

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

SNAP Food Assistance For College Students



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or “SNAP” (formerly called Food Stamps) helps eligible low-income households buy food. Many low income college students qualify.

Can I get SNAP if I am in college?

There are special rules about SNAP for low-income college students. You may qualify if you meet any of the following:

- Get federal Work Study, and you work or expect to work during the semester
- Receive financial aid from the state MASSGrant program
- Attend a community college and your course of study or certificate program will increase your employability
- Work (for pay) an average of 20 hours or more per week
- Care for a child under the age of 12, or you get TAFDC as a parent with children
- Are in school through a state-approved education or training program
- Are in college less than half-time (for example, less than 6 credit hours)
- Are under age 18 or over age 49
- Have a temporary or permanent disability that makes it hard to work 20 hours/week
- Receive services through the Mass Rehab Commission

How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

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

- Online: DTAConnect.com
- Call 877-382-2363, press 7
- 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

If you live with other people who get SNAP, they may need to contact DTA to add you. See below. 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).

How much SNAP will I get?

It depends! The monthly SNAP benefit amount is calculated based on your countable income and your expenses, such as rent or child care. Visit Mass.gov/SNAP to see maximum benefit amounts.

What income does DTA count?

- Earned income from a job or self-employment,
- Unearned income such as Social Security, child support or unemployment insurance.

Work Study and other federal educational aid **does not count** as income.

What proofs do I need to give DTA?

DTA will send you a list of proofs they need (such as proof of income or Massachusetts residency). DTA should accept a self-declaration (over the phone or written) of your college enrollment and which of the special rules you meet, listed above. Contact info@masslegalservices.org if DTA asks you for proof of financial aid or where you are enrolled in school.

What if I live with other people?

Roommates	If you buy and prepare more than half of your food separately from your roommates, you can apply for SNAP for <i>just yourself</i> . If you buy and prepare most of your food together (you share the food you all purchased together), you must apply for SNAP with your roommates—and they must report their income and meet other rules.
Parents	<p><i>If you are age 22 or older and live with your parents— but you buy and prepare more than half your food separate from your parents – you can apply for SNAP for just yourself to buy your own food.</i></p> <p><i>If you are under age 22, you cannot get SNAP separately from your parents if you live with them. This is true even if you don't share food. If your parents currently get SNAP, they should ask DTA to add you. If your family is low income and does not get SNAP, your parents can apply for SNAP as a household.</i></p>
On-Campus	If you live on-campus and get 2/3 or 3/3 meals a day or 14+ meals a week from a school meal plan, you don't qualify for SNAP benefits. If you have a limited meal plan – for example, 1 meal a day – then you may be SNAP eligible.

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: Masslegalhelp.org
- **For more information visit Masslegalservices.org/food4students**