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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

DEC 20 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

Section 4141 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) authorized and provided funding for the Secretary of Agriculture to test the use of financial incentives at the point-of-sale to encourage households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase fruits, vegetables or other healthful foods. FCEA also directed the Secretary to submit a report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate by the end of December each year, describing the status and results of the pilot operated under this authority. This letter accompanies the fourth annual report to Congress on the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP)—our name for the FCEA-funded initiative.

In 2012, HIP was fully implemented by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance in Hampden County, Massachusetts. By January 1, 2012, 6,571 households that had been randomly assigned to participate in HIP were able to earn incentives when they purchased eligible fruits and vegetables at participating retailers. The last wave of retailers joined HIP on October 1, 2012, bringing the total number of participating retailers to 118, including 12 farmers markets. HIP participants were eligible to earn incentives for 12 months, ending in December 2012.

HIP is being evaluated using a rigorous research design. Analyses are underway in preparation for an interim report expected Spring 2013. Early results from these analyses suggest that recipients of the healthy incentive consumed on the order of one-fifth cup more incentivized fruits and vegetables than a control group that did not receive the incentive. Complementary analyses are ongoing and will be needed to fully understand these early, but encouraging, results.

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow

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If you have any questions about this report, your staff may contact Brian Baenig, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter and report are being sent to Senator Pat Roberts, Congressman Frank Lucas, and Congressman Collin Peterson.

Sincerely,


Kevin W. Concannon
Under Secretary
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

Enclosure

Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) 2012 Summary Report

Section 4141 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) authorized and provided funding for the Secretary of Agriculture to test the use of financial incentives at the point-of-sale to encourage households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase fruits, vegetables or other healthful foods. On the basis of this legislative authority, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) designed the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP).

Households participating in HIP earn an incentive of 30 cents for every SNAP dollar they spend on targeted fruits and vegetables. Incentives are credited to the household's SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) account with each targeted food purchase and can be used on any future SNAP purchases. The Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) implemented HIP in Hampden County. HIP is being evaluated using a rigorous research design in which the 55,000 SNAP households in the county were randomly assigned to either the HIP group or the control group.

This report describes the major activities and accomplishments that took place in 2012 and briefly outlines plans for 2013. In summary, HIP was fully operational in 2012 and two rounds of data were collected for the evaluation. Specifically, during the year, we:

- continued to successfully operate HIP, allowing thousands of SNAP households to earn HIP incentives;
- developed and distributed additional materials to HIP participants, providing updated retailer lists and other materials to encourage their participation;
- recruited and trained additional retailers, including farmer markets, to participate in HIP;
- conducted two rounds of HIP data collection activities, including household data collection, stakeholder interviews and focus groups to obtain information needed to conduct the evaluation; and
- prepared for the closeout of HIP, which will end December 31, 2012.

Overview of Healthy Incentives Pilot and Evaluation

The design of the pilot and evaluation was guided by our desire to successfully increase fruit and vegetable purchases, meet statutory requirements for a strong evaluation, and remain within the available funding.

Consistent with the goal of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, the pilot provided participating households a financial incentive that equals 30 percent of their SNAP spending on 'targeted' fruits and vegetables. Targeted fruits and vegetables are the same ones allowed by Federal regulations for purchase with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children fruit and vegetable vouchers. These include most fruits and vegetables available as fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Among the products which do not earn an incentive are vegetables or fruits with added sugar, salt, fat, or oil (with some exceptions).

Incentives are credited to the household's SNAP-EBT account with each targeted fruit and vegetable purchase and can be used on any future SNAP purchases. The total value of incentives

that can be earned is subject to a monthly cap of \$60 per household. This household cap is based on calculations designed to remain within the \$2 million available for the incentive while minimizing the number of households expected to reach the cap.

The Massachusetts DTA began operating HIP in Hampden County on November 1, 2011, and will continue through December 31, 2012. Located in western Massachusetts, the county is a mix of urban, rural, and suburban areas. Of the approximately 55,000 SNAP households in Hampden County, 7,500 were randomly assigned to participate in HIP.

