

Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): SNAP customers



Question: What is HIP?

Answer: HIP helps you buy more fruits and vegetables from farmers with your SNAP benefits (also known as food stamps). HIP is an incentive program unique to Massachusetts that helps you earn more SNAP benefits.

Question: How does HIP work?

Answer: Use your SNAP benefits with one of our HIP retailers to buy fruits and vegetables. You will get the SNAP money you spend on eligible fruits and vegetables put right back on your EBT card, up to a monthly limit.

Important: You need to spend SNAP benefits/Food Stamps on fruits and vegetables to earn HIP incentive benefits.

It's easy to earn HIP incentive benefits. The money goes back onto your EBT card right away after each eligible purchase. You will see it added back into your SNAP balance. As always, you can spend that balance on SNAP food at any location where SNAP is accepted.

Question: How much HIP can I earn each month?

Answer: You can earn:

- Up to \$40 per month if there are 1 or 2 people in your SNAP household
- Up to \$60 per month if there are 3 to 5 people in your SNAP household
- Up to \$80 per month if there are 6 or more people in your SNAP household

Remember: This is extra money you can earn back onto your EBT card each month, in addition to your regular monthly SNAP benefits.

Question: Where can I earn HIP?

Answer: You can buy HIP-eligible fruits and vegetables at participating sites across the state. Participating sites include:

- Farmers' markets
- Mobile farmers' markets
- Farm stands
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm share programs

Question: How can I find a HIP retailer?

Answer: In many ways!

- Go to <https://massnrc.org/farmlocator/map.aspx> (choose HIP under Nutrition Programs)
- Go to mass.gov/HIP
- Call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333

Tip: Look for the HIP logo when you shop, or ask the farmer if they participate in HIP. Not every farmer participates in HIP.

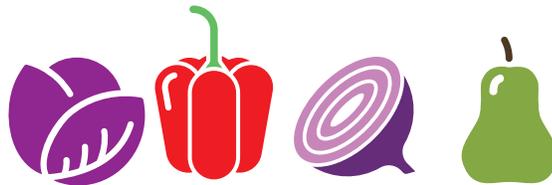
You cannot earn HIP at food stores, like supermarkets. However, at supermarkets or any location that accepts SNAP, you can spend the money you've earned back onto your EBT card through HIP.

Question: What fruits and vegetables from a HIP farm are eligible for HIP?

Answer: Fresh, canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables. They must not have added sugar, salt, fats, or oils.

Examples of eligible foods are:

- onions
- pears
- broccoli
- canned tomatoes
- applesauce
- frozen berries
- dried mushrooms
- fresh herbs
- vegetable seeds
- starter plants for your garden (like tomato seeds or tomato plants)



Examples of foods that do not qualify include:

- vegetable and fruit juices (including apple cider)
- ornamental and decorative fruits and vegetables
- dried spices and herbs

Question: I have \$0 left on my EBT card. Can I still earn my HIP for the month?

Answer: No. You need to have SNAP available on your EBT card to pay for the fruits and vegetables before the money is put back onto your card through HIP. If you have spent all your SNAP benefits for the month, you will need to wait until your next SNAP issuance to earn HIP.



Question: When does my monthly HIP limit start?

Answer: Your HIP monthly limit starts on the first of every month. It does not start the same day you receive your SNAP benefits.

Example: Sally Smith is a SNAP household of 1. Her monthly HIP limit is \$40. She gets her SNAP benefits on the 13th of every month. On June 1st, Sally made a purchase of \$20 on HIP eligible food items. Sally has \$20 left to earn for the month of June. Sally can earn \$40 more dollars starting July 1st.

Question: How can I earn my total HIP limit?

Answer: Buy HIP fruits and vegetables first before spending your SNAP benefits on other food items.

Example: Jon Snow gets \$300 in SNAP benefits. Jon goes to his local farmers' market after getting his monthly SNAP benefits and buys all his fruits and vegetables. Jon was able to earn his monthly HIP cap of \$60. He then used his remaining SNAP on other food items.

Question: How can I find out how much HIP incentive benefits I have earned this month?

Answer: There are two ways to check.

1. When you buy HIP-eligible fruits and vegetables, look at your receipt. Your receipt will show:

- your SNAP/EBT account balance
- how much HIP incentives you earned this sale
- how much HIP incentives you earned this month.

2. Call the number on the back of your EBT card (1-800-997-2555). This will tell you:

- your SNAP/EBT account balance
- how much you have earned back onto your card through HIP for the month.



SAMPLE RECEIPT

This shows your starting SNAP balance. “SNAP Purchase” is how much you spent with your EBT card. “HIP Earned” is how much of that purchase is HIP eligible. The “SNAP Purchase” was immediately refunded with the “HIP Earned”, which is why there is no change in your SNAP balance.

“HIP Earned MTD” is how much HIP you have EARNED this month. You can find out how much HIP you can still earn this month by subtracting “HIP Earned MTD” from your monthly HIP Cap (\$40, \$60, or \$80)

Verizon 12:38 PM 54%

Receipt Details Done

Proc#: 3906152 02/22/2017
Term#: T0000001 12:36:49 PM

SNAP Purchase

Card Num: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx3245 *
Settlement Date: 02/22/2017
Merchant: < No Merchant >
(Market Manager)

Balance Summary:	
SNAP Begin Bal:	230.00
SNAP Purchase :	-20.00
HIP Earned :	20.00
SNAP End Bal :	230.00

Cash Balance :	100.00
HIP Earned MTD:	25.00

Result: Approved
Auth #: 123456

Send

Question: If I don't earn my entire monthly HIP limit, can I earn extra HIP the next month?

Answer: No. Your HIP monthly limit is the same every month, starting on the first of the month.

Question: What if I have questions about HIP?

Answer:

- Call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333
- Visit www.mass.gov/hip

Question: How do HIP-eligible foods help me and my family?

Answer: Eating a lot of fruits and vegetables every day helps keep you healthy! A healthy diet helps prevent heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, and cancer. It also helps you maintain a healthy weight. Families are healthier when they eat more fruits and vegetables! Visit www.mahealthyfoodinasnap.org to learn more.