



# SNAP Food Assistance: Workers who lost hours or job due to COVID-19

If you were laid off or lost income and need help putting food on the table, SNAP food assistance is here to help. SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), gives individuals and families money to buy food at grocery stores, convenience stores, and certain farmers markets. You have the right to apply for SNAP any time you need help.

## Who is eligible for SNAP?

Most households with low or no income are eligible for SNAP. Here are some core rules:

- If you live with your spouse or your children under age 22, they need to be part of the same SNAP household.
- If you live with other people, you do not need to apply with them unless you buy and prepare most of your food together.
- If you are not a US Citizen, there are special immigrant status rules.
- In general, if your income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), you may be eligible for SNAP. For example, for a household of 3 people, 200% of the poverty level is \$3,620/month.

## I lost my job or work hours because of COVID-19. What should I know?

You can **apply for SNAP at any time**. You do not have to wait to file an application.

- The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) should not count income you are no longer getting because your job stopped.
- During COVID-19, DTA should not ask for proof you were laid off by your employer.
- You may be eligible for expedited SNAP benefits within 7 days of the date of your application if your income is less than your shelter costs or if you have very low or no income or assets.

If you have children, you are aged 65+, or you are disabled, you might also be eligible for **monthly cash benefits** from DTA. Call any DTA office by phone to apply.

- For local office contact information: [Mass.gov/orgs/department-of-transitional-assistance/locations](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-transitional-assistance/locations)
- Information on TAFDC for families: [Mass.gov/service-details/check-tafdc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-tafdc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply)
- Information on EAEDC for seniors and persons with disabilities here: [Mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply)

## How much can I get in SNAP each month to help buy food?

The maximum SNAP benefit is \$194/month for 1 person, \$355/month for 2 people, and more for larger households. The amount you get is based on your net countable income. As part of the federal response to COVID-19, it is possible some SNAP households will receive emergency SNAP allotments in the future in addition to their regular monthly benefit.

## How do I apply for SNAP?

Because of COVID-19, you currently **cannot apply in person** at DTA. To apply:

- Apply **online**: [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com)
- Download the SNAP application at [Mass.gov/SNAP](https://Mass.gov/SNAP) then fax the **paper application** to DTA's fax line: 617-887-8765 or mail it to DTA Document Processing Center, PO Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780.
- Apply **over the phone** by calling Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at (800)645-8333, the Food Bank of Western MA at (413) 247-9738, the Greater Boston Food Bank (617)427-5200, or other MA SNAP outreach partners listed here: [Mass.gov/snap-outreach](https://Mass.gov/snap-outreach). (Note: not all SNAP outreach partners are able to take phone applications during the crisis, so call first to see if open.)

## How do I learn the status of my case after I apply?

The fastest way to learn about your SNAP case is if you use the DTA Connect mobile app or DTAConnect.com. You can find out your case status, view DTA notices, and upload documents directly to your DTA case record.

You can also call the DTA Assistance Line at **1-877-382-2363**. Due to high call volume you may need to call back or wait on hold for a long time - call from a landline or cellphone that has sufficient minutes.

## What if I am sick or need someone to help me buy food?

DTA will issue only one SNAP EBT card per household with the name of the head of household printed on the card. Everyone in the household has the right to use the card for food shopping. Grocery stores should not ask to look at the card or refuse to let you use the card if you know the PIN. The PIN is the secure signature for the card.

Also, you can give your card to a trusted family member or friend to food shop for you. Federal rules say you do not need tell DTA if you are giving people permission to make food purchases for you on an ad-hoc basis. [7 CFR 273.8\(f\)\(9\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-273/subpart-8/section-273.8(f)(9))

## What are my rights?

If you are denied SNAP or cash benefits, or disagree with a decision DTA has made:

- Call the DTA Assistance Line or your case manager to ask more information about why they denied your case.
- Call the DTA Ombudsman's office at **617-348-5354** if you cannot reach a case manager. Ask the Ombuds Office to review your case.
- Request a hearing if you disagree with DTA's decision. There is an appeal form on the back of the DTA notice. Fill this out and fax or mail it back to DTA. During COVID-19 hearings are held by phone.
- Contact your local Legal Services office for information about your rights and possible representation: [Masslegalhelp.org](https://Masslegalhelp.org)

## Where can I find emergency food?

For help with food resources in your community, call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline: **1-800-645-8333**