**Settlement Notice**

**Lawsuit about Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Wage Match**

**October 2016**

## Did DTA send you a “wage match” notice in 2014 or 2015? You may be able to get back SNAP benefits. Also you have the right to object to the Settlement.

**Why?**

In 2014 and 2015, DTA compared wage information they had about you with information they got from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR).

If the DOR wage information did not match the information DTA had, the DTA computer sent you a notice about the wage match and then closed your SNAP case. DTA has stopped using wage match information to decide if people are eligible for SNAP, for now.

Some SNAP clients took DTA to court over its wage match procedures. DTA agreed to:

1. Give some SNAP benefits back to some people if DTA closed their case after the wage match.
2. Send a SNAP application and a postage-paid return envelope to households if DTA closed their SNAP case after the wage match and did not reopen it by the end of 2015.
3. Only use wage match information to decide if people are eligible for SNAP if DTA decides, after DTA testing, that the information is accurate and relevant.

The agreement is called a “Settlement”. This kind of lawsuit is called a “class action”.

## Who is in the class?

The class is all Massachusetts households who got a wage match notice after March 17, 2014 if DTA closed their SNAP case within 60 days of the notice. You are getting this notice because you are a member of the class.

**Who is eligible for back benefits under the Settlement?**

Households who may be eligible for back benefits fall into 3 groups. DTA will send you another notice if you are in one of these groups. **You do not have to do anything now.** If you are not getting SNAP now, you can reapply at any time.

## What are the 3 groups?

### Group 1 – Automatically get three months of back SNAP benefits

You are in Group 1 if DTA closed your household’s SNAP case and did not reopen it by December 17, 2015, and –

* The wage match was for a child under 18, ***or***
* The difference between DOR’s wage information and DTA’s wage information was less than $300.

### Group 2 – May get two months of back SNAP benefits if you reapply for SNAP benefits and get approved

You are in Group 2 if DTA closed your household’s SNAP case and did not reopen it by December 17, 2015 and you are not in Group 1.

### Group 3 –Automatically get two months of back SNAP benefits

You are in Group 3 if you are getting SNAP benefits now and DTA closed your household’s SNAP case but:

DTA did not reopen your SNAP case or pay you back any SNAP benefits you missed while your case was closed, ***and***

* Your case was closed for less than 4 months, ***or***
* DTA had not processed a document in the case when DTA closed the case.

## What if you do not agree with something in the Settlement?

The Judge will hold a hearing to decide if she will approve the Settlement. You can come to the hearing. **The hearing will be on Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at 2:00 P.M., Suffolk Courthouse, Courtroom 916, 3 Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108.**  You do not have to come, but you are welcome to come if you want.

If the judge approves this Settlement and you are in the class, you cannot take DTA to court over any wage match notice sent to you by DTA in 2014 or 2015.

If you **do not agree with any part of the Settlement, you have the right to object**.

You can come to the hearing and tell the Judge you object to the Settlement.

You can also object to the Settlement in writing:

1. Write a letter to the judge. Explain what you do not agree with in the Settlement.

Include:

* 1. The name and number for the court case:
	Milesi v DTA, Suffolk Superior Court, No. 2014-1641E.
	2. The part of the Settlement you disagree with and why you disagree. For example, you might disagree because you are not going to get all the back benefits you think you lost.
	3. Your name and address.
	4. A sentence that says you will be at the hearing onOctober 26, 2016, if you want to tell the judge something about this case.
1. Send the letter by October 20, 2016 to:

Clerk Margaret Buckley

Session E, Room 916

Suffolk Courthouse

3 Pemberton Square

Boston, MA 02108

1. Send a copy to Deborah Harris, Mass. Law Reform Institute by mail or email:

Deborah Harris
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
40 Court Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02108

wagematch-info@mlri.org

## How do the lawyers get paid?

The lawyers in this case work for Massachusetts Law Reform Institute. They started the case in May 2014. They have been working to get the Settlement since then. The state will pay Massachusetts Law Reform Institute $120,000.

**How can you get more information?**

* See a copy of the Settlement: [www.MasslegalHelp.org/wagematch](http://www.MasslegalHelp.org/wagematch)
* Call Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI): 857-317-3240
* Email wagematch-info@masslegalhelp.org