

MEMORANDUM

November 15, 2011

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst *lmc*

SUBJECT: **Discussion: Eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; previously federal Food Stamps)**

Attending this discussion:

JoAnn Barnes, Deputy Chief, DHHS Children, Youth, and Family Services
Felicia Turner, Administrator, DHHS Income Supports and Child Care Subsidy Program

At this session, the Committee will receive information on the program previously called Food Stamps, which is now called SNAP at the federal level and the Food Supplement Program in the State of Maryland.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) website says that nationally in 2010, 40.3 million people participated in the SNAP program. The average benefit per person was about \$134 per month. In the State of Maryland, SNAP served 560,848 people in 265,796 households. The average monthly benefit per Maryland household was about \$275 per month.

DHHS has provided information on ©1 showing that in FY11, 57,026 people in 25,554 Montgomery County households participated in SNAP. This number of cases is about a 25% increase although the number of applications was relatively unchanged.

DHHS has provided information on their outreach efforts as well as information from USDA on eligibility criteria. Information at ©7 shows that households with incomes at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for SNAP. For a family of four this would be an income of \$2,422 per month. While the information on ©6 "Five Easy Steps to SNAP Benefits" has immigration or naturalization papers (if you were born outside the United States) as a

requirement, the information at ©3 highlights that there are many instances, including refugees and asylees, where a non-citizen may be eligible for SNAP without a waiting period.

The USDA website also includes a SNAP retail locator that allows someone to put in an address or zip code and then view retailers within a certain mile range that accept SNAP. The printout at ©8 shows locations near the zip code 20850. There is then a scroll at the bottom of the screen identifying the names and locations of the retailers. The retailers may be large grocery stores such as Safeway, ethnic grocery stores, or pharmacy/convenience stores such as CVS.

Included at ©9-11 is information on Farmer's Markets. Three Montgomery County Farmers Markets: Crossroads Farmers Market, Silver Spring FreshFarm Market, and the Takoma Park Farmers Market, are identified as accepting SNAP.

Lastly, attached at ©12-18 is information on the USDA's Healthy Incentives Pilot program that is being conducted in Massachusetts. The USDA has selected only one site for this effort and an evaluation will be conducted after the three year pilot period. For every \$1 spent on specifically identified healthy foods (fruits/vegetables) the SNAP participant will receive 30 cents on their EBT card, effectively discounting their healthy purchase by 30 percent. Given the Committee's ongoing interest in nutrition and reducing obesity, staff thought this program might be of interest to the Committee.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Food Supplement Program in Montgomery County

November 2011

As of Oct. 1, 2008, SNAP is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. It stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and reflects the changes made to meet the needs of clients, including a focus on nutrition and an increase in benefit amounts; Maryland adopted the name *Food Supplement Program*.

Food Supplement Program Statistics

	Base Year FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY11 Growth Rate	Cumulative Growth Rate
FS Applications	13,900	18,322	24,082	30,186	30,282	0%	118%
FS Caseloads	11,310	11,758	15,766	19,268	25,554		125.94%

The Food Supplement Program caseload translates into 57 026 individual recipients receiving the benefit of Food Supplement Benefits in Montgomery County.

HHS Outreach

Most of HHS' outreach efforts for the Food Stamp Program have been at the three neighborhood safety net sites and through partnerships with the Capital Area Food Bank and Catholic Charities. We currently have a vacancy at the outreach station at Montgomery Works, the Wheaton One Stop employment service. At least one of our part time Community Connectors currently does outreach at the Crossroads Farmers' market and also at the Silver Spring Farmers' market where she assists customers with online applications for the Food Supplement program. Both of these markets are encouraging the use of Food Supplement benefits for healthy foods.

Attachments:

- Maryland Department of Human Resources - *Food Supplement Program- Eligibility Rules*
- USDA/FNS - *5 Easy Steps to SNAP Benefits*

- USDA/FNS – ***Determining Product Eligibility for Purchase with SNAP Benefits*** - which describes what foods cannot be purchased with benefits.
- Maryland Department of Human Resources - ***Family Investment Programs - Income Guidelines*** – includes Food Supplement and Temporary Cash Assistance benefit amounts

A representative from the Department of Human Resources will join us to talk about the process for becoming a Food Supplement merchant.



