

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## SNAP Food Benefits and Adult Foster Care



**Adult Foster Care (AFC)** is a program for older adults and adults with disabilities who cannot live alone. MassHealth pays qualified AFC caregivers to provide in-home care to older and/or disabled MassHealth recipients who would otherwise be institutionalized.

Low-income persons who provide in-home care to disabled adults through the Adult Foster Care (AFC) program may be able to exclude that person and their income from their SNAP benefits.

### I am an Adult Foster Care caregiver. Can I get SNAP?

If you are low income and have a hard time buying food, you may be eligible for SNAP.

In general, you need to be in a SNAP case with people you live with if you buy and make most of your food together. If you are an AFC caregiver, you have the choice to include or **exclude** Adult Foster Care members in your SNAP household. This is true even if you share meals with the AFC member.

If you do not include the AFC member in your SNAP household, the AFC income does not count in your household's SNAP calculation —but if excluded, the AFC member cannot in turn get their own SNAP benefits.

NOTE: If you are married to the AFC member or they are your child and are under 22, due to SNAP rules you **cannot** exclude them.

### Is excluding an AFC member from my SNAP important?

If the foster adult is excluded from your SNAP household, none of their foster care payments or other income they get (such as Social Security) counts for SNAP. When an AFC member and their income are excluded, care-giving households often qualify for higher monthly SNAP benefits.

### How do I remove a AFC member from my SNAP case?

If you are already getting SNAP that includes a foster adult (AFC member), you can ask DTA to remove the AFC member and their income, along with the AFC income, from the SNAP calculation. You can do this at any time! Tell DTA the person is an AFC member and ask for the adult to be removed from your case.

## I do not get SNAP. How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

Apply through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA):

- Online: [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com)
- By phone: 877-382-2363, press 7
- In person at any local DTA Office
- Fax or mail: Get a paper application at [Mass.gov/SNAP](https://Mass.gov/SNAP)

After you apply, you need to talk to DTA for the application interview and send any proof documents they need. Tell DTA during the interview about the AFC member, and state you want to exclude them from your case.

DTA has 30 days to approve or deny your application, unless you qualify for emergency SNAP. If you are approved, SNAP benefits are put on an EBT card (like a debit card).

## What are my rights if I am denied SNAP?

- Download DTA Connect to send DTA proofs, update information, learn about your case, and see DTA notices.
- Call the DTA Assistance Line at 1-877-382-2363 to talk with a SNAP worker and about why you were denied. You can also ask to speak to a Supervisor or the Office Director.
- Call the DTA Ombudsman's office at 617-348-5354 and ask them to review the case.
- Request a hearing if you disagree with DTA's decision. There is an appeal form on the back of the denial notice. You can also call the Division of Hearings to file an appeal over the phone at (617) 348-5321. The hearing is by phone, unless you ask for one in person or by Zoom.
- Contact your local Legal Services office for more information: [MassLegalHelp.org](https://MassLegalHelp.org)

*You can find the rules about foster care payments and SNAP benefits in federal regulations 7 CFR 273.1(b)(4), 273.9(c)(15), and Massachusetts SNAP regulations 106 CMR 361.240(F)*