

# Massachusetts Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

The Healthy Incentives Program means healthy families, sustainable farms, and a strong local economy. Operated by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, the program provides a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement when SNAP users buy fresh, healthy, local food directly from Massachusetts farmers.

## Since HIP began in April, 2017:

SNAP households have purchased more than **\$44 million** from local farmers in healthy, local foods.

More than **185,000 households / 300,000** individuals have used HIP.

- 44% of those families included seniors, who need less medical attention when they eat healthy foods.
- 30% of those families included children, who do better in school when they eat healthy food.
- 30% of those families include a person with a disability.



294 HIP farmers across the Commonwealth sell food at farmers markets, CSAs, farm stands and mobile markets at **nearly 600 points of sale**.

In a study of program operations, HIP participants on average purchased **1.23 daily servings of fruits and vegetables per person**. This helps reduce the incidence of dietary related illnesses and public health care costs.

HIP helps **lessen MA's estimated \$2.4 billion in avoidable costs related to food insecurity and hunger** in MA by increasing access to healthy foods to vulnerable people.

Each HIP dollar spent results in an additional \$2 in local economic impact, when farmers spend those dollars on local goods and services. So HIP has resulted in **an additional \$88 million in local economic impact**.

To address disproportionately low usage among African American SNAP clients and SNAP clients with disabilities, **in 2022 the program added 100 vendors** who expressed a commitment to addressing these inequities.

HIP helps build an economically sustainable food system, helping make healthy food available to more people, and supporting farmers to be able to charge fair prices for what they grow, allowing them to better steward their land, protect natural resources, and contribute to the local economy.

# HIP's Impact



“Participating in HIP has given us an ability to actually provide fresh produce to customers who wouldn’t have access to it otherwise. Our SNAP sales have increased 40% since the HIP program started, and has been able to fund our expansion to more markets and a CSA that offers delivery for customers who can’t make it to the markets. We feel much more integrated into our local food system and able to provide in ways that we couldn’t before.”

- Mill City Grows, Lowell

My family needs the mobile market. Cooking is what we do. It’s part of our culture, and you can’t cook with bad ingredients. [This market] has the best ingredients I’ve seen in Boston, and I can actually afford it.”

- HIP customer, Roxbury YMCA Trustees mobile market

Since HIP has been introduced in Massachusetts, I have been able to eat much healthier. As a senior citizen in treatment for incurable cancer, I have lowered immunity. Particularly during the holidays, it is a blessing to have that extra \$40 per month of guaranteed fresh produce for an immunity boost, and with inflation and obvious rising food costs, my SNAP dollars stretch farther due to HIP.

- Marcia M., HIP customer, Dennis

HIP helps consumers and farmers. It is a brilliant, simple, effective method for subsidizing healthy vegetables and stimulating the local economy.

- Elena Colman, Small Farm, Stow



The Caucus chose HIP as a priority because it demonstrates the connections between public health, local food, food access, the local economy, and the environment, and proves that public investments in comprehensive programs can have far-reaching impacts.

- MA Legislative Food System Caucus

The collaboration between MDAR and DTA on the HIP program has been a **true success story** for farmers’ markets and the communities they serve.

- MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux

The Healthy Incentives Program is a powerful tool in our work to address food security issues across the state. The program not only increases access to fresh, locally-grown food for SNAP clients, but also brings critical economic support to our local farms and communities.

- Former DTA Comm. Amy Kershaw

The more than 300 supporters of the Campaign for HIP Funding have successfully advocated for \$59 million for HIP since 2017. Join us in supporting this essential program!

[www.hipma.org](http://www.hipma.org)