Eligibility Rules

Listed below are some of the basic rules and the kinds of proof you may need during your interview. Your case may be completed faster if you bring the proof with you to the interview.

If you have trouble getting papers (documents) or information you need, the case manager may be able to help you. If the papers are not easy to get, you may be able to give the name and phone number of someone, such as your employer, who can confirm your statements.

Citizenship and Immigrant Status:

Some people who are not U.S. citizens are not eligible for the Food Supplement Program (FSP). There are exceptions for refugees, asylees, immigrants whose deportation has been withheld, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Amerasians and some immigrants legally admitted for permanent residence, parolees, aliens granted conditional entry, and certain battered spouses and children. Border Crossing Native Americans, certain Iraqi and Afghan immigrants, victims of human trafficking and Hmong or Laotian tribe members may also be eligible. Even if some members of your household are not eligible, those who are may be able to get food supplement benefits.

Social Security Numbers:

You will have to provide a Social Security number for every household member, including children, except for undocumented immigrants applying on behalf of others. If any household member, other than an undocumented immigrant does not have a Social Security number, he or she will have to apply for one.

Work Rules:

With certain exceptions, able-bodied adults between 16 and 60 years of age must register for work, accept an offer of suitable work, and take part in an employment and training program when referred to one by the local department of social services.

Students:

Most students ages 18 through 49 who are enrolled in college or other institutions of higher education at least half time are not eligible for food stamps. However, students may be able to get FSP benefits if otherwise eligible if they:

1. get cash assistance benefits under a TCA program;
2. take part in a State or federally financed work study program;
3. work at least 20 hours a week (no averaging);
4. are taking care of a dependent household member under the age of 6;
5. are taking care of a dependent household member over the age of 5 but under 12 and do not have adequate child care to enable them to attend school and work a minimum of 20 hours, or to take part in a State or federally financed work study program; or
6. are a single parent in school full-time with a child under 12; or
7. are assigned to or placed in a college or certain other schools through:
 - A. a program under the Work Force Investment Act,
 - B. a program under Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974,
 - C. an employment and training program under the Food Stamp Act, or
 - D. an employment and training program operated by a State or local government.
8. are receiving disability and receiving SSI, SSA or VA disability payments, or
9. have a disability verified by a doctor or licensed psychologist.

Deductions:

After adding all of your household's countable income, the case manager will subtract certain deductions. The

following deductions are allowed for all households:

1. standard deduction;
2. 20 percent of earned income;
3. actual costs of dependent care costs for children and disabled adults if this care is needed so that a household member can work, look for a job, or get training or education leading to a job;
4. legally owed and paid child-support payments;
5. shelter expenses and utility expenses;
6. medical expenses over \$35 a month for household members who are age 60 or older or receiving certain disability payments.

Proof: Verification for the following is required:

1. verification of income, such has but not limited to: paystubs, letter from employer or award letter.
2. child-support payments, such as a court order and cancelled checks and the legal obligation to pay;
3. verification of legal immigrant status for eligible immigrants;
4. medical expenses for individuals 60 or older or disabled;
5. any information which is questionable or conflicting.

Finding Out if You Qualify

After your interview, the local department will send you a notice.

If you do not qualify for FSP benefits, the notice will provide the reason.

If you qualify for benefits, the notice will explain how much food supplement benefits you will get. It will also tell you how many months you can get food supplement benefits before you must reapply.

If you think your application has been wrongly denied or that you have not gotten the correct amount of food supplement benefits, you should tell the office. If they do not agree, you must ask them to have your case reviewed by a fair hearing official. For more information about fair hearings, see the section entitled Your Rights.

Receiving Your Food Supplement Program Benefits

If the office finds that you are eligible, you should get your food supplement benefits no later than 30 days from the date you first applied, unless you qualify for faster service. If you have no income (or very little income) for the month and you need help right away, you may qualify for Expedite Food Supplement benefits within 7-days. Food Supplement Program benefits are issued to households on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, called the Independence Card. You use this card to buy your food.