A rigorous evaluation is being conducted to assess the impact of HIP on participants' intake of fruits and vegetables. Specifically, the evaluation will determine:

- the impact of the financial incentive on individual consumption of fruits and vegetables;
- the impact of the financial incentive on foods other than qualifying fruits and vegetables, and on food energy intake overall;
- the extent to which calories consumed from fruits and vegetables displace calories from other food groups;
- what factors influence HIP impacts, such as household demographics, the household food environment, dietary knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, or household shopping patterns;
- what processes are involved in implementing and operating HIP;
- HIP effects on workload and operations in local SNAP offices, retailer operations and patterns of SNAP redemptions among participating and non-participating retailers;
- the costs associated with HIP, including initial start-up, ongoing administration, and the costs of the incentives within the pilot and on a national scale; and
- challenges encountered and lessons for future implementation.

2012 Achievements

Pilot Implementation

DTA Management of HIP Operations

HIP was fully operational in 2012. DTA held a number of regularly scheduled meetings to discuss implementation topics to ensure that the pilot ran smoothly. The DTA Director held regular monthly status calls involving DTA, FNS, Xerox (formerly Affiliated Computer Systems or ACS), Novo Dia Group, and the external evaluators, Abt Associates (Abt) and Maximus to identify operational, technical, and evaluation issues, and to identify and plan for activities in the upcoming months. In addition, DTA conducted weekly technical meetings with part of this group to monitor the technical progress of the project and to identify any technical issues that might impede the implementation. Finally, DTA and FNS had weekly check-in meetings.

Working with Community Stakeholders

DTA involved over 75 community partners in various aspects of HIP. These community partners proved to be an integral factor in the implementation of HIP, and an important component of the smooth rollout of the pilot. They included local and regional non-profits, community based organizations (CBOs), State and city agencies, medical centers, libraries and

higher education institutions. The community partners are a diverse and committed group and DTA was successful in building relationships with them. They provided advice and support during the grant application process, reviewed training materials, hosted participant training sessions, conducted outreach to retailers and served as a resource to HIP participants. The locus of their involvement was the HIP Steering Committee, a group consisting of 12 CBOs and representatives of various State and city agencies, convened by DTA to provide input and foster opportunities for collaboration.

EBT System Changes Development, Testing and Implementation

DTA worked closely with their State EBT vendor, Xerox, to plan, test, and implement changes needed to process HIP and to track its use. Implementation at larger, chain retailers was supported by Novo Dia Group, the State consultant. The system changes were completed, tested and certified in 2011.

During 2012, several issues arose. First, a third party processor (TPP) used by two of the four chain retailers operational at the time removed the HIP transaction processing code when making an unrelated software change. As a result, HIP participants did not earn the incentive for about 45 days during December 2011-January 2012. The TPP corrected the problem within a month of its detection, and DTA subsequently credited the 1,140 households affected by the outage. Second, in September 2012, this same TPP made a software change that led to the HIP month-to-date total not appearing on store receipts. Households were receiving credit for HIP purchases, but may have been confused about the amount of incentives they had earned for the month. An additional challenge occurred early in 2012 and involved two chain retailers' failure to maintain accurate and updated lists of HIP-eligible items in the database used to calculate HIP incentives. HIP participants reported that they were not earning the incentive when purchasing certain targeted fruits and vegetables. The issue was remedied and DTA and Novo Dia Group worked with retailers during the remainder of the pilot to ensure that their product databases were routinely updated as new food items are added.

Retailer Recruitment

As of October 1, 2012, there were 102 HIP participating retailers (excluding the 16 farmers markets). The number of retailers gradually increased since November 1, 2011, when HIP went live. DTA had hoped that a chain of superstores with a significant presence in Hampden County would be included in the October 1 cohort. Competing company priorities prevented them from participating earlier. However, in spite of substantial efforts by DTA, several community partners, and FNS, both the retailer and their TPP determined that they were unable to commit the resources necessary to meet the October 2012 deadline.

Farmers markets participated in HIP beginning in late spring when they began operating for the season. This cohort included twelve farmers markets, three farm stands, and one mobile market. The markets used one of three different types of systems to process HIP transactions: (1) tokens, similar to those currently used to redeem SNAP benefits in farmers markets; (2) Mobile Market+, an iPod-based application developed by Novo Dia Group; and (3) e-HIP, another iPod-based application developed by the Mass Farmers Markets. Staff from DTA and several

community partners attended the farmers markets to provide technical assistance to market managers, vendors and HIP participants.

