

Department of Transitional Assistance

July/August 2025 Advisory Board

Statewide Updates

Federal SNAP Updates

DTA continues to monitor ongoing federal legislative changes that impact SNAP operations and client benefits. These changes will go into effect over time, and we are committed to keeping you fully informed as we learn more from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service about how these changes will be made. We will share regular updates to ensure our clients, partners, and community organizations have the information they need.

Anti-Hunger Task Force

On July 17, Governor Healey signed an Executive Order creating an Anti-Hunger Task Force to help prevent Massachusetts families from going hungry as federal food assistance programs face cuts, with DTA having a seat and key role to play. The task force will bring together leaders from government, food banks, nonprofits, and businesses, along with those directly affected, to develop recommendations for mitigating federal cuts to SNAP and other food assistance programs. [You can learn more here.](#)

State Budget Process

At the end of June, the Legislature sent the Governor a FY26 State Budget, which she signed on Friday, July 4, that funds caseworkers below what the Governor requested. Recognizing the importance of maintaining caseworker staffing, the Healey-Driscoll Administration signed the budget, and immediately [filed a request](#) for supplemental funding that can be used for DTA caseworkers to ensure continued staffing levels. We will continue to work with our colleagues in the Legislature to ensure the Department has adequate funding for our staff.

Key Line items:

- Caseworker Reserve - \$101.3 million
- Administration and Operation - \$106.9 million
- Healthy Incentives Program - \$20.1 million
- TAFDC - \$466.7 million
- EAEDC - \$208.9 million

TAFDC Eligibility Expansion for Pregnant People with No Other Children

The TAFDC line item eliminated the language that restricted eligibility for pregnant people over the age of 20 with no other children from receiving TAFDC until their final 120 days of pregnancy. The Department is now approving applications for pregnant people over the age of 20 with no other children as soon as the pregnancy is medically verified when they meet all other program rules. The Department continues to develop policy for this group, will be making systems changes and will do a look back to July 1 to capture any cases that were denied prior to notification of the change.

Healthy Incentives Program Updates

The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) incentive amount increased to \$40 per month for all eligible households starting July 1st. This represents a significant enhancement to the program that will provide additional support for families purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Updated information and materials reflecting the new \$40 HIP incentive are now available on mass.gov/hip, including updated HIP FAQs, instructional videos, and flyers in multiple languages. We encourage all partners to review these materials and update any signs, websites, and printed materials to reflect the new \$40 monthly amount.

DTA has communicated this change to customers through text messages and emails to households who have used HIP recently, as well as updates to our website, DTA Finder, social media, and client notices.

Additional HIP program enhancements are scheduled for later this year, including "Single Swipe" functionality for HIP transactions, expanded HIP information on receipts, and improved customer service line information. We will continue to keep partners informed as these changes are implemented.

SUN Bucks

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

Most students who qualify for SUN Bucks were 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, or were in foster care at any time during the 2024-2025 school year.

Families who don't qualify for automatic enrollment must apply for SUN Bucks either online at DTAConnect.com or submit a paper application at the child's school. Benefits have been distributed to approved households throughout the summer months.

SNAP Work Rules Changes

Following the end of temporary COVID-19 flexibilities, the Department resumed time-limited benefits for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) beginning May 1, 2025. DTA has made concurrent 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 www.mass.gov/snapworkrules, 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 organizations.

August will be the first month clients not meeting the ABAWD work rules will be ineligible for SNAP due to the time-limit, unless they have an exemption or start meeting the ABAWD work rules. For more information visit our website www.mass.gov/snapworkrules.

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 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 them to prevent skimming or other benefit theft.

DTA clients are encouraged to continue reporting any stolen benefits to DTA as soon as they discover it. While there are currently no funds available for replacement benefits, if additional funding is received, it's important that DTA have the stolen benefit claims available to process.

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 high volume, with nearly 9,000 calls received on an average day from people hoping to speak to a DTA staff member. More than half of those calls hear the high-volume message, and approximately 2,000 are able to speak with a Case Manager.

DTA is exploring new strategies and appreciates partner help in promoting self-service options for clients, such as increasing use of DTA Connect. Through DTA Connect, clients can submit applications, submit verifications, check case status, check balances, and more. We also encourage clients to work with contracted SNAP outreach partners, which are approved community-based organizations that help clients apply for and maintain their SNAP benefits. A list of partners can be found online [here](#).