment to process SNAP/HIP transactions.
- Equipment funding and other funds to support proposals may be available through the [SNAP equipment grant](#) or [Marketlink subsidy](#).
- Vendors new to processing HIP must complete mandatory HIP training prior to processing HIP.
- Vendors may only sell to clients in the communities contained in their proposal unless granted approval in writing by DTA.

- Vendors must provide updated sales location information to DTA and/or MDAR on an ongoing basis so HIP locations can be posted on DTA Finder.
- All SNAP/HIP transactions must comply with federal and state SNAP regulations.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested vendors must submit their application via the [HIP Vendor Notice of Opportunity webpage](https://www.mass.gov/healthy-incentives-program-hip-notice-of-opportunity-noo) at <https://www.mass.gov/healthy-incentives-program-hip-notice-of-opportunity-noo> by June 8, 2022. Vendors will be notified of selection or non-selection via email.

Questions regarding the application or selection process may be submitted to DTA.HIP@mass.gov. DTA will not respond to emails directly but will post both questions and responses on the [HIP Vendor Notice of Opportunity webpage](https://www.mass.gov/healthy-incentives-program-hip-notice-of-opportunity-noo) at <https://www.mass.gov/healthy-incentives-program-hip-notice-of-opportunity-noo>.