In an effort to help HIP participants determine which foods are HIP-eligible, DTA worked with retailers to develop and install various types of signage. These include shelf strips, produce stickers, freezer decals, adhesive signs, and a large (four foot) standee to be placed at the front of the store. In general, these signage options are a variation of the HIP logo, with no reference to HIP (except for the standees that were placed at the front of the store.) The goal of installing the signage is to aid HIP participants in identifying HIP-eligible foods without informing non-HIP participants of the existence of the pilot. With the exception of one chain of convenience stores whose policy prohibited their use and another chain who used standees, signs were installed in all stores, both large and small by the end of August. The standees were installed by mid-September.

DTA staff continued to visit the stores, especially the smaller ones, on a monthly basis to answer questions about HIP and provide technical assistance. Monthly site visits were conducted at all HIP retailers starting in August and will continue through the end of January 2013, one month after the end of the pilot, to assist stores in closeout activities.

Ongoing Communication with and Support for HIP Households

During 2012, HIP households continued to receive HIP notifications by mail to keep them updated concerning pilot activities. All notifications were translated into Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. In early February, HIP participants received an updated list of retailers that included those who joined HIP as of February 1. A second interim mailing was sent in mid-June, containing (1) another updated list of retailers, including participating chain retail stores outside of Hampden County; (2) a colorful brochure describing HIP and its benefits; and (3) a list of participating farmers markets. HIP participants received a third interim mailing in late August. This mailing was customized for each HIP household, informing them of how much they had spent on targeted fruits and vegetables since the pilot's inception, their actual HIP amount earned to date and an estimate of the amount of HIP incentive they might expect to earn in the month. The mailing also included inserts highlighting the primary community partners as well as recipe cards and tips for including more fruits and vegetables in their diets. A fourth interim mailing, containing an updated list of retailers, including those joining on October 1 and updated information on farmers markets including their closing dates, was sent in late September. In addition to presenting the inserts, the accompanying letter highlighted the new retailer signage designating HIP-eligible items. For Wave 1 HIP participants whose HIP incentive began November 1, 2011, the letter reminded them that their opportunity to earn the incentive would end on October 31, 2012, and encouraged them to make the most of their final month. A final mailing to Wave 2 and 3 HIP participants, reminding them that their incentive was ending, was sent November 1 and November 30, respectively.

Support for HIP participants included the HIP toll free call line, e-mail account, and website. Community partners were also available to answer questions and provide technical assistance. The HIP call line was by far the most heavily used DTA-provided resource. Through the end of September 2012, over 600 calls were received. Topics included general questions about how HIP works, household eligibility, participating retailers, receipt errors and eligible foods. No e-

mails were received from HIP participants. DTA has limited information on the use of the website by HIP participants. While DTA recorded several hits on participant-related pages each month, it is impossible to know who accessed them.

Closeout of the HIP Incentive Period

Closeout activities for HIP began in the fall of 2012. Key parties affected or involved included the HIP participants, DTA and Xerox.

From the participants' perspective, HIP began winding down on October 31, 2012, as the period for earning incentives for the Wave 1 households ended. Periods for earning incentives for Wave 2 and 3 participants ended on November 30 and December 31, 2012, respectively. As noted above, about one month before the opportunity to earn incentives was scheduled to end, DTA sent reminder letters to all participants and encouraged them to maximize their opportunity to earn the incentive in the final month. Note that while the ability to earn incentives ends, any incentives earned will remain in participants' SNAP-EBT accounts and will be available for use on future SNAP purchases.

DTA and Xerox worked together to ensure that the systems were in place to terminate the HIP incentive as scheduled. This involved careful planning and testing.

Closeout activities will continue into 2013 as described later in this report.

Evaluation Implementation

Participant Data Collection

During 2012, participant data collection included two rounds of telephone interviews as well as two sets of focus groups. In addition, Abt received EBT data for both HIP and non-HIP households.

The Abt team collected Round 2 (early implementation) and Round 3 (late implementation) data for sampled HIP participants and sampled non-HIP participants. During Round 2 data collection, the evaluation team completed approximately 2,000 interviews, split evenly between HIP and non-HIP participants. During Round 3 data collection, just over 1,500 interviews were completed, again, divided evenly between HIP and non-HIP participants. Information collected in the Round 2 and 3 surveys included: household composition and demographics; frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption; food preferences and beliefs; exposure to nutrition education; barriers to consuming fruits and vegetables; family food environment; participation in HIP (participant group only); and general shopping patterns and food expenditures. Rounds 2 and 3 also included a 24-hour dietary recall. In addition, a second dietary recall was collected from a 10 percent subsample, to support the estimation of usual dietary intake.

