

Housing

There is a limited amount of public and subsidized housing in Massachusetts. The rent a public housing tenant pays is based on household income and whether utilities are included in the rent. Rental assistance programs provide financial aid in the form of subsidies or vouchers to help low-income persons rent apartments.

For more information about these services, call the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) at 1-617-573-1100. You can also ask DHCD for a pamphlet called, "How to Obtain Housing Assistance in Massachusetts."

You may also apply for RAFT through DHCD. RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition) is a state-funded homelessness prevention program. RAFT gives short-term financial assistance to low-income families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Homeless Services

To assist homeless families, DTA's Emergency Assistance (EA) Program provides services, including temporary emergency shelter, to increase both family stability and access to permanent housing. The EA Program is for homeless families with children or pregnant women who meet financial eligibility standards.

The Department of Transitional Assistance also provides emergency shelter for individuals without children. Eligibility requirements are set by the shelter and placements are made on a first-come, first-served basis. To apply for EA or to find out more information on homeless services, please contact your local DTA office.

MassHealth

MassHealth offers a broad range of health care services for low - and moderate-income people in Massachusetts. It pays for part or all of a member's health insurance or pays medical providers for services. When you apply for cash assistance at your local DTA office, your eligibility for MassHealth will be reviewed. For more information on MassHealth, call toll-free 1-800-841-2900 or go to www.mass.gov/masshealth.

Elder Services and Nutrition

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs offers information and valuable resources such as housing, home health care, meals and nutrition advice. For more information on the wide variety of programs and services provided, contact the Executive Office of Elder Affairs at 1-617-727-7750 or visit their website at www.mass.gov/elderservices.

Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) provides services and assistance to certain immigrant populations, including refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, and other immigrants. To obtain information about services or if you need assistance, call ORI at 617-727-7888 or visit their website at www.mass.gov/ori.

Veterans' Benefits

If you ever served in the United States Armed Forces and were honorably discharged, you are a veteran. In addition to health care, substance abuse and mental health services, burial benefits, educational benefits, and employment assistance, you may be eligible for monetary benefits. Contact the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services at 617-210-5480 or visit their website at www.mass.gov/veterans to locate a state benefits counselor near you.

Fuel Assistance - Community Action Program (CAP)

Fuel Assistance can help you pay for heating your house or apartment during the winter months. It can pay for fuel, or if heat is included in your rent, it can pay for a part of your rent.

Community Action Program (CAP) offices run the fuel assistance programs and provide help with electric and gas bills, insulation and furnace repairs. Many CAP offices also help with a wide variety of other services, including job training, day care and housing information. To find out which agency covers your city or town, call the "Heatline" at 1-800-632-8175 or visit their website at www.mass.gov/dhcd/.

Utility Discounts - Most electric companies and gas companies have low-income discount programs. You automatically qualify for the discounts if you receive cash assistance, food stamp benefits, MassHealth, SSI, Fuel Assistance, or if your child is in the School Lunch Program or Head Start. These discounts can save you 25-35 percent on each bill. To apply for the discounts, call your gas and electric companies and ask for an application.

Telephone Discounts - Some telephone companies also have low-income discount programs. Call your local telephone company to ask if it has a low-income discount program and how to apply.

This is a TANF-funded brochure.

Help for Those in Need:



A Resource Brochure

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) understands that sometimes it's hard to make ends meet. That's why we want you to know that there are many programs that can help you through a tough time.

This brochure provides a list of several places to get the help you might need.

Phone numbers are listed for many of these services. A worker at DTA can help you with cash assistance or a food stamp application.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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Believing you can.

www.mass.gov/dta



Food Stamp Benefits

Food stamp benefits help you buy nutritious food that you need for your family. All food stamp recipients can receive free nutrition information by visiting www.mypyramid.gov or by calling the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program at 1-800-622-3637. To apply or get information about food stamp benefits, call the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Application Information Unit toll-free at 1-800-249-2007 or 1-866-950-FOOD or go to your local DTA office. You can apply in person, by mail or you can fax in your application. You can also apply online at www.mass.gov/dta.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The Department of Public Health runs the WIC Program. This program provides food vouchers to pregnant and nursing women, new mothers and children under age five. To get more information, call the Department of Public Health WIC Hotline at 1-800-WIC-1007. You may also visit online at www.mass.gov/wic.