Determining Product Eligibility for Purchase with SNAP Benefits

In general, items that are not eligible for purchase with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamp Program) benefits include:

- Food products that contain alcohol or tobacco products
- Items that are not intended for human consumption (e.g. paper products, pet foods, etc.)
- Foods sold hot at the point-of-sale, and
- Vitamins and supplements

When considering the eligibility of vitamins and supplements, power bars, energy drinks and other branded products, the primary determinant is the type of product label chosen by the manufacturer to conform to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines:

- Items that carry a nutrition facts label are eligible foods
- Items that carry a supplement facts label are classified by the FDA as supplements, and are therefore *not* eligible.

The Food and Nutrition Service does *not* have authority to determine whether branded products have been appropriately labeled as supplements and cannot answer inquiries relative to why particular branded products carry a supplement facts label. Such questions/concerns must be directed to the product manufacturer. Product manufacturers label their products based on Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling guidelines and are in the best position to provide labeling rationale.

Please follow the guidance above to determine whether a specific branded product is eligible.

The FNS – SNAP posted list of determinations is now limited to generic (non-brand specific) products.

To request determinations on generic items, or brand- specific items that do not have a nutrition or supplement facts label, please submit by mail or email a complete product package or sample of the item(s) to:

Chief
Retailer Management and Issuance Branch
Benefit Redemption Division
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 404
Alexandria, VA 22302
OR EMAIL TO:
BRDHQ-WEB@fns.usda.gov

All requests for determinations submitted with complete product packaging will be completed within 10 business days.

5 Easy Steps to SNAP Benefits

5 Bring Papers to Your Interview

Once you have applied for SNAP, the checklist below can help you get ready for your interview. You don't need everything. If you are at a SNAP office, ask the SNAP worker to check the items you need to bring to the interview. If you are calling for an appointment, ask the SNAP worker what you should bring and mark the boxes below. You can also send someone to do the interview for you.

Identity

- Birth certificate
- Driver's license
- Work or school ID card
- Health benefits card
- Voter registration card

Residency

- Utility bills, like electric, gas, or water
- Rental agreement or mortgage statement that shows your address
- Letter from shelter employee where you are living

Medical Expense Deduction

For households with elderly (60 or older) and disabled members

- Billing statements
- Itemized medical receipts, like for prescription drugs
- Medicare card indicating Part B coverage

Earned Income

- Pay stubs
- Statement from employer as to gross wages
- Income tax forms
- Self-employment bookkeeping records

Unearned Income

- Bank statements
- Agency letter showing money received, like Social Security, Veteran's Affairs, child support, alimony, unemployment

Immigration

- Immigration or naturalization papers (only if you were born outside of the United States)



Family Investment Programs - Income Guidelines

# of People in the household	Temporary Cash Assistance	Food Supplement Program			
	Max Benefit Amount with No Income*	Gross Monthly Income-under 200% of FPL**	Gross Monthly Income-under 130% of FPL	Maximum Net Income-under 100% of the FPL	Maximum Benefit Amount with No Income
1	259	1,816	1,180	908	200
2	453	2,452	1,594	1,226	367
3	574	3,088	2,008	1,544	526
4	695	3,726	2,422	1,863	668
5	805	4,362	2,836	2,181	793
6	885	5,000	3,249	2,500	838
7	995	5,636	3,663	2,818	952
8	1,095	6,272	4,077	3,136	1,202
9	1,182	6,908	4,490	3,454	1,352
10	1,278	7,546	4,904	3,773	1,502
Add'l person	109	1,052	414	526	150

* TCA does not have a maximum income limit. There are specific deductions and disregards applied to gross income to determine eligibility. Each family's income must be reviewed and calculated individually.

** The Food Supplement Program's gross income limit is 130% of FPL. However, there are several exceptions to this income limit so we encourage State residents to apply for the program when they need help with buying food. The income limit is waived for certain groups, and there is also a waiver that allows the State to set the limit at 200% of FPL for needy families receiving non-cash TANF services.

Note: For more information, please contact the DHR information number 1-800-332-6347.

