

Was your SNAP Application Denied for Lack of an Interview? Know Your Rights.

The SNAP rules require DTA to give you an interview - by phone or in person - with a DTA worker within 30 days of the date of your application.

In recent months, DTA's Assistance Line has been overwhelmed, making it very hard for SNAP applicants to get their interview. Many SNAP applicants miss DTA's automated calls and then try to call the DTA Assistance Line (1-877-382-2363). Callers report they are often "on hold" for 30 to 60 minutes and/or get disconnected. According to DTA's own data, **1 of every 2 calls to the DTA Assistance Line from callers trying to reach a DTA worker are disconnected due to high call volume.**¹

These unacceptable problems with DTA's phone line can lead to DTA wrongly denying your application for missing the required interview. DTA may send you a denial notice that says "*you did not finish your SNAP application.*" Under DTA's rules, if you tried to reach DTA to have your interview, **DTA should not deny your SNAP application - unless you actually "refused to cooperate."**

See DTA's rules 106 CMR 361.400 and 106 CMR 361.700(B)(1) - attached.

Steps you can take:

1. Reapply for SNAP:	If your SNAP was denied, you have the <i>right to reapply</i> - at any time. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you do not get the DTA interview call, were put on hold for too long, or your call was disconnected - report this problem to the DTA Ombuds Office at 617-348-5354 or send an email to the Ombuds Director Sara.Craven@mass.gov• If you can, go in person to a local DTA office from 8-5 on weekdays. You have the right to get an interview the same day you walk in.• If you are approved, your SNAP will start the date you reapplied.
2. File an appeal:	Even after you reapply for SNAP, you can <i>appeal to get back benefits</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• File an appeal within 90 days of your original denial notice. You can fill out the appeal form on your denial notice - or hand write a note - and upload it to DTACONnect. Or call the DTA Division of Hearings: 617-348-5321• Most hearings are done over the phone.• Explain to the Hearings Officer your efforts to get a DTA interview and that you did NOT "refuse to cooperate."• Try to take a screenshot of any phone calls you made to the DTA Assistance Line, including calls attempting to reschedule a missed interview. Or write a statement of your efforts to reach DTA. Upload the screenshots or statement to DTACONnect for the Hearings Officer to review.
3. Legal Services:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For free legal help, visit www.MassLRF.org

Updated: February, 24, 2025

¹ See [DTA Performance Scorecards, 2024](#) Assistance Line Average Daily Calls (chart, page 4)



Agency ID: [REDACTED]
10/17/2024

[REDACTED]
BOSTON MA 02124-3080

For Your Information DTA has made a decision about your case

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): We denied your SNAP application because

- You did not finish your SNAP application.

If you want SNAP benefits, you must submit a new application.

Need help because of disability? Tell us if you need help to understand or do something we ask because of a health problem or disability. This could be mental, physical, sensory, learning, intellectual, cognitive or developmental. We may be able to give you extra help or adjust a rule. This is called an accommodation. Call a Client Assistance Coordinator at 617-249-8200 for help with an accommodation.

Assisting Person: You can choose a trusted person to help manage your benefits. This person is called an "assisting person."

Legal Services: Call Greater Boston Legal Services (617-371-1234/1-800-323-3205) to ask about free legal services.

Regulations: The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR 361.400, 106 CMR 361.500. You can find our regulations at [Mass.gov/DTA/Regulations](https://www.mass.gov/DTA/Regulations).

Connect with DTA! You can use DTA Connect or call DTA Assistance Line at 877-382-2363. If you have any questions about your case, need to make updates, need help because of a disability, are experiencing domestic violence, or have

362.370: continued

(C) The authorized representative is properly using the SNAP benefits. Except in cases of drug and alcohol treatment centers and group homes, the Department may disqualify the authorized representative from participating as an authorized representative for up to one year if the Department has obtained evidence that the authorized representative has misrepresented a household's circumstances and has knowingly provided false information about the household, or has made improper use of SNAP benefits. The Department shall notify the household and the authorized representative in writing 30 days before disqualification. The notice shall include the proposed action; the reason for the proposed action; the household's right to request a fair hearing; and the appropriate Department telephone number; and the name of the person to contact for additional information.

361.400: Household Refusal to Cooperate

To determine eligibility, the information on the application must be complete and the application signed, the household or its authorized representative must be interviewed, and certain information on the application must be verified. If the household refuses to cooperate with the worker in completing this process, the application shall be denied at the time of refusal.

For a determination of refusal to be made, the household must be able to cooperate, but clearly demonstrate that it will not take actions that it can take and that are required to complete the application process. For example, refusal to be interviewed shall result in a denial; failure to keep an appointment for an interview shall not automatically result in a denial. If there is any question as to whether the household has merely failed to cooperate as opposed to refused to cooperate, the household shall not be denied.