Data were collected through a telephone survey. Spanish-speaking interviewers were available to complete surveys with respondents whose primary language was Spanish; interpreters were used, as necessary, for other languages. When respondents could not be reached by phone, the Abt team sent field interviewers to respondents' homes. Once they located respondents and

gained their cooperation for the interview, field interviewers provided a cell phone that respondents used to complete the interview.

In addition to the survey data collection, the Abt team conducted two rounds of focus groups to gather information from HIP participants regarding their experiences with the pilot. The first round of focus groups, conducted during the spring of 2012, collected information on participants' early impressions of HIP after several months of HIP participation. The second round was held in the fall, once participants had 9-11 months of experience with HIP. Eligible participants for the focus group had to be active SNAP participants, and when asked, said they had at least heard of the HIP program. For both rounds, participants were selected to evenly represent both men and women, and to represent a mix of ages and educational levels, with no more than two individuals per group having a college degree or higher. Both the spring and fall focus groups included two groups that were conducted in English and one in Spanish.

Topics for both rounds of focus groups included: how and when participants learned about HIP; how much and what type of information/training participants received regarding HIP; participants' levels of understanding about how the incentive could be used; changes in food spending habits and changes in food eating habits; level of ease associated with use of HIP; level of understanding regarding what foods in what forms earn the incentive; how much of the incentive money participants have earned and spent; how HIP did not meet, met, or exceeded the participants' expectations; at which stores' participants use their HIP EBT card and the level of ease associated with HIP participation at these stores, including the attitudes of the stores' staff and availability of HIP-eligible products; and overall thoughts about HIP.

Finally, Abt received daily EBT data files, including both HIP and non-HIP households. These data cover the HIP implementation period, starting November 1, 2011, and continuing through a three month post-implementation period until March 31, 2013. These data will be used to analyze the take-up rate of the HIP incentive by HIP participants, differences in redemption patterns between HIP and non-HIP households, and the impact of HIP on retailers' SNAP redemptions.

Retailer Survey and On-site Observations

Surveys and on-site observations of food retailers offer insight into the experiences and satisfaction of an important HIP stakeholder group and provide valuable information about the implementation process and costs of HIP.

In summer 2012, the Abt team conducted the second round of in-person, on-site observations in 7 of the 10 participating stores observed in 2011. The observations included recording information about the store environment, conducting an inventory of selected fruits and vegetables, and observing a simulated HIP transaction with cashiers. In addition, the team conducted observations at three purposively selected farmers markets. Each market represented one of three systems for performing a HIP transaction (systems discussed above). The observations included recording information about the market's environment and the steps involved in conducting a HIP transaction.

In late 2012, the Abt team conducted a second survey of retailers and a third and final round of store observations. The survey of participating retailers focused on understanding how HIP affected store operations, including: difficulties encountered; amount of time required to process transactions; and perceptions of effects on sales and profits. The survey also collected information on the types of fruits and vegetables available and their prices to determine whether any changes occurred during HIP operations. The sample selected to participate in this final round of surveys included those who joined HIP after the November 2011 launch. We anticipate obtaining completed surveys from approximately 50 participating retailers.

The protocol for administering this second and final round of surveys built upon lessons learned in fielding the baseline surveys in 2011. Corporate contacts for major chain stores gathered survey information from their selected stores. Follow-up with these corporate contacts was conducted by email and phone. Surveys with independent retailers, who are difficult to reach by phone, were conducted by mail with in-person follow-up. An initial letter described participation in the current round of retailer data collection and asked respondents to look for the delivery of upcoming paper surveys. Next, survey booklets were sent via FedEx to all sampled stores. Two weeks after the FedEx mailings, Abt researchers visited non-respondents at their stores to either collect completed surveys; ask respondents to complete surveys for pick-up the next day; or administer the survey in-person. During that week, the third and final round of observations was conducted at a selected sample of 10 retailers.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews conducted with stakeholders provided detailed information on the implementation and operation of HIP which contributes to analyses of pilot implementation, the costs of the pilot, and the feasibility of nationwide expansion. Key stakeholders included: Massachusetts DTA State and local agency staff; Xerox, the Massachusetts SNAP EBT vendor; integrated retailers/third party processors involved in processing SNAP EBT transactions; and local community partners.