For detailed information on specific programs and benefits available, please review the specific policy manuals available at:

<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/manuals/index.php>

or the MD State Regulations for the Department of Human Resources using the link below:

http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/subtitle_chapters/07_Chapters.aspx

Income Guidelines for Assistance Programs Headquartered in Other State Agencies

Link to income guidelines for Child Care Subsidy:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/child_care/subsidy/

Link to income guidelines for Medical Assistance Programs:

<http://dhmh.maryland.gov/mma/pdf/2011/IncomeAssetGuidelines-2011.pdf>





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SNAP Retailer Locator

To find a retailer near you that welcomes SNAP EBT customers, click the "Select Location" button and enter a starting location. Click a map point to get details and directions. Click "En Espanol" above to view this page in Spanish. Researchers: for data download options see below the map.

Select Location
Switch Maps

SNAP Retailers closest to your location are listed below. Select a retailer to zoom in.

ID	Retailer	Distance
13	MAGRUDERS OF COLLEGE PLAZA INC 20 - 15108 Frederick Rd, Rockville, MD 20850-5495	1.70 miles
14	Patel Brothers - 15110 Frederick Rd, Rockville, MD 20850-1108	1.70 miles
15	CVS Pharmacy 1445 - 360 Hungerford Dr, Rockville, MD 20850-4167	1.78 miles

Sources: ESRI, USGS, FAO, EPA, DeLorme, TANA, USDA, FNS, other suppliers

Download Information: SNAP Retailers by State or Access SNAP Map Service

- Related Links: Eat Right When Money's Tight, My Pyramid, and Benefits.gov
- Data as of October 4, 2011.
- This site requires Adobe Flash plugin.
- To report a specific mapping or address error, contact BRDHQ-Web@fns.usda.gov.

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Senior Farmer's Market Coupon Program – 2011 – Summary

The Senior Farmers Market Coupon Program (SFMCP) in Montgomery County provided for the distribution of thirty dollars worth of coupons to 700 low income individuals this season. This allocation benefited an additional 70 people over coupon distribution in 2010.

The distribution sites were: Long Branch Senior Center, Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, Holiday Park Senior Center, Rockville Senior Center, Gaithersburg Upcounty Senior Center, Elizabeth House and Waverly House, representing all general regions of Montgomery County.

Marketing of this program was done via Mary Anderson, Department of Public Affairs, with an announcement in the Gazette and other unspecified newspapers on only one occasion because of the limited number of people who could be accommodated.

Representatives from each of the 7 distribution sites were trained during the last week in June based on the guidelines of the Maryland Department of Agriculture. There were several changes this year, including (1) elimination of the need to show proof of low income, (2) later distribution to encourage seniors to go to the Market when more produce would be available, and (3) one booklet worth \$30, rather than 2 booklets worth \$15 each. . Coupons were offered on a first-come, first-served basis at the sites on July 7, 2011.

All coupons were handed out on the day of distribution, except about half of the allocation at Schweinhaut Senior Center. That center served as a resource for late callers over the next few weeks and remaining coupons were later sent to Waverly House in late July, where individuals on the waiting list were accommodated.

At some sites, there were lines that formed as early as 7:00 am (for 10:00 am distribution). Most early birds were non-English speaking Asian seniors, accompanied by a bilingual individual.

The guidelines and plan for distribution for 2011 were much more successful than last year due to a decrease in the number of distribution sites and the elimination of the need to prove income level.

In order to improve the system for next year, we will:

- (1) reconsider inclusion of the Schweinhaut Senior Center and increase the number of coupons allotted to Waverly House.
- (2). Consider other strategies, if necessary, based on the final 2011 redemption rate, announced by MDoA in early spring 2012.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY**Bethesda Central Farm Market**

Parking lot on Elm Street between Woodmont Ave. & Wisconsin Ave.
 Sunday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. April 10 - November 20
 Contact: **Mitchell** Berliner mitch@bethesdacentralfarmmarket.com

Bethesda FRESHFARM Market

Norfolk Ave., at Veterans Park
 Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. May 7 - October 29 (market will be closed on October 1)
 Contact: Bernadine Prince 202-362-8889
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Briggs Chaney-Greencastle Farmers and Artisans' Market (new market)

3300 Briggs Chaney Road
 Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. May 14 - November 19
 Contact: Gigi Goin 301-792-9448 or gigi.ontheweb@gmail.com
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Clarksburg Town Center Farmers' Market