Food Banks

Massachusetts' food banks offer emergency assistance by providing food pantries and other food programs with emergency supplies. Food banks will provide you with a list of programs in your area where you can get free emergency food. Call a food bank in your area:

- Eastern Massachusetts: Greater Boston Food Bank 1-617-427-5200
- Central Massachusetts: Worcester County Food Bank 1-508-842-3663
- Western Massachusetts: The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts 1-413-247-9738

To find food resources in your community, you may also call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 (TTY: 1-800-377-1292).

School Breakfast and School Lunch Program

These programs provide free or reduced price nutritionally balanced meals and snacks to children in participating schools. In Massachusetts, children residing in households that receive food stamp benefits are automatically enrolled in the school lunch and breakfast programs. If you would like to enroll your child in any of these programs, please call the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at 1-781-338-3000 (TTY:1-800-439-2370) or visit www.mass.gov/doe or www.doe.mass.edu. You may also call your child's school.

Career Centers

If you need help finding a job or would like information about training opportunities, you can go to your local Career Center. Each Career Center has free resources to help you apply for jobs and help you with job search. In addition, Career Center staff will provide you with information about training opportunities, including financial assistance. Career Centers are located in most major cities in Massachusetts. To find the one closest to you, call the Division of Career Services (DCS) at 1-617-626-5300, or visit their website at www.mass.gov/careercenterservices.

Job Search/Job Readiness Program

The Job Search/Job Readiness Program helps people find work. Activities include identifying and finding solutions to employment barriers, job readiness activities, job search activities and follow-up services to help you get a job. Programs are also available to help you keep your job or get a better job. Call or visit your local DTA office for more information.

Employment Services Program (ESP)

Employment services are available to address your vocational, educational and training needs. Call or visit your local DTA office for more information.

Tax Assistance - Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC/EIC)

If you or someone in your family works, you may be eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the state Earned Income Credit (EIC). Filing taxes and claiming EITC/EIC tax credits could mean you will pay no taxes and still get a refund from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR). To qualify, you must work, meet certain income and other requirements, and file a tax return, even if you did not earn enough money to be required to file. In Massachusetts, getting the EITC/EIC refunds will not affect your eligibility for MassHealth, SSI, food stamps, low-income housing, or cash assistance. For more information about EITC/EIC or to find out how to get free help with filing your tax return, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 (TTY/TDD: 1-800-829-4059) or call DOR at 617-887-MDOR (6367) or toll-free in Massachusetts:1-800-392-6089. To find a free tax preparation site, visit www.mass.gov/masscashback.

Unemployment Benefits

If you lost your job or if the number of hours you work has been cut, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits. You may also be eligible for job search and job training benefits. Apply for benefits by phone or at your nearest Unemployment Insurance Walk-In office.

By phone: 1-877-626-6800 from area codes 351, 413, 508, 774, and 978.
617-626-6800 from any other area code, including 617. TTY/TTD: 1-888-527-1912.

In person: You may visit an Unemployment Insurance Walk-In office. These include all DCS Career Centers plus a few other offices. These are listed at www.mass.gov/careercentersuiling, or you may call 1-617-626-6560 for the location nearest you.

Child Care

Safe, affordable child care is your number-one priority if you are working, participating in Job Search/Job Readiness, or attending an approved training or education program. For information about low-cost, quality child-care assistance, call the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) at 1-617-988-6600 or the Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-800-345-0131, or visit their website at www.mass.gov/eec. If you are receiving TAFDC, call your local DTA office for a referral.

Child Support

Every child has the legal right to get money from both parents, whether the parents are separated, divorced or were never married. The child support you receive will help you make a better life for you and your children. If you are not already receiving child support, call the Department of Revenue (DOR) Child Support Enforcement Unit at 1-800-332-2733 or visit their website at www.mass.gov/cse.

Transportation - Access to Jobs

Do you have transportation to and from your job and your child care provider? Is lack of transportation keeping you from finding a good job? If you receive cash assistance, you may be eligible for transportation benefits. Call or visit your local DTA office and ask about "Access to Jobs" or visit their website at www.accesstojobs.org.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence affects the entire community. Everyone deserves to be safe. If you or someone you know is being abused and you would like more information on what you can do to keep yourself, family or neighbors safe, call or visit your local DTA office and ask to speak to a Domestic Violence Specialist. If it is after hours or an immediate emergency, please call SafeLink at 1-877-785-2020.