



# Know Your Rights



## SNAP Food Assistance For College Students

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or “SNAP” helps eligible low income households buy food. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, **everyone who qualifies for SNAP gets the maximum amount for their household**. For example, \$234/month for one person, \$430 for 2 people, and \$616 for 3 people!

### Can I get SNAP if I am a college student?

There are special rules for low-income college students, including *new rules* during the COVID public health emergency.\* You may qualify for SNAP as a student if you meet **any of the following**:

- You were awarded Work Study in your financial aid, even if you do not have a work study job,\*
- You receive a full Pell Grant or have an “Expected Family Contribution”(EFC) of \$0 under your financial aid (FAFSA) approval,\*
- You receive MassGrant financial aid from the state,
- You are enrolled in a certificate or degree program at a Massachusetts Community College,
- You attend college through a state-approved education or training program or through the Mass Rehab Commission,
- You have a temporary or permanent incapacity or disability,
- You are age 50 or older,
- You care for a child under the age of 12, or you have kids and get TAFDC cash benefits,
- You work or are self-employed an average of 20 hours or more per week, **OR**
- You are enrolled less than half-time.

### How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

- **Online/by smartphone:** [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com)
- **By phone:**
  - Call the DTA Assistance Line at 1-877-382-2363 (press #6), or
  - Call the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333
- **Paper application** – find at [Mass.gov/SNAP](https://Mass.gov/SNAP)
  - **Fax:** 617 887 8765
- **Mail:** DTA Document Processing Center, PO Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780

If DTA needs more information from you (such as proof of your income) after getting your application, they will mail you a notice. You can check to see what information DTA needs and learn about the status of your application on [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com) or via the DTA Connect mobile app. If you have a \$0 EFC you may have gotten a personalized

email from the Mass Department of Higher Education (DHE) around 2/3/21 (example [here](#)). If you got this email, send DTA a copy after you apply – you can upload it via DTA Connect.

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 income does DTA count?

DTA counts the following income in calculating your SNAP benefits:

- Gross earnings from a job (before taxes are taken out) or self-employment including gig work (after your business expenses, but before taxes),
- Unearned income such as Social Security or SSI, child support or Unemployment benefits (but not the \$300/week boost currently in place due to the pandemic).

Work Study and other federal educational aid does not count as income. State and private educational loans and grants also do not count unless the non-federal money is earmarked and used for your living expenses (room and board).

Some other types of income also do not count. See the [MLRI SNAP Advocacy Guide](#) to learn more.

### What if I live with other people?

#### Roommates:

If you buy and prepare most of your food *separately from your roommates*, you can apply for SNAP for just *yourself*. If you buy and prepare most of your food *together*, you must apply for SNAP with your roommates—and they must report their income and meet other rules.

#### Living with Parents:

*If you are 22 or older and live with your parents*—but you buy and prepare more than half your food separately from them – you can apply for SNAP for just yourself to buy your own food.

*If you are under 22 and live with your parents*, you cannot get SNAP separately from them. This is true even if you don't share food with them. If your parents currently get SNAP, they should ask DTA to add you. If your family is low income and does not get SNAP, you or your parents can apply for SNAP as a household.

#### Living on Campus:

If you live on-campus and get more than 2/3 of your meals from a school meal plan, you don't qualify for SNAP. You may be eligible for SNAP if you have no meal plan or a limited meal plan.

### 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. You can also ask to speak to a Supervisor or the Office Director.
- Call the DTA Ombuds's office at **617-348-5354** and ask them to review your case.
- Request a hearing if you disagree with DTA's decision. You can fill out the appeal form on the back of the DTA denial notice OR call the Division of Hearings for a hearing. Call **617-348-5321**. Your hearing will be by phone.
- You may be able to get free legal help. Visit the [Mass Legal Resource Finder](#) to find your local Legal Services office: [Masslrf.org](#)
- You can also appeal or request a "special circumstance" review of their EFC determination if more than \$0 and you need it to qualify for SNAP. See [formswift.com/swift-student](#)
- **For more information:** [Masslegalservices.org/food4students](#)