Public House Rd. & Clarksburg Rd.
 Sunday: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. June 5 - October 30
 Contact: Taty Franklin 240-686-1700 or ClarksburgFarmersMarket@yahoo.com
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Crossroads Farmers' Market

7676 New Hampshire Avenue
 Wednesday: 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. May 18 - October 26
 Contact: Michele Levy 301-891-7244 or crossroadsmarket@gmail.com
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior), FVC & SNAP Accepted

← SNAP

Gaithersburg Farmers' Market

Corner of Fulks Corner Ave. and MD Rt. 355
 Thursday: 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. June 1 - October 27
 Contact: Nansie Heimer Wilde 301-258-6350 or nwilde@gaithersburgmd.gov
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Gaithersburg Main Street Pavilion Farmers' Market

Kentlands: 301 Main Street
 Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. May 7 - November 19
 Contact: Nansie Heimer Wilde 301-258-6350 or nwilde@gaithersburgmd.gov

Kensington Farmers' Market

Train Station Lot, Howard Avenue
 Saturday: 8:00 am to Noon Open all year*
 Contact: Shirley Watson 301- 949-2424 or shirley.watson@tok.md.gov

King Farm Farmers' Market (new market)

Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park, Pleasant Rd.
 Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. May 28 - October 29
 Four Irvington Centre, 805 King Farm Boulevard
 Wednesday: 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. May 25 - October 26
 Contact: Marni Dacy 240-731-2305 or farmersmarket@kingfarm.org

Montgomery Farm Women's Co-op Market

Bethesda: 7155 Wisconsin Avenue
 Wednesday: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Open all year*
 Saturday: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Open all year*
 Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Open all year*
 Contact: Barbara Johnson 301- 652-2291

Montgomery Village Farmers' Market (new market)

9801 Centerway Road
 Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. June 4 - October 29
 Contact: Peggy Marks 240-483-2348 or dmullis@mvf.org
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Olney Farmers' Market

2801 Olney Sandy Spring Road
 Sunday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. May 8 - November 6
 Contact: Janet Terry 202-257-5326 or jterry@wusa9.com
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Poolesville Farmers' Market

19701 Fisher Avenue
 Friday: 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on June 24, July 15, July 29, August 19
 Contact: Cathy Bupp 301-428-8927 or cathybupp@poolesville.com

Potomac Village Farmers' Market

9908 South Glen Road
 Thursday: 2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. May 5 - October 27
 Contact: Suzanne Hermes 301-792-6054 or potomacfarmersmarket@gmail.com
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Rockville Farmers' Market

Corner of Route 28 and Monroe Street in the Parking Lot
 Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. May 14 - November 19
 Wednesday Location: E. Montgomery at Maryland Ave. (in front of Regal Theatre)
 Wednesday: 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. June 1 - October 26
 Contact: Mike Coppersmith 240-314-8605 or mcoppersmith@rockvillemd.gov
 FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted

Shady Grove Farmers' and Artisans' Market (new market)

9601 Medical Center Drive (enter on Broschart Rd), JHU Montgomery County Campus
 Wednesday: 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. June 29 - November 16
 Contact: Gigi Goin 301-792-9448 or gigi.ontheweb@gmail.com

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Silver Spring FRESHFARM Market

Elsworth Drive between Fenton & Cedar
Open all year*
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. January - March
Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. April - December
Contact: Sarah Mosbacher 202-362-8889
FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior), FVC & SNAP Accepted

← SNAP

SMV Winery Farmers' Market

Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard
18125 Comus Road
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. April 30 - September 29
Contact: Susan Reed 301-605-0130

Takoma Park Farmers' Market

Old Town Takoma Park on Laurel Ave.
(between Carroll Ave. & Eastern Ave.)
Open all year*
Sunday: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Web: www.takomaparkmarket.com
FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC & SNAP Accepted

← SNAP

Wheaton Farmers' Market

Reedie Drive between Veirs Mill Rd. and Georgia Ave.
(Behind Dunkin' Donuts)
Sunday: 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. June 5 - October 30
Contact: Margorie Satterlee 410-215-7173
FMNP Checks (WIC & Senior) & FVC Accepted



- Gov Monitor - <http://www.thegovmonitor.com> -

Massachusetts Awarded \$20 Million For Healthy Incentives Pilot

Posted By [admin](#) On August 19, 2010 @ 11:57 am In [Economy, Governance, Health Care, United States](#) | [No Comments](#)

Incentive program for SNAP participants in Hampden County promotes healthier eating.

