

**INCENTIVES FOR ENROLLED
FAMILIES POLICY-
STANDARD PROCEDURE**

Title: Illinois Department of Human Services Home Visiting (DHS-HV) Incentives for Enrolled Families in DHS-HV Programs	Date Issued: April 14, 2021
Area: Use of Funds for Incentives for Enrolled Families	

PURPOSE. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on allowable costs and how to budget for items related to participant incentives.

SCOPE. MIECHV and HFI Home Visiting Programs (Herein referred to as DHS-HV). This policy does not apply to MIECHV Coordinated Intake Programs. Coordinated Intake Programs should refer to DHS-HV Advertising Costs and Promotional Materials Policy.

POLICY. Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) (herein referred to as DHS-HV) sites funded to support home visiting programming shall only use HFI and MIECHV funds on allowable participant incentives as described herein.

Participant incentives are used in home visiting to promote and support parental involvement and encourage families to maintain scheduled visits, complete screenings, and/or attend group connections. Commonly purchased items for participant incentives include the following:

- Diapers and Wipes
- Infant Care Items (ie, thermometers, onesies, pacifiers, etc)
- Books, Toys, and Craft Items
- Car Seats
- Portable Cribs (ie, Pack n’ Play®)
- Safety/Baby Proofing Items (ie, gates)
- Crib and/or Toddler Bedding

Participant incentives that are **not** allowable costs under the DHS-HV programs include the following:

- Food and infant formula*
- Technology (ie, tablets, laptops) for families*
- Meals that would be considered “entertainment” would be unallowable. Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any associated costs are unallowable, except where specific costs that might otherwise be considered entertainment have a programmatic purpose and

are authorized either in the approved budget for the award or with prior written approval of the IDHS. The costs of refreshments and snacks for enrolled individuals/families participating in group activities that are an integral component of the home visiting program are allowable (eg, nutritious snacks for dads' group meetings).

Participant incentives should be budgeted for in the "supply" line item and should be labeled Participant Incentives and must include a list of the specific items to be purchased. Costs should be broken out by number of items and per item cost.

Participant incentives should only be provided to enrolled and established participants of home visiting or group services.

If one does not already exist, DHS-HV sites are required to establish guidance related to incentive giving and include this in the organization's policy and procedure manual.

***Special Update for Allowances in Times of Uncertainty**

The Illinois Department of Human Services understands that families' and DHS-HV Sites' needs may shift during times of uncertainty or during emergencies and has decided to align with new federal statutory authorities in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) (CAA).

The allowances in CAA will be extended to DHS-HV sites. DHS-HV sites may use funds during the COVID-19 Public Health emergency period to:

1. Train home visitors in conducting virtual home visits and in emergency preparedness and response planning for families;
2. Acquire the technological means as needed to conduct and support a virtual home visit for families enrolled in the program; and
3. Provide emergency supplies to families enrolled in the program, regardless of whether the provision of such supplies is within the scope of the approved program, such as diapers, formula, non-perishable food, water, hand soap, and hand sanitizer.

Additional Special Allowance During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Period (from The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) follows:

DHS-HV will allow the provision of pre-paid grocery cards to enrolled families. The pre-paid grocery cards may not be redeemed for cash or used for unallowable items including (but not limited to) purchase of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or other substances, or firearms. **Providers must have written policies and controls in place to safeguard pre-paid grocery cards and document their use. Controls must include an inventory log to track the cards and signed documentation showing receipt of the pre-paid grocery card by the family.** It is recommended that card denominations not exceed \$50.

All DHS-HV programs must adhere to their organizational incentive policy and maintain appropriate documentation for the purchase and distribution of pre-paid grocery cards. Grant recipients have the ultimate responsibility to track and account for all grant funds spent.

As with all other costs paid using IDHS grant funds, awardees must ensure that funds are used for authorized purposes in compliance with applicable statute, regulations, policies, program requirements and the terms and conditions of the award. DHS-HV sites are required to develop and maintain policies and procedures related to acquiring and managing technology and emergency supplies for their program and families they serve. DHS-HV sites should ensure that they comply with their own organizational policies when incorporating these new authorities, as well as federal requirements such as:

- 2 CFR 200

DHS-HV SITES may choose to re-budget funds later in the fiscal year for costs related to the above-described activities.

- Note that budget revisions are required if the line item transfer is greater than 10% (of the line item) or \$1,000 of the budget line item, whichever is greater.
- DHS-HV sites should contact DHS staff to request a budget revision or if you have any questions about budget revisions.
- All budget revisions must be submitted by May 1 of the grant year to ensure they are processed and approved before the end of the fiscal year—which is June 30.

These allowances will only be made to the SFY21 and SFY22 budget period.

