



# Know Your Rights



## SNAP Food Assistance: For Workers on Strike

SNAP is a federal nutrition benefits that can help put food on the table. You may be eligible for SNAP if you are on strike. But, there are special rules for some strikers.

### What are the SNAP eligibility rules for strikers?

If you are on strike, there are two different ways that DTA should count your income to see if you are eligible. How DTA counts your income depends on your situation. For the SNAP regulations on strikers, see [106 CMR 361.240\(E\)](#).

1. DTA should only consider your **current** income when you are on strike and apply for SNAP if:
  - a. On the day before the strike started, you were:
    - i. A caretaker of a child under 6
    - ii. A caretaker of an incapacitated person (such as an elderly parent)
    - iii. 60 or older
    - iv. A student enrolled at least half time
    - v. Pregnant (second or third trimester)
    - vi. Getting TAFDC (DTA cash assistance for families)
    - vii. A participant in a drug or alcohol treatment program
  - b. You are not participating in the strike but can't work because of other employees on strike, you do not want to cross a picket line due to fear of personal injury, or you have been locked out (your employer closed your workplace to resist the demands of employees).

*For example:* Belinda works at Stop & Shop and goes on strike on April 11. She cares for her 5 year old daughter who lives with her. When Belinda applies for SNAP, DTA should consider her current income – NOT the income she was getting from Stop & Shop before she went on strike.

*Note for current SNAP recipients:* if you are part of one of the above groups and you are already getting SNAP, you should ask DTA to remove the income from your case that you are not getting because you are on strike.

2. If you do not fall into the above groups, DTA should **compare your income before you went on strike with your current income**, and use the higher amount. In general, if your income was below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level before the strike (\$3,555 per month for 3 people), you may be eligible.

*For example:* Belinda cares for her 10 year old daughter who lives with her. She doesn't meet any of the other special striker rules for SNAP. When Belinda applies for SNAP, DTA should look at the income she had before she went on strike and compare it to her current income when determining if she is eligible.

## How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

You can file an application for SNAP through DTA:

- Apply online: [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com)
- Fax a paper application to DTA at: 617 887 8765
- Mail a paper application to: DTA Document Processing Center, PO Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780
- Go In person to a local DTA Office

After you apply, call the DTA Assistance Line for an interview at **1-877-382-2363**. Then send DTA the proofs they ask for. 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).

In addition to your income, DTA will ask about citizenship/non-citizenship status, who you live with, what your housing costs are, and other information.

## What happens when the strike ends?

If you were getting SNAP before the strike started, you should continue to follow the rules for reporting changes and doing paperwork. If you start getting SNAP while you are on strike, you may need to tell DTA when the strike ends – it depends on how much your income is. To learn more about the reporting rules for SNAP, see:

[Masslegalservices.org/content/98-what-happens-after-i-am-approved-snap-and-what-changes-do-i-need-report-dta](https://Masslegalservices.org/content/98-what-happens-after-i-am-approved-snap-and-what-changes-do-i-need-report-dta)

You can see information about your case, including copies of notices DTA has mailed you in the past 18 months, by going to [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com).

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

- Download the **DTA Connect** mobile app to send DTA proofs, look at your case information, 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. If you disagree with what the SNAP worker says, 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 DTA denial notice. Fill this out and fax or mail it back to DTA You can have the hearing by phone or in person.
- Contact your local Legal Services office if you are denied SNAP or need advice and representation: [Masslegalhelp.org](https://Masslegalhelp.org)

Contact MLRI if you have questions about the SNAP striker or other eligibility rules: Vicky Negus at [vnegus@mlri.org](mailto:vnegus@mlri.org) (617 357 0700 x 315) or Pat Baker at [pbaker@mlri.org](mailto:pbaker@mlri.org) (x328) with questions.