The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has chosen Massachusetts to conduct the first-ever Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP).

It's an incentives-based program to promote healthier eating, including fruits and vegetables, among low-income residents participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The 2008 federal Farm Bill authorized \$20 million for USDA to test whether incentives to buy fresh produce will increase the purchase of healthy foods.

Massachusetts was the only state chosen to administer this groundbreaking study.

The grant will be distributed over three years to the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), SNAP participants in Hampden County and an independent contractor that will evaluate the efficacy of providing incentives to eat healthier.

"I'm delighted that the Commonwealth has been selected to provide a national example through this pilot program," said Governor Deval Patrick. "This Administration is deeply committed to promoting health and wellness for all state residents, and I applaud the work of the Department of Transitional Assistance for developing a comprehensive pilot proposal that made our selection possible."

Massachusetts was chosen in a competitive process based on a comprehensive pilot proposal that included very thorough and strong design, implementation, staffing and management plans. Hampden County is a mix of 27 urban, rural and suburban communities with a total of 50,000 SNAP households.

The majority of recipients are concentrated in the areas of Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee. Massachusetts will begin operating the pilot program in the fall of 2011.

The USDA also selected Abt Associates Inc. of Cambridge to act as an independent contractor to evaluate HIP. The evaluation will focus on whether incentives increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables and how participants' overall diets are affected. Researchers will also study HIP effects on the state, retailers and other SNAP stakeholders, and assess the feasibility of implementing HIP nationwide.

"This pilot is a significant step towards reducing the financial barriers low-income residents have to add more fruits and vegetables to their diets for a healthier lifestyle," said Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. JudyAnn Bigby. "Being selected for the pilot reflects the Patrick-Murray Administration's ongoing commitment to promoting healthy eating and living for all people throughout the Commonwealth."

"I am honored that our proposal was selected for this groundbreaking pilot," said DTA Commissioner Julia E. Kehoe. "I commend our staff members for their teamwork and their commitment to this project in the face of escalating caseloads. HIP furthers our effort to foster innovative partnerships that assist low-income individuals and families as comprehensively as

possible. We look forward to working with USDA, Abt Associates Inc. and the excellent organizations in Hampden County to ensure the success of HIP.”

The Healthy Incentives Pilot will enroll 7,500 randomly selected SNAP households to receive incentives. For every dollar participants spend on fruits and vegetables using their SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, 30 cents will be added to their benefit balance — thus cutting the cost of fruits and vegetables by almost one-third. The majority of the \$20 million grant will be shared by DTA and Abt Associates.

In addition to providing nutritious food to its participants, SNAP has a positive impact on the state economy. DTA issues nearly \$100 million per month in SNAP benefits. Every dollar spent in SNAP generates nearly \$2 in economic activity.

This means that the \$1.2 billion issued annually in SNAP equates to \$2.4 billion in local production, sales and jobs for the Commonwealth.

SNAP serves more than 755,000 individuals in Massachusetts by assisting low-income individuals and families with purchasing healthy food. The program is federally funded and serves as the first line of defense against hunger.

Individuals, families with children, seniors and people with disabilities who are having difficulty meeting their basic needs are encouraged to apply for SNAP benefits by visiting www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice ^[1], calling 1-866-950-FOOD, or visiting their local DTA office.

USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will provide Federal oversight of the pilot and evaluation. FNS oversees the administration of 15 nutrition assistance programs.

These programs serve one in four Americans over the course of a year and work in concert to form a national safety net against hunger.

SNAP, the largest of these programs, helps more than 40 million Americans each month put healthy food on the table.

Visit www.fns.usda.gov ^[2] for information about FNS and nutrition assistance programs.

