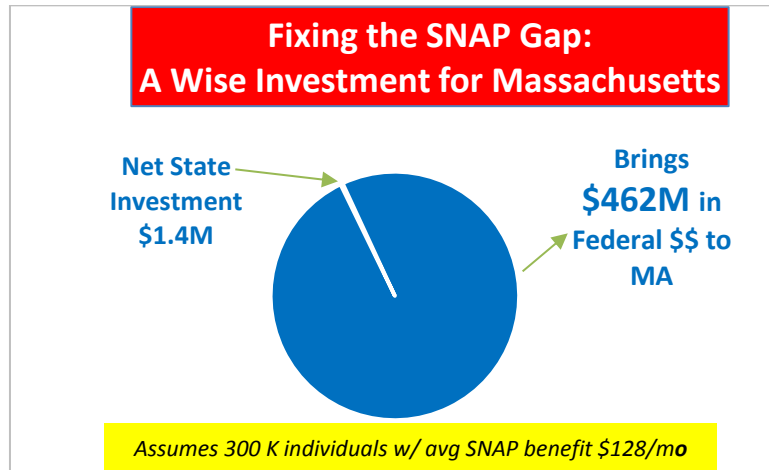


7 Smart Fiscal Reasons to Close the “SNAP Gap”

Can Massachusetts Afford to Close the SNAP Gap? Can we afford NOT to?



1. **SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded:** Providing SNAP to even 300K low income individuals (about 170K new SNAP households) will bring in **\$462M additional** federal nutrition dollars/year.¹
2. **The federal government reimburses 50% for SNAP admin costs:** Roughly **half** of the \$1.9M increase to DTA Central and \$1M in creating a common portal qualifies for federal reimbursement.²
3. **More low income students will get free school meals:** Receipt of SNAP automatically enrolls students in **free school meals**, which helps low-income schools feed even more children and leverage even more federal meals dollars through the “Community Eligibility Provision.”³
4. **An increase in SNAP can help reduce MassHealth administrative costs:** MassHealth currently uses SNAP eligibility to renew eligibility for MassHealth, which renewal process **reduces admin costs in Medicaid.**⁴
5. **SNAP receipt reduces health care costs:** Medical research confirms that when low-income families and elders access federal nutrition benefits, they incur **lower health care expenses.**⁵
6. **SNAP boosts the economy:** Every \$1 in SNAP triggers a \$1.73 economic “ripple effect.”⁶ MA currently receives \$1.2B in SNAP, triggering **\$2 billion in economic stimulus** to the Commonwealth.
7. **SNAP dollars can increase state tax revenue:** Receipt of SNAP can help free household income for housing costs, as well as taxable items like paper goods, cleaning products, gasoline for transportation.

SNAP Gap References Notes:

¹ Average SNAP benefit in Massachusetts is \$128/month per person. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap> If just **300K** MassHealth recipients received the SNAP benefit (about 170K new households), the SNAP dollars would increase by **\$462M**: 300K pp x \$128 SNAP x 12 months = \$462M. If **680K** additional individual Masshealth recipients qualified, the additional federal SNAP dollars would be **\$1B**

² SNAP federal regulation, 7 C.F.R. §277.4 (b). “The base percentage for Federal payment shall be 50% of the State agencies’ allowable Food Stamp Program Administration costs.” If the state FY2017 budget invests \$1.9M in additional SNAP workers and \$1M to initiative a common application, half of that funding is eligible for fed reimbursement.

³ USDA Food and Nutrition Service “Community Eligibility Provision” (CEP) guidance allows schools and school districts with high rates of “direct certification” of children for free school meals to provide universal free breakfasts and lunch to all students in the school or school district. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision> Children are “directly certified” through receipt of SNAP, TANF, certain Medicaid households and foster care children. Increasing SNAP participation of low income families directly impacts a school’s ability to provide universal free meals.

⁴ State and federal guidance on use of SNAP eligibility information to renew Medicaid/MassHealth eligibility:

- CMMS/Health and Human Services approval of the Medicaid 1115 waiver “express lane” provisions (see pp 5-7) at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/eohhs/cms-waiver/ma-1115-amendment-approval-oct-1-2013.pdf>
- EOHHS MassHealth Eligibility Operations Memo 12-05 (9/15/2012) re Express Lane Renewal Process, at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/eom2012/eom-12-05.pdf>

⁵ Medical research documenting improved health outcomes for children and adults who receive SNAP:

- Frank, D., Ettinger de Cuba, S., Sandel, M., and Black, “SNAP cuts will harm children in the USA,” The Lancet, vol 382, no 9899, (2013), [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(13\)61805-X/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(13)61805-X/abstract)
- Executive Office of the President of the United States, Domestic Policy Advisors “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/SNAP_report_final_nonembargo.pdf
- Szanton, S. et al. “Access to Public Benefits to Reduce Risk for Nursing Home Entry Among Maryland’s Dual Eligible Older Adults,” Johns Hopkins U. 2015, at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284174095_Access_to_Public_Benefits_to_Reduce_Risk_for_Nursing_Home_Entry_Among_Maryland%27s_Dual_Eligible_Older_Adults
- Sonik, R “Massachusetts Inpatient Medicaid Cost Response to Increased Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits,” Am J, Public Health, March 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26794167>

⁶ Economic “ripple effect” of SNAP benefits as documented by USDA Economic Research Service and Moody’s Economy: <http://frac.org/initiatives/american-recovery-and-reinvestment-act/snapfood-stamps-provide-real-stimulus/>

