



Know Your Rights



SNAP Food Assistance And Foster Care Children

If you are low income and care for a foster child, you may be able to get higher SNAP benefits under special SNAP rules.

I get SNAP and care for a foster child. Can I get more SNAP?

Under the SNAP rules, children who live with you must be part of your SNAP household. If you include a foster child in your SNAP case, the foster care income you get counts for SNAP. However, you have the **choice to exclude** foster care children from your SNAP household.

If you chose to do this, **NONE** of the foster care payments count as income. And any other income of the foster child—such as Social Security or child support—also does **NOT** count. **This may result in a higher SNAP benefit for the rest of your family.** Note: The foster child cannot get SNAP separately if he or she is not included in your SNAP household.

Example: Sam and Susan Howard have two biological children and care for a foster child, Jimmy. The Howards get foster care payments of \$600/month. The Howards can apply for SNAP for themselves and their two children as a 4 person household, excluding Jimmy AND the DCF foster care payment. If the Howards included Jimmy in their SNAP case, their SNAP benefits would be lower because the foster care payments would be counted as income.

How do I remove a foster care child from my SNAP case?

If you are already getting SNAP that includes a foster child, you can ask DTA to remove the foster care child and all the foster care income from the SNAP calculation. You can do this at any time! Send DTA proof the child is in foster care and ask for the child to be removed from your case.

You can send DTA documents with a smartphone through **DTA Connect**, DTA's mobile app.

Can I get free school meals for my foster child?

Yes. All foster children can get free school meals even if you do not get SNAP benefits for the foster child. Be sure the school knows you are enrolling a foster child. DCF should help you notify the school. The free meals continue through the entire school year, even if the foster child moves to another school or is no longer in foster care.

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

You can file an application for SNAP through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA):

- Apply online: [Mass.gov/snap](https://www.mass.gov/snap)
- 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](#)

Be sure to tell DTA if you wish to exclude the foster child in the SNAP application.

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).

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 for more information: www.masslegalhelp.org

You can find the rules about foster care payments and SNAP benefits in the Code of Federal Regulations: 7 CFR 273.1(b)(4), 273.9(c)(15), and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations: 106 CMR 361.240(F)