

## **FAQ:**

### **Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits for More Massachusetts Community College Students**

#### **Background:**

On June 1, 2010, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) issued Field Operations Memo 2010-28, expanding Food Stamp/SNAP eligibility for students in career based programs at community college:

<http://www.masslegalservices.org/node/32130> For many decades, college students have been barred from food stamps unless they met one of the federal exemptions<sup>1</sup> to the student exclusion rule. Students often qualify if they receive federal or state work study grant, but with high unemployment and more attending state colleges to finish degrees or upgrade skills, there is not enough work study to go around. Despite increased demand, funding for federal work study has not increased in the last decade, and the limited funds have eroded with increases in the minimum wage – wage amounts upon which work study grants are based.

In response to MLRI's research and policy analysis, DTA recently agreed that federal FS/SNAP law permits them to exempt students from the federal bar where enrolled in "state or local government employment and training programs" likely to enhance employability and/or otherwise lead to employment. This new DTA policy significantly expands the number of low income community college students who may qualify for SNAP.

#### **How do community college programs determine which students are in career or technical education programs, or one that will lead to employment?**

Each November, the 15 community colleges determine the number of enrolled students who meet the criteria of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-270), as defined in Appendix A of the Perkins IV Manual: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/perkins/perkins\\_manual.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/perkins/perkins_manual.pdf) This student count helps Massachusetts leverage federal Perkins grants to improve the career and technical education at the colleges for all students. (This is not a financial grant provided to an individual student.) For FS/SNAP eligibility purposes, a community college may also determine that a student enrolled in another degree or course of study will also lead to employment, independent of the Perkins student count.

#### **What kinds of educational programs are considered "career and technical education"?**

The following are career and degree based "academic clusters" under which most Perkins-eligible programs fall: Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Visual and Communications; Business, Management and Administration; Education and Training; Finance; Government and Public Administration; Health Science, Hospitality and Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; Manufacturing, Marketing, Sales and Service; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

#### **How does a student prove he or she enrolled in a qualifying degree or certificate program?**

DTA has developed a *one-page form* for a student to be signed by a community college official. The form and proof of enrollment is sufficient to meet the FS/SNAP student rule. If a student is enrolled in a program that the college *does not* consider likely to lead to employment, the student may still qualify for FS/SNAP if he or she receives work study or meets one of the other exemptions to the student rule.

#### **Are students who live at home with parents now eligible for FS/SNAP benefits?**

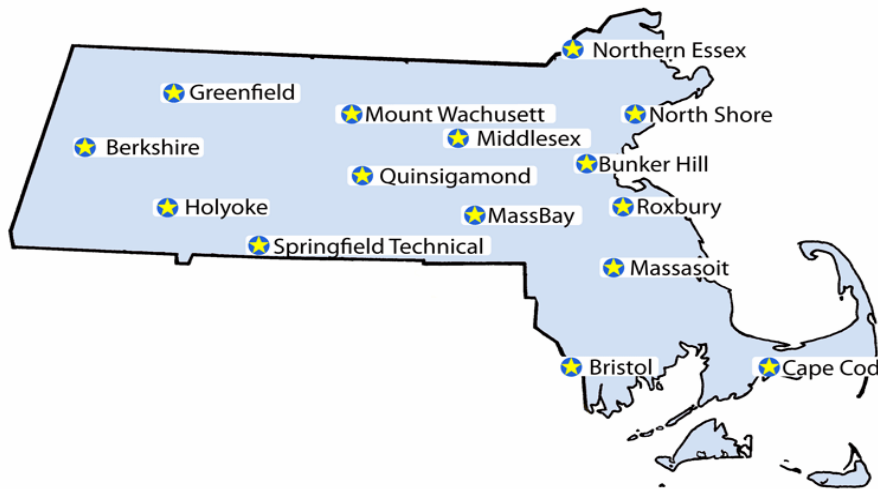
If a student is under age 22 and lives with his or her parents, the student must apply *with the parents or be added* to the parent's FS/SNAP benefits. This is part of the regular FS/SNAP household composition rules. See 106 CMR 361.200. Once a student turns age 22 – or is over age 18 and lives with others who are not his or her parents – the student may apply separately provided he or she purchases and prepares less than half the meals with others.

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<sup>1</sup> Exemptions to the student ineligibility rule include being an older student (over age 50), having a disability, caring for a young child (under age 6 or under age 12 under certain conditions, receiving TAFDC, working 20 hours a week, participating in a FS/SNAP education and training (FSET) activity, or receiving federal or state work study. See 106 CMR 362.410.

# Food Stamp/SNAP Outreach: Mass Community College Students



	Community College Name	Unduplicated Credit Student Headcount: Fall 2009	Students in Career/ Tech Ed Programs (Perkins Clusters): 2008/2009 yr	Eco disadvantaged (Pell Grant) Students 08/09
1	Berkshire CC	2,601	893	788
2	Bristol CC	8,767	3,192	1,838
3	Bunker Hill CC	11,009	2,433	1,458
4	Cape Cod CC	4,657	1,188	574
5	Greenfield CC	2,546	746	346
6	Holyoke CC	7,473	2,320	1,441
7	Mass Bay CC	5,564	3,369	650
8	Massasoit CC	7,941	1,972	738
9	Middlesex CC	9,516	2,974	1,699
10	Mt.Wachusett CC	4,761	1,786	1,154
11	North Shore CC	7,968	2,556	1,629
12	Northern Essex CC	7,385	2,887	2,095
13	Quinsigamond CC	8,348	2,538	939
14	Roxbury CC	2,749	1,251	643
15	Springfield Tech CC	6,782	2,321	1,072
	<b>TOTALS:</b>	98,067	32,426	17,064

Chart represents potential SNAP-eligible student population under DTA Field Ops Memo 2010-28. Note, students under age 22 living at home eligible only through parent's SNAP household All students must meet financial and other SNAP eligibility rules. Data source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education <http://www.mass.edu/library/Reports/2010-03CCTrendBook.pdf> ; 2008/2009 Perkins Eligible and Pell Grant students: Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education