



Know Your Rights



SNAP Food Assistance For College Students

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or “SNAP” helps eligible low-income households buy food.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, **everyone who qualifies for SNAP gets at least the maximum amount for their household**. For example, \$281/month SNAP for 1 person, or \$516 for 2 people!

Can I get SNAP if I am a college student?

There are special rules for low-income college students, including *new rules* during the COVID public health emergency. You may qualify for SNAP if you meet **any of the following**:

- You were awarded Work Study in your financial aid, even if you do not have a work study job*
- You receive a full Pell Grant or have an “Expected Family Contribution”(EFC) of \$0 under your financial aid (FAFSA) approval
- You receive MassGrant financial aid from the state
- You are enrolled in a Community College or a Voc/Tech school doing post-secondary classes
- You attend college through the Mass Rehab Commission
- You have an incapacity or disability that reduces your ability to work and go to school
- You are age 50 or older
- You care for a child under the age of 12, or you have kids and get TAFDC cash benefits, **OR**
- You work or are self-employed an average of 20 hours or more per week.

How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

- **Online/by smartphone:** DTAConnect.com
- **By phone:** Call the DTA Assistance Line at 1-877-382-2363 (press #7),
- **Through your MassHealth application** (check the SNAP application checkbox)
- **Paper application** – find more at Mass.gov/SNAP
- **In person:** At your local DTA office

You can self-declare your student status. If DTA needs more information from you after you apply – such as proof of your income, where you live or your identity – they will send you a notice.

You can check to see what information DTA needs and learn about the status of your application on DTAConnect.com or via the DTA Connect mobile app. 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 income does DTA count?

DTA counts the following income in calculating your SNAP benefits:

- Gross earnings from a job (before taxes are taken out) or self-employment including gig work (after your business expenses, but before taxes),
- Unearned income such as Social Security or SSI, child support or Unemployment benefits
- Some other sources of income, contact an advocate.

None of your financial aid counts. This includes loans, grants, scholarship, work study, assistantships. All federal, state, local and private financial aid is non-countable income.

What if I live with other people?

Living with Roommates: If you buy and prepare most (half or more) of your food *separately from your roommates*, you can apply for SNAP for just *yourself*. If you buy and prepare most of your food *together*, you must apply for SNAP with your roommates, report their income and meet other rules.

Living with Parents: *If you are 22 or older and live with your parents–* but you buy and prepare more than half your food separately from them – you can apply for SNAP for just yourself.

If you are under 22 and live with your parents, you cannot get SNAP separately from them. This is true even if you don't share your food with them. If your parents currently get SNAP, they should ask DTA to add you. If your family is low income and does not get SNAP, you or your parents can apply for SNAP as a household.

Living on Campus: If you live on-campus and get most of your meals from a school meal plan, you don't qualify for SNAP. You may be eligible for SNAP if you have no meal plan or a limited meal plan.

What are my rights if I am denied SNAP?

You have the right to:

- Apply and get notices if you are approved or denied. You can download the **DTA Connect** mobile app to send DTA proofs, look at your case information, and see DTA notices
- Talk with a SNAP worker or their Supervisor if you were denied. Call the DTA Assistance Line at **1-877-382-2363**. You can also ask to speak the Office Director.
- Contact the DTA Ombuds's office at **617-348-5354** and ask them to review your case.
- Request a hearing if you disagree with DTA's decision. You can fill out the appeal form on the back of the DTA denial notice OR call the Division of Hearings for a hearing. Call **617-348-5321**.
- Find free legal help. Visit the [Mass Legal Resource Finder](https://masslegalservices.org) to find a Legal Services office: [Masslrf.org](https://masslrf.org)
- If your financial aid office said you have an EFC of more than \$0, you can also appeal or request a "special circumstance" review of their EFC determination. See <https://formswift.com/swift-student>

For more information: [Masslegalservices.org/food4students](https://masslegalservices.org/food4students)