



## **SNAP Eat Well, Be Well Pilot Rewards Program Overview**

The Eat Well Be Well Rewards Program (EWBW) offers an innovative approach to address food insecurity by making fresh produce more affordable through a monetary SNAP incentive. SNAP recipients will receive this incentive automatically at the cash register. SNAP customers will receive an additional 50 cents for every SNAP dollar spent on eligible fresh fruit and vegetable purchases up to \$25. This will be applied to their EBT cards immediately after the purchase is complete and can be used to purchase any SNAP eligible item. ***Please note only in-store purchases count towards the accrual of additional benefits.*** The Rhode Island Eat Well, Be Well Rewards Program is the first and only statewide retail SNAP incentive program in the United States.

### **Why is the Eat Well Be Well Rewards Program Important?**

According to the RI Community Food Bank, food insecurity, defined by the USDA as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food, currently impacts nearly 1 in 3 households in Rhode Island. Additionally, the Food Bank Status Report on Hunger stated that people of color are disproportionately impacted by the burden of food insecurity; 48% of Black households and 51% of Latinx households experienced food insecurity versus 23% of white households in Rhode Island. SNAP supports low-income families, but healthy food items, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, are extremely cost prohibitive for this population. The average household in Rhode Island receives approximately \$315 in benefits per month which is equivalent to \$3.75 per household per meal according to the Brown University School of Public Health. The goal of this program is to substantially alleviate food insecurity for Rhode Island's most vulnerable families.

The Eat Well Be Well Rewards program is a market-based solution to helping alleviate food insecurity and promoting healthy eating for Rhode Island's lowest income families, while supporting the state's retail grocery businesses.



## **SNAP Eat Well, Be Well (EWBW) Pilot Rewards Program**

Did you know that you if you purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating stores with your SNAP EBT card you can earn additional benefits to spend on any food item? For more information about this pilot program, please see the frequently asked questions below.

### **What is the Eat Well, Be Well Pilot Rewards Program?**

Eat Well, Be Well Rewards puts money back on your EBT card when you use SNAP to buy healthy fruits and vegetables from authorized grocery stores. You may also hear this being referred to as incentives or incentive benefits.

### **How do I earn incentive benefits?**

To earn benefits, the Eat Well, Be Well Rewards Program requires that you purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating stores. The rewards will automatically be added to your SNAP/EBT card.

### **How will I know if the fruits and vegetables are approved?**

Only fresh fruits and vegetables are approved for rewards during the pilot program. Participating stores will identify which fruits and vegetables are approved.

### **What can I spend my reward incentive benefits on?**

You can spend your reward incentives on any SNAP-eligible food item. The reward incentives you earn will automatically be applied to your next SNAP-eligible purchase at a grocery store.

### **How much do I earn in reward incentives when making a purchase?**

For every dollar you spend on an eligible reward incentive item, you earn half of that amount in incentive. The match is 50% of the eligible purchase amount. For example, if you purchase \$10.50 in fresh fruits and vegetables, you will earn \$5.25 in incentives.

### **Is there a maximum amount I can earn in reward incentives in a month?**

Yes, each household can earn a maximum of \$25 in reward incentives a month.

### **How long do I have to use reward incentives?**

You have 274 days (or 9 months) to spend your reward incentives and then they will be removed from your account.

### **Where can I go to earn these rewards?**

Not all stores in Rhode Island offer reward incentives. We are continually adding participating stores, so check the DHS website at <https://dhs.ri.gov/SNAP-Eat-Well-Be-Well> for the most up-to-date list of participating stores. Currently, all Stop & Shop and Walmart stores in Rhode Island are participating.

### **What items are eligible for this incentive?**

- Fresh fruits and vegetables that are cut or whole.
- Edible seeds (e.g., sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds)
- Fresh herbs
- Salad Kits – inclusive of products that have cheese, croutons, dressing, etc. included.
- Pomegranate cup (fresh arils)
- Potted fruit, vegetable and herb plants (i.e. basil)
- Fresh garlic

**How much is the incentive?**

SNAP participants are eligible to receive a 50% on eligible fresh fruit and vegetable purchases for every dollar spent up to \$25.

**What is the limit for this incentive?**

There is a monthly cap of \$25 per SNAP household. This means a SNAP household can spend \$50 per month on eligible fresh fruits and vegetables and receive up to a \$25 reimbursement incentive back onto their EBT card.

**How does the SNAP recipient receive their reward incentive?**

The reward incentive is given to the SNAP recipient as an automatic reimbursement directly on the participants' EBT card. The SNAP recipient does not need to take any additional steps to receive this incentive. The incentive will be reimbursed immediately after purchase of any eligible items back onto the recipients' EBT card.

**How can I check my rewards balance?**

There are three ways you can check your EWBW rewards balance:

- It is printed on the bottom of the receipt when you check out at the grocery store.
- You can access it via phone or your online SNAP portal like you would normally to find your monthly SNAP balance.
- Customers can also call the EBT customer service number at 1-888-979-9939. Should customers have questions about their balance, please email the DHS at [dhs.ebtinquiry@dhs.ri.gov](mailto:dhs.ebtinquiry@dhs.ri.gov)

**Who do I contact if I have a problem with my EWBW Rewards balance?**

Please email the Department of Human Services at [dhs.ebtinquiry@dhs.ri.gov](mailto:dhs.ebtinquiry@dhs.ri.gov).

**How is the program funded?**

This program was funded through an \$11.5 million budgetary appropriation of the Rhode Island General Assembly to the Department of Human Services during the 2022 legislative session.

**How long will this program last?**

Currently, this program will operate until funds are expended or additional funding becomes available.