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[1] www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice: <http://www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice>

[2] www.fns.usda.gov: <http://www.fns.usda.gov>

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Abt Associates to Evaluate Ground-Breaking Pilot Program Aimed at Encouraging Healthier Eating Among Lower-Income Americans

Will a 30-Percent Incentive on Fruits and Vegetables Lead to Healthier Eating?

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Aug. 20 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service has selected Abt Associates to lead a team evaluating a ground-breaking pilot program aimed at encouraging healthier eating among lower-income Americans. The Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) will enroll households in Hampden County, Massachusetts that participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program).

As a complement to the Let's Move campaign against childhood obesity led by the First Lady, the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) aims to improve the diets of participants in SNAP. The evaluation will measure the impact of the incentive on consumption of fruits and vegetables and on diet quality, more generally. Researchers will also measure impacts on food retailers and other SNAP stakeholders as well as assess the feasibility of HIP, the lessons learned, and the potential for implementing HIP nationwide.

As reported by the White House's Office of the First Lady, "One third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. A recent study put the health care costs of obesity-related diseases at \$147 billion per year. This epidemic also impacts the nation's security, as obesity is now one of the most common disqualifiers for military service."

While most Americans fall below the *Dietary Guidelines* for recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, low-income people, including SNAP participants, are less likely to consume sufficient quantities of fruits and vegetables. The HIP is a creative response to the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, which called for a demonstration program to test ways to increase SNAP participants' consumption of fruits and vegetables, including use of financial incentives at the point-of-sale. It will enroll households that participate in SNAP and for every dollar participants spend on fruits and vegetables using their SNAP benefits cards 30 cents will be added to the balance on their cards -- thus cutting the cost of fruits and vegetables by almost one third.

Abt Associates is leading a team that includes Westat; the Atkins Center for Weight and Health at the University of California at Berkeley; and Imadgen, LLC. Collectively, this team has decades of experience executing nutrition program studies, implementing and analyzing experimental evaluations, conducting state-of-the-art nutrient data collection, and working with SNAP systems that manage administrative data and electronic benefits transfer.

About Abt Associates

Abt Associates applies research, program implementation and technical assistance, and policy expertise to a wide range of social, economic and health policy issues; international development; and complex business problems. Founded in 1965, the company provides services to U.S. federal, state and local governments; universities and foundations; media; and major corporations. Its staff of over 1,500 is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Atlanta, Georgia; Bethesda, Maryland; Durham, North Carolina; New York, New York (Abt SRBI); and in Africa, Asia, Central Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. For more information, visit www.abtassociates.com.

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RELATED LINKS

Requirements and Specifications for SNAP HIP Fruit and Vegetable Purchases

Any variety of fresh whole or cut fruit without added sugars.¹

Any variety of fresh whole or cut vegetable, except white potatoes, without added sugars, fats, or oils (yams and sweet potatoes are allowed).¹

Any variety of canned² fruits (must conform to FDA standard of identity (21 CFR Part 145); including applesauce, juice pack or water pack without added sugars, fats, oils, or salt (i.e. sodium). Any variety of frozen fruits without added sugars.³

Any variety of canned² (except mature legumes) or frozen vegetables without added sugars, fats, or oils. Varieties may be regular or lower in sodium.³ Varieties must conform to FDA standard of identity (21 CFR Part 155). White potatoes are NOT included. Yams (e.g. orange, red, and white) and sweet potatoes are allowed.

Any type of dried fruit or dried vegetable (except dried mature legumes) without added sugars, fats, oils, or salt (i.e., sodium).¹

¹Herbs (e.g. parsley, dill, cilantro, mint) fresh or dried, or spices; edible blossoms and flowers, e.g., squash blossoms (broccoli, cauliflower and artichokes are allowed); creamed or sauced vegetables; vegetable-grain (pasta or rice) mixtures; fruit-nut mixtures; breaded vegetables; fruits and vegetables for purchase on salad bars; peanuts; ornamental and decorative fruits and vegetables such as chili peppers on a string; garlic on a string; gourds; painted pumpkins; fruit baskets and party vegetable trays; items such as blueberry muffins and other baked goods; infant food in fruit variety; and fruit juices are **NOT** authorized.

