

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## SNAP Food Assistance: For Workers on Strike



SNAP is a federal nutrition benefit that can help put food on the table. You may be eligible for SNAP if you are on strike. But, there are special rules for some strikers.

### What are the SNAP eligibility rules for strikers?

If you are on strike, there are two different ways that DTA should count your income to see if you are eligible. How DTA counts your income depends on your situation. For the SNAP regulations on strikers, see [106 CMR 361.240\(E\)](#).

#### 1. DTA should only consider your current income when you are on strike and apply for SNAP if:

- a. On the day before the strike started, you were:
  - A caretaker of a child under 6
  - A caretaker of an incapacitated person (such as an elderly parent)
  - 60 or older
  - A student enrolled at least half time
  - Pregnant (second or third trimester)
  - Getting TAFDC (DTA cash assistance for families)
  - A participant in a drug or alcohol treatment program

b. You are not participating in the strike but can't work because of other employees on strike, you do not want to cross a picket line due to fear of personal injury, or you have been locked out (your employer closed your workplace to resist the demands of employees).

*For example: Belinda works at Stop & Shop and goes on strike on April 11. She cares for her 5 year old daughter who lives with her. When Belinda applies for SNAP, DTA should consider her current income – NOT the income she was getting from Stop & Shop before she went on strike.*

**Note for current SNAP recipients:** if you are part of one of the above groups and when you go on strike you are already getting SNAP, ask DTA to remove the income from your case that you are not getting because you are on strike.

#### 2. If you do not fall into the above groups, DTA should compare your income before you went on strike with your current income, and use the higher amount. In general, if your income was below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level before the strike, you may be eligible. Visit [Mass.gov/SNAP](#) to see the SNAP income limits.

*For example: Belinda cares for her 10 year old daughter who lives with her. She doesn't meet any of the other special striker rules (list above). When Belinda applies for SNAP, DTA should look at the income she had before she went on strike and compare it to her current income. DTA should count the higher income when determining if she is eligible.*

## How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

Apply through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA):

- Online: [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com)
- By phone: 877-382-2363, press 7
- In person at any local DTA Office
- Fax or mail: Get a paper application at [Mass.gov/SNAP](https://Mass.gov/SNAP)

After you apply, you need to talk to DTA for the application interview and send any proof documents they need.

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 happens when the strike ends?

If you are getting SNAP and your income changes, check what reporting rules you need to follow. Different types of cases have different rules. You can check what reporting rules you have to follow on [DTAConnect.com](https://DTAConnect.com) or in your approval notice from DTA. You may not need to tell DTA until you do paperwork (an Interim Report or Recertification). Or, you may need to report the change.

## 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 if you are denied SNAP or need advice and representation: [Masslegalhelp.org](https://Masslegalhelp.org)