In 2011, the Abt team conducted an initial set of 30 in-person interviews with individuals or groups of individuals who played key roles in the development and initial implementation of HIP. In 2012, the team conducted two additional rounds of interviews, one set in the spring focusing on early operations and another in the fall focusing on more mature operations and the feasibility of expanding HIP. For the second and third rounds, topics included: HIP implementation, including operations; management, and coordination; HIP system technical support; additional retailer recruitment, participation, and support; participant perceptions, feedback and questions; involvement of community partner organizations; and issues encountered/lessons learned. The third round will also address the feasibility of expanding the program nationwide. The final set of interviews with Xerox, the integrated retailers, and third party processors covering EBT-related topics will be conducted in early 2013 in order to learn about their closeout activities.

Implementation Report

One of the major accomplishments of the evaluation in 2012 was the completion of the Early Implementation Report. This report, prepared by the Abt team, documents the experiences of the

early implementation phase of the HIP project. It is descriptive in nature, detailing how the system is designed to work, the early implementation experiences, and the key successes, challenges and lessons learned. Specifically, it describes HIP development and project management, systems design and modifications, retailer recruitment and training, participant notification and training, and the role played by local DTA offices and community partners. The report covers activities from grant application development (beginning in December 2009) through March 2012. It is based on stakeholder interviews, the first year retailer survey, on-site observations, project documents and HIP team meetings.

Interim Report

The Interim Report addresses the overall goals of the evaluation—estimating the impact of HIP on participant fruit and vegetable consumption and other key measures of dietary intake. Analyses are based on data collected during the early HIP implementation phase, enabling estimation of the very short-term impacts of HIP. The report estimates the impact of HIP on mean incentivized fruit and vegetable outcomes overall and by household characteristics. It also estimates the impact on dietary knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as the household food environment and general shopping patterns.

Work began on the Interim Report near the end of the year. Early results suggest a modest difference between the treatment and control groups on intake of fruits and vegetables on the order of about one-fifth cup (about an ounce) per person per day. Preliminary findings suggest there was no significant difference in total energy intake between treatment and control groups. Thus, there is some indication that the additional fruits and vegetables consumed may be substituting for other foods. HIP participants spent only slightly more than non-HIP participants each month on fruits and vegetables. Work continues on refining the database and the estimation methods. Thus, these preliminary results may be revised as analyses proceed. In addition, analysis of spending on fruits and vegetables and other complementary analyses are ongoing and will be needed to understand these early findings. The Interim Report is intended to provide an early picture of the impact of HIP; the full impact of HIP will only be understood in light of comprehensive analyses that will be carried out for the Final Report, expected at the end of 2013.

2013 Planning

Major Highlights of State's Activities for 2013

Close-out of Operations

DTA closeout activities will include a number of activities such as ensuring that all stakeholders are aware that HIP has ended, staffing the HIP call line to respond to any questions that former HIP participants may have, and working with retailers and Xerox to disable HIP features and restore traditional SNAP operations.

Notification of stakeholders began in 2012. DTA had a well-orchestrated plan to notify participants, as described in the 2012 accomplishments. DTA is planning to continue to visit retailers, particularly the independent ones, on a monthly basis through the end of January to assist them with closeout and address any questions. DTA is in touch with its community

partners on a routine basis, both through the HIP Steering Committee and via frequent communications.

Xerox will continue to generate daily HIP EBT files for the first three months of 2013. Thus, the chain retailers will maintain their lists of HIP-eligible items during this period. After this, HIP features will be disabled and traditional SNAP operations will resume.

Reporting

DTA will submit a draft final progress report and financial report to FNS for review and comment. Upon receipt of FNS' comments, DTA will revise and re-submit both reports. Additionally, DTA will submit a final project report on the planning, implementation, operations and closeout of the pilot, from the perspective of the State. All final reports are expected to be submitted by the end of summer 2013.

Meeting at FNS

DTA will conduct a final briefing at FNS. Prior to the briefing, DTA will submit draft materials for the presentation to FNS for review and comment. They will refine the presentation based on FNS' comments. In addition, DTA may participate in one or more debriefings concerning various aspects of the pilot.

Major Highlights of Evaluation Activities for 2013

Data Collection

Data collection in 2013 will focus on EBT-related items. As noted above, the third round of interviews with Xerox, integrated retailers and third party processors will be conducted in early 2013 to learn about their closeout activities, lessons learned and their opinions on the feasibility of expanding HIP.

