KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

SNAP Food Assistance
For College Students

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or "SNAP" helps eligible low-income households buy food. Many low income college students also qualify.

Can I get SNAP if I am a community college student?

In Massachusetts, most low-income students attending a community college are eligible for SNAP. The SNAP rules allow community college students in certificate programs or associate's degree programs to qualify. The course of study must be a "career or technical education" program or a program likely to lead to employment. Most community college programs qualify (Students at Quincy College also qualify under the same rule).

Note: Low-income students must also meet the