

# MASSACHUSETTS HEALTHY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (HIP)



In 2017, HIP meant better health outcomes for vulnerable families, and better sustainability for local farms.

## FAMILIES



SNAP families purchased **\$2.97 million** in fresh, healthy, local foods.



**35,400 families** earned HIP incentives.



**62,200 individuals** increased their fruit and vegetable intake by **1 serving** per day.



That increase in healthy eating can mean savings of more than **\$1.1 million** in public health costs.



**50% of those families included seniors**, who spend less time in the emergency room when they eat healthy foods.



**34% of those families included children**, who do better in school when they eat healthy foods.



More than **70% of MA SNAP recipients are employed**. Eating healthy food increases productivity in the workplace.

## FARMS

More than **200 farms** sold **\$2.97 million** more of the fresh fruits and vegetables they grew.



SNAP sales at farm retailers increased by **nearly 600%** from 2016 to 2017, thanks to HIP.



That increase in sales helps generate **22-48 new jobs** in the farming sector.



Each dollar spent results in an **additional \$1.12** in local economic impact, as farmers contribute to the local economy, spending those dollars on goods and services.



Increased farm sustainability means farmers are better able to **protect their land**, stewarding **natural resources** that benefit the environment.



In 2017 there was a **65% increase** in the number of direct-to-consumer SNAP retailers.



# What is the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)?

Launched in April 2017, the Healthy Incentives Program provides monthly incentives to SNAP households of up to: \$40 for families of 1-2; \$60 for families of 3-5; and \$80 for families of 6 or more, when they purchase fresh, local, healthy vegetables and fruits from Massachusetts farmers at farmers markets, farm-stands, CSAs, and mobile markets. The money they spend at these retailers is immediately added back to their EBT cards, and can be spent at any SNAP retailer. The program is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance, in partnership with the Department of Agricultural Resources and the Department of Public Health, and is supported by a grant from USDA, state financing, and private donations.

## What are people saying about HIP?

The East Boston Farmers Market has experienced an **800% growth in SNAP sales** between the 2016 and 2017 season.

- Gabrielle Witham, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

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

We have had many new customers this summer including many senior citizens and many group homes for adults with disabilities. This program is providing healthy food from fields in our state to folks who truly need that food. It is a simple concept that is **working very well**.

- Kim Miczek, Breezy Gardens, Leicester and Spencer

The **sheer volume of sales** provide compelling evidence dispelling the myth that low income people do not want to purchase and eat fresh produce.

- Grace Slivoski, Worcester Regional Environmental Council

Collaborations like this typify what kind of government our taxpayers expect and deserve; one that **identifies problems and offers concrete solutions** that draw from multiple agencies and stakeholders with shared goals.

- State Representative Chris Markey (D-Dartmouth)

HIP is helping our **SNAP clients to eat better and live healthier** by giving them a greater opportunity to purchase nutritious fruits and vegetables at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and through Community Supported Agriculture farm shares.

- DTA Commissioner Jeff McCue

In one season our farmers market **revenue blew up because of HIP**. At several locations we went from one tent to three; one register to two, and sales were measured in thousands rather than hundreds. The insight we gained was transformative to our operations: People are hungry and living too close to the edge. The HIP program placed us right on the front lines of feeding people who might otherwise go without. That mission – that idea of reaching out further to help people in need – is now central to the way we do business.

- Justin Chase, Arrowhead Farm, Newburyport

The best part about the program is knowing that we can get our produce into the homes of our neighbors who **normally cannot afford to pay** a price that is fair to the farmers for our produce. Everyone wins with this arrangement.

- Tristram Keefe, Urban Farming Institute, Bowdoin Geneva farmers market, Dorchester

