

## **Department of Transitional Assistance**

### **June 2025 Advisory Board**

### **Statewide Updates**

#### **State Budget Process**

The Massachusetts legislature continues to work through the annual State Budget. This is a long and complex process and involves many stages where DTA will weigh in to advocate for our clients and staff.

The House's initial budget proposal presents mixed results for the Department of Transitional Assistance's funding priorities. There are a few key areas where funding falls below Governor Healey's requested amounts:

- *Caseworkers Staff Account* is funded at \$101.3M which is a \$41.7M (29%) decrease from the Governor's H.1 Budget
- *Dept of Transitional Assistance Administration and Operation* is funded at \$107.5M which is a \$5M (4%) decrease from the Governor's H.1 Budget

The Senate has also finished their initial version of the FY26 budget with a few key differences from the House's budget:

- *Caseworker Staff Account* was fully funded at \$142.9M
- *Healthy Incentives Program* was funded at \$25.4M which is a \$6.6M increase from the Governor's H.1 Budgets

Now that both chambers have finished their debates, they will work together in a Conference to come to one unified budget to pass and send to the Governor.

The Department remains confident that funding levels will improve as the budget progresses through subsequent stages. DTA continues to work closely with partners and advocates to educate legislators on the importance of appropriate funding to support critical services and operations.

#### **SUN Bucks**

DTA is excited to bring back SUN Bucks (formerly Summer EBT) for a second year. Families who qualify will receive \$120 for each eligible child to assist with buying food when schools are closed for the summer.

**Automatic Enrollment:** Most students who qualify for SUN Bucks will be automatically enrolled through a streamlined process, requiring no action from families. This includes students who:

- Are actively receiving or have received SNAP during the 2024–2025 school year

- Receive DTA cash benefits
- Receive SSI or certain types of MassHealth coverage
- Were in foster care at any time during the 2024–2025 school year

Who Needs to Apply: If a family doesn't qualify for automatic enrollment, they must apply for SUN Bucks either online at DTAConnect.com or submit a paper application at the child's school.

To be eligible, families must meet all of these requirements:

- Your child attends a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program
- Your household income meets the same guidelines used for free or reduced-price school meals

Benefits will begin to be distributed to approved households on XXXX

### **Monitoring Federal Funding for SNAP**

We are working with federal partners to monitor the ongoing federal budget process and how it impacts client benefits. DTA is aware of discussions at the congressional level regarding reductions to SNAP benefits and eligibility limitations to meet spending reduction targets and is monitoring these for their impact on Massachusetts.

### **New Bedford Transitional Assistance Office Relocation**

On May 12, the DTA New Bedford office will be moved into its new permanent location at 16 Kilburn Street, New Bedford, MA 02740.

### **SNAP Work Rules Changes**

Following the end of the temporary COVID-19 flexibilities, the Department resumed time limited benefits for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) beginning May 1, 2025. DTA has concurrently made system enhancements to better support SNAP recipients for the reimplementation of SNAP work rules time limited benefits.

These enhancements include a new screening process to identify exemptions, new work rules explanation videos available in [multiple languages on our website](#), and improved notices that clearly explain which work requirements apply to household members. DTA has also enhanced the system to document compliance with the ABAWD work rules, including when a client is volunteering at public or non-profit organization.

### **DTA is Now on Facebook**

DTA has launched an official Facebook page to enhance our communication with the community and provide timely updates about programs and services. Our Facebook page is focused on providing updates and information for clients and partners and is managed by DTA's Communications team. Facebook is not an avenue to assist clients with their

casework. We invite you to connect with us on [Facebook here](#) as we work to make our services more accessible to everyone we serve.

### **Benefits Theft**

Federal funding used to replace stolen SNAP benefits has expired for thefts that happened after December 20, 2024.

It is more important than ever that clients protect their benefits from theft. Clients can control when their card is usable and when it is not by locking and unlocking their EBT card through their DTA Connect account. Clients are encouraged to leave their cards locked until they need to use it in order to prevent skimming or other benefit theft.

DTA clients are encouraged to continue to report any stolen benefits to DTA as soon as they discover it. There are not funds available for replacement benefits right now.

We understand that there has been confusion regarding why DTA continues to request reports of stolen benefits when there is not funding available. If additional funding is received, it's important that DTA have the stolen benefit claims available to process. We ask for your assistance in clarifying this with partners and clients.

#### **How to Report Stolen Benefits:**

- Call the DTA Fraud Line at 833-602-9247
- Fill out the [Claim for Replacement of Stolen Benefits form](#) online
- Complete and mail [the Claim for Replacement of Benefits Stolen Electronically form](#) to:  
DTA Program Integrity Fraud Investigation Unit  
P.O. Box 4411  
Taunton, MA 02780-0435
- [More information can be found here.](#)

### **Assistance Line**

The DTA Assistance Line continues to experience an incredibly high volume of callers. In an average day, the Assistance Line receives nearly 9,000 calls from people hoping to speak to a DTA staff member. More than half of those calls hear the high-volume message and about 2,000 are able to speak with a Case Manager.

DTA is exploring new strategies and appreciates your help in promoting other self-service options for clients, such as increasing use of DTA Connect.

By using DTA Connect, a client can submit an application, submit verifications, check their case status, check their balance, and more. We also encourage clients to work with contracted SNAP outreach partners, which are approved community-based organizations that are able to help clients apply for and maintain their SNAP benefits. A list of partners can be found online [here](#).

