



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance**

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2024-69
December 5, 2024**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  **Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Local Implementation and Special Populations**

Re: SNAP: Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) Benefit Threshold Change

Overview

The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) is an incentive-based program that helps SNAP households maximize their benefits when buying fruits and vegetables from an eligible HIP retailer. SNAP households are automatically enrolled in HIP once their SNAP case is approved.

Effective December 1, 2024, due to operational budget constraints, the incentive will be capped at \$20 a month, regardless of the household's size.

Clients who received a HIP incentive for eligible purchases made at a HIP retailer or through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program within the last year will receive text and email notifications of this threshold change before December 1, 2024.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff:

- that HIP reimbursement benefits will no longer be tiered,
- all SNAP households, regardless of size, are eligible for a reimbursement of up to \$20 per calendar month, and
- updates to Online Guide pages.

Revised Online Guide Pages

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Healthy Incentives Program
Page: HIP Examples

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Healthy Incentives Program
Page: HIP Operations

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialist or TAO management email them to [DTA.Procedural Issues](#).

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.

HIP Examples

Q1: If a client has \$0 left on their EBT card, can they still earn HIP for the month?

A1: No. SNAP households must have SNAP benefits available on their EBT card to pay for the fruits and vegetables.

Q2: If a household doesn't earn their entire monthly HIP cap, can they earn extra incentives the next month?

A2: No. SNAP households may only earn up to their monthly cap.

Example

Cyrus Lucky (he/him) is a SNAP household of 3. His monthly HIP limit is \$20. He gets his benefits on the 14th of every month. On December 16th, Cyrus made a purchase of \$16 on HIP-eligible food items. Cyrus has \$4 left to earn for the month of December. Cyrus can earn \$20 more SNAP dollars starting January 1st.

Last Update: December 5, 2024

HIP Operations

SNAP households are automatically enrolled in HIP when their case is approved.

A [welcome notice](#) is generated to the household outlining how HIP works.

SNAP households earn a dollar-for-dollar match, up to a monthly cap based on household size, on [HIP-eligible fruits and vegetables](#).

To earn HIP incentives, SNAP clients must spend their SNAP benefits on fruits and vegetables with eligible HIP retailers at:

- Farmers' markets
- Farm stands
- Mobile markets
- [Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\)](#) programs

Not every farmer participates in HIP. To find a list of HIP retailers, visit www.DTAFinder.com.

Note	HIP cannot be earned at food stores, like supermarkets. However, HIP incentives can be used at any location that accepts SNAP.
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HIP Benefit Monthly Cap Amount

The maximum HIP benefits a household can earn is \$20 a month regardless of household size.

Important	To earn HIP incentive benefits, SNAP households must have a balance on their EBT card. Unlike SNAP benefits which are issued on a cyclical month, HIP runs on a calendar month. This means that SNAP households are able to earn their monthly cap starting the 1 st of every month and have until the last day of that month to reach their cap.
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When a HIP-approved purchase is made, the HIP incentive benefit is immediately credited to the household's EBT account and may be redeemed immediately or saved for a future purchase, similar to SNAP benefits. HIP incentives can be used just as SNAP benefits and, if unused, will remain on the household's EBT card up to the expungement period.

After each HIP-eligible purchase, the receipt identifies the amount of the HIP incentives earned, as well as the month-to-date total. SNAP households can also get this information by calling EBT Customer Service at 1-800-997-2555.

Sample Receipt



EPPIC

EPPIC transaction history identifies HIP-eligible purchases as FINI INCENTIVE REBATE and includes the amount earned back on the purchase. If a portion of or entire HIP cap was earned in the calendar month, the remaining portion or \$0.00 will be listed as the amount.

BEACON

The FINI Participation page was created to record SNAP households' participation. It allows DTA staff to identify which households are participating in HIP. The FINI Participation page records when the household made their first HIP-eligible purchase. The BEACON page is named after the original USDA FINI grant.

Cancellation

Participation in HIP is voluntary. SNAP households can choose to opt-out of HIP at any time. When this request is processed ([DTA Staff Responsibilities](#) (link)), a HIP special batch narrative is generated, and the SNAP household is issued a cancellation notice outlining the effective date and how to re-enroll.

Note	The HIP special batch narrative references outdated contact information. Please refer to DTA Staff Responsibilities for current points of contact.
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HIP Benefit Adjustments

At times, a HIP benefit is not immediately credited to a SNAP household's EBT card upon transaction of a HIP-eligible purchase. This is generally due to technical issues with the retailer's equipment. When a benefit adjustment is processed ([DTA Staff Responsibilities](#)) a benefit adjustment notice is issued to the household informing them of the date and the name of the retailer where the issue occurred and when the HIP benefit was credited to their EBT card.

HIP benefit adjustments are issued when the following occurs:

- Purchase was HIP-eligible fruits and vegetables
- Purchase was made at an authorized HIP retailer
- HIP cap had not yet been reached in the calendar month

Last Update: December 5, 2024