²“Canned” refers to processed food items in cans or other shelf-stable containers, e.g., jars, pouches. Home canned fruits and vegetables, such as those sold at Farmers’ Markets, vegetable juices, infant food in vegetable variety, and mature legumes in **dry or canned** form are **NOT** authorized. **Fresh and frozen** forms of mature legumes are authorized. Examples of mature legumes: black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, black beans, lima, navy, soy, small red and great northern beans . Immature legumes, e.g., green peas, green beans, snap beans, yellow and wax beans in any form are allowed.

Definition of mature legumes: beans, peas or lentils grown to the mature stage, allowed to dry and harvested for the seeds within the pods.

³ Also **excludes** catsup or other condiments; pickled vegetables, olives; soups; fruit roll-ups.

Note: Small amounts of sugar are added to some foods that are naturally sugar-containing during the canning process to maintain the integrity of the vegetable (sweet peas and corn) and are allowed.

Frequently Purchased Foods and HIP Eligibility Status

Examples of Foods NOT Eligible Under HIP:

- Infant food – any variety of any commercial infant food vegetable or fruit
- Juices (fruit and vegetable)
- White potatoes (any white potato such as, but not limited to, fingerlings, red bliss, Yukon gold, purple, frozen hash browns)
- Generally fruits and vegetables with added sugar, fat, oils or salt
- **Mature Legumes*** (defined as beans, grown to the mature stage, allowed to dry and harvested for the seed within the pods) are NOT allowed. More specifically:

Dry beans, peas and lentils in packaged form
Canned mature beans and peas

(Frozen and fresh forms of mature legumes ARE allowed.)

Examples of mature legumes not eligible:

Pinto beans
Navy (pea) beans
Great Northern beans
Black beans
Fava beans
Small White beans
Large Lima beans (butter beans)
Baby Lima beans
Small Red beans
Light Red Kidney beans
Dark Red Kidney beans
White Kidney beans (cannellini)
White Marrow beans
Adzuki beans
Pink beans
Roman beans
Soybeans
Cranberry beans
Pigeon peas
Split peas
Yellow Split peas
Black-eyed peas
Garbanzo beans (large chickpeas)
Small chickpeas
Yellow Eye
Lentils

***Dry and canned mature legumes may be purchased with regular SNAP benefits.**

- Catsup or other condiments
- Pickled vegetables
- Olives
- Dried white potatoes
- Soups, sauces (e.g. pizza)
- Herbs (fresh or dried) or spices
- Edible blossoms and flowers e.g., squash blossoms (broccoli, cauliflower and artichokes are allowed)
- Creamed or sauced vegetables
- Stewed tomatoes
- Vegetable-grain (pasta or rice) mixtures
- Fruit-nut mixtures
- Breaded vegetables
- Fruits and vegetables for purchase on salad bars
- Peanuts
- Ornamental and decorative fruits and vegetables such as chili peppers on a string, garlic on a string; gourds; painted pumpkins; fruit baskets, and party vegetable trays
- Items such as blueberry muffins and other baked goods
- Fruit leathers and fruit roll-ups
- Mixed vegetables containing white potatoes

Examples of HIP Eligible Fruits and Vegetables:

- **Immature legumes** (canned, frozen, fresh or dry without added sugar, fats, oils) such as, but not limited to:

Snow peas
Green peas
String beans
Green beans
Snap beans
Wax beans
Yellow beans
Spinach
Sweet Corn
Kale
Cauliflower
Broccoli

- **Frozen and fresh** mature legumes (see mature legume section)
- Artichokes
- Hominy (without added sugar, oils, or fat)
- Orange, white, and red yams
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes- diced, pureed, paste, sauce, whole (without added sugar, salt, or fat)
- Applesauce (no sugar added, unsweetened)

- Spaghetti sauce (without added sugar, fats, oils, or meat)
- Salsa (without added sugar, fats, oils)

Frequently Asked Question:

Q. Can I buy food other than fruits and vegetables with my HIP earned incentive?

A. You can purchase any eligible SNAP foods with the incentive you earned from purchasing approved HIP fruits and vegetables. For example, dry and canned mature legumes excluded from purchase with HIP incentive can be purchased with the SNAP benefit.

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