

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

SNAP Food Benefits & Legally Present Immigrants



MLRI MASSACHUSETTS
LAW REFORM
INSTITUTE

GREATER BOSTON
LEGAL SERVICES
...and justice for all

La Colaborativa

Many low-income Massachusetts immigrants are eligible for federal SNAP food benefits. If you are eligible, the SNAP benefit amount is based on income, who you live with and share food with, and costs of living - such as rent and childcare costs. Learn more at [Mass.gov/SNAP](https://www.mass.gov/SNAP).

If you were eligible for state SNAP and the benefits ended, see **Take Action** information below.

Am I eligible for federal SNAP benefits?

You may be eligible for federal SNAP if you have one of these immigration statuses:

- Refugee, asylee, or granted withholding of deportation status
- Victim of trafficking (T- Visa)
- Cubans and Haitians who entered the U.S. with humanitarian parole, applied for asylum or have other special statuses
- Immigrants from Iraq or Afghanistan with certain immigration statuses
- Immigrants from Ukraine with humanitarian parole

Children under 18 and certain disabled adults are also SNAP eligible without a waiting period if:

- Lawful permanent residents (LPRs), often called “Green card holders”
- Humanitarian parole granted for 365 days or longer
- Certain battered immigrants (VAWA petitioners and others)

This is not a complete list. If you are not sure, apply for SNAP! Tell DTA about your immigration status and give them proof of your status. And some LPR adults may also qualify for SNAP (without waiting 5 years) if they have enough countable work history.

Who is not eligible for federal SNAP?

Examples of legally present immigrants who are not currently eligible for SNAP:

- Temporary Protected Status (TPS), unless you also have humanitarian parole
- U visas (victims of violence)
- Pending or approved Deferred Action (including Dreamers)
- Pending application for asylum, unless from Haiti or Cuba

- Special Immigrant Juvenile visas (SIJs)
- Parole granted for less than 365 days
- LPRs, parolees and battered immigrant adults who may need to wait 5 years.

Immigrants who are undocumented, visitors, or foreign students are also not eligible for SNAP.

Can I get SNAP for my kids or family members?

Yes! Even if you are not eligible, your U.S. citizen or children with an eligible immigration status may qualify. Other people you live and share food with may also be eligible. You can apply to get SNAP for other household members.

If I get SNAP, does that hurt my immigration status?

NO! SNAP benefits or other non-cash benefits you get do not hurt your status or the status of other people you live with. It is safe to get SNAP. See Mass.gov for more information:

[Mass.gov/info-details/information-about-the-public-charge-rule-and-how-it-may-impact-you](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/information-about-the-public-charge-rule-and-how-it-may-impact-you)

What is state SNAP and why did it end?

On December 4, 2023, the Massachusetts Legislature and Governor Healey allocated \$6 million to the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to provide state SNAP benefits to legally present immigrants not eligible under federal law. By the end of April 2024, over 4,400 families were receiving state SNAP benefits. DTA had to end state SNAP in April because they ran out of funding.

How can I apply for SNAP?

There is no wrong door! You can apply:

- Online at DTAConnect.com (6 languages)
- In person [at a local DTA office](#)
- By phone. Call 877-382-2363 (press 7)
- With a paper application (13 languages). See [Mass.gov/SNAP](https://www.mass.gov/SNAP)
- With [a SNAP outreach partner](#) in your community

What if I am denied or need more information?

- Find free Legal Help: [MassLRF.org](https://www.masslrf.org)
- If you can't reach DTA by phone: [Bit.ly/DTAtips](https://bit.ly/DTAtips)
- For updates on State SNAP from DTA: [Mass.gov/StateSNAP](https://www.mass.gov/StateSNAP)
- See also MLRI's SNAP Advocacy Guide [Questions 48 to 53](#).