The household shall also be determined ineligible if it refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility, including reviews generated by reported changes, recertifications, or as part of a Quality Control review.

Once denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, the household may reapply but shall not be determined eligible until it cooperates.

361.500: Interviewing Households

At initial certification, an interview shall not be conducted with SSI households that have filed an application at an SSA office. (See 106 CMR 361.190.)

All other applicant households, including those submitting applications by mail, fax or through the online application shall be scheduled for a face-to-face interview in the local office unless the office interview requirement is waived as provided in 106 CMR 361.510. The applicant household must be notified of the date and time when the original interview appointment is scheduled. If the household does not appear for the interview appointment, the worker must notify the household that it missed a scheduled interview and that it is the household's responsibility to contact the local office to reschedule a missed interview. The interview shall be conducted by the worker prior to initial certification and at all recertifications. The individual interviewed may be the head of household, spouse, other responsible member of the household, or the household's authorized representative. The applicant may bring any individuals s/he chooses to the interview.

361.510: Waiver of the Office Interview

The households in 106 CMR 361.510(A) and (B) shall not be required to complete a face-to-face interview in the local office. For these households the interview must be conducted by telephone or home visit. However, home visits shall be used only if the time of the visit is scheduled in advance with the household. Households who have been certified for 24 months shall have a telephone interview at the end of the 24-month period. (See 106 CMR 366.920: *Regular SSI/SNAP Households*.)

(A) Waiver Granted upon Request. Any household which is unable to appoint an authorized representative and has no household member able to come into the office because they are elderly or disabled as defined in 106 CMR 361.210 shall be granted a waiver of the office interview.

361.650: Responsibility for Obtaining Verification

The household has primary responsibility for providing documentary evidence to support its income statements and to resolve any questionable information, provided that nothing in 106 CMR 361.650 shall limit the ability of the Department to verify information from other government agencies or from banks. Households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, or through an authorized representative. The worker shall consider any reasonable documentary evidence provided by the household and shall be primarily concerned with how adequately the verification proves the statements on the application. If it would be difficult or impossible for the household to obtain the documentary evidence in a timely manner, or the household has presented insufficient documentation, the worker shall either offer assistance to the household in obtaining the documentary evidence, except when verification of shelter or utility costs for unoccupied homes would have to be obtained from a source outside the State, or shall use a collateral contact or home visit. The worker shall not require the household to present verification in person at the local office.

361.660: Documenting Verification

Case records must be documented to support eligibility, ineligibility, and benefit level determinations. The documentation shall be in sufficient detail to permit a Quality Control reviewer to determine the reasonableness and accuracy of the determination. If verification was required to resolve questionable information, the worker shall document why the information was considered questionable and what documentation was used to resolve the questionable information. The worker shall also document the reason why an alternate source of verification, such as a collateral contact or home visit, was needed and the reason a collateral contact was rejected and an alternate requested.

361.700: Timeliness Standards for Processing

The worker shall determine the household's eligibility as soon as possible after the household or its authorized representative files the application. An application is filed the day the Department, or in the case of certain SSI households, the date the SSA office, receives an application containing the applicant's name and address, which is signed by either a responsible member of the household or the household's authorized representative in accordance with 106 CMR 361.120. See 106 CMR 365.180: *Categorically Eligible Assistance Units* for processing standards for categorically eligible households and 106 CMR 365.120: *Determining Eligibility and Benefit Level* for processing standards for PA households.

(A) Eligible Assistance Units. Households that are found to be eligible must be provided an opportunity to participate within 30 calendar days following the date of application. An opportunity to participate consists of the Department's issuing SNAP benefits *via* the EBT system before the 30-day processing standard expires. When the Department misses this timeliness standard and the household is eligible for SNAP benefits in the month of application, SNAP benefits must be provided retroactive to the date of application.

(B) Denying the Application. Households found ineligible shall be sent a Notice of Denial as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the application was filed.

(1) If the household fails to appear for one scheduled interview, the worker must notify the household that it missed a scheduled interview appointment and that it is the household's responsibility to reschedule that interview. If the household makes no subsequent contact with the Department to reschedule the missed interview, the application shall be denied no later than 30 days after the application was filed. When an application is denied for this reason, the household must file a new application to participate in the program.

(2) In cases where the interview was conducted and all necessary verification was requested on the same day the application was completed, a notice of denial may be sent no sooner than the tenth day nor later than the 30th day if the household did not provide the requested verification as long as:

- (a) the household received a statement of required verification and was notified of the date they must be submitted; and
- (b) the Department offered to help the household obtain needed verification as required in 106 CMR 361.650.