Analysis

The analysis will focus on addressing the five major objectives of the evaluation: (1) assessing the impact of HIP on fruit and vegetable consumption by SNAP participants, and on other key measures of dietary intake; (2) identifying and assessing factors that influence how HIP impacts participants; (3) describing the processes involved in implementing and operating HIP; (4) assessing the impact on the HIP grantee (the State SNAP agency), the local SNAP agency, and their team of partners (including retailers, EBT processors, and community organizations); and (5) quantifying, to the extent possible, the Federal, State, and local administrative costs of the pilot and the estimated costs of nationwide implementation.

The data for the analysis will include the participant surveys, the EBT data, the participant focus groups, the retailer surveys and on-site observations and the stakeholder interviews.

Public Use Files

Abt will construct public-use data files that contain all data collected during the HIP study. The files will exclude all direct personal identifiers such as respondent name, address, and date of birth and only include randomly assigned identifiers. In addition, demographic variables and combinations of demographic variables with fewer than five sample members will be recoded. Other potentially identifying variables will also be identified and recoded as necessary to ensure that no individuals can be identified.

Evaluation Reports

There will be three evaluation reports prepared during 2013. Work on the first, the Interim Report, began in 2012, and will be completed in 2013. The second, the Final Report, will be prepared in 2013. Work on the third, the Summary Report, will begin near the end of 2013.

Interim Report

As discussed above, the Interim Report examines the impact of HIP on participant fruit and vegetable consumption and other key measures of dietary intake. Analyses are based on data collected during the early HIP implementation phase, enabling estimation of the very short-term impacts of HIP.

A five member Technical Work Group, made up of outside experts from academia, will review the second draft of the report, provide written comments and participate in a discussion with FNS and Abt about ways to improve the report. Their feedback will be used to revise the report.

Final Report

The Final Report will build on the analyses performed for the Interim Report, and will incorporate Round 3 participant survey data and additional EBT data, to estimate the longer term impact of HIP on participant fruit and vegetable consumption and other measures of dietary intake. Like the Interim Report, it will also include how household characteristics, dietary knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as the household food environment and general shopping patterns impact fruit and vegetable consumption, again updated to include Round 3 participant data as well as additional EBT data. In addition, the Final Report will include the process of implementation, based on the earlier Implementation Report, updated by Rounds 2 and 3 stakeholder interviews; the costs of implementing and operating HIP; and the feasibility of nationwide expansion.

Summary Report

After FNS acceptance of the Final Report, the Abt team will prepare a short (20 pages or fewer), free-standing Summary Report providing an overview of the study and the major evaluation findings, written in non-technical language. It is likely that the final version will be completed in 2014.

Project Timeline Table

Major Project Activities	
2009	
	FNS convened stakeholders to discuss key pilot features
	FNS developed design for the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP)
	Announcement of competition for pilot cooperative agreement and evaluation contract released
2010	
	Massachusetts DTA selected as pilot site
	Abt Associates selected as independent evaluator
	Pilot implementation activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ EBT systems work ❖ Retailer recruitment
	Evaluation activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Technical Work Group formed ❖ Work with DTA on evaluation reporting requirements ❖ Develop data collection instruments
2011	
	Pilot implementation activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ EBT computer systems changes ❖ Retailer recruitment ❖ Selection and notification of HIP households ❖ Train DTA staff, retailers, HIP households ❖ Development and production of HIP stakeholder training materials
	Evaluation activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ OMB clearance package prepared; approval received ❖ Selection of evaluation sample ❖ Baseline data collection—SNAP recipients, retailers, stakeholders
	HIP began operations
2012	
	HIP operates during the entire year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provided support for participants and other HIP stakeholders ❖ Continued retailer recruitment ❖ Development and production of Farmers Market training materials ❖ Implementation of Farmers Market models
	Data collection during early and late implementation phases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Participant surveys ❖ Retailer surveys and observations ❖ Stakeholder interviews ❖ EBT transaction data collection
	Prepare Implementation Report
	Work on Interim Evaluation Report
2013	
	Complete Interim Evaluation Report
	Prepare Final Evaluation Report
	Work on Summary Evaluation Report

Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, we have made substantial progress this year in the implementation and evaluation of HIP. We continued to successfully operate HIP, allowing thousands of SNAP households to earn HIP incentives. As of October 1, 2012, we had over 100 retailers participating in HIP. The

evaluation team conducted two rounds of HIP data collection activities, including household data collection, stakeholder interviews and focus groups to obtain information needed to conduct the evaluation and prepared the Early Implementation Report. Finally, we prepared for the closeout of HIP, which will end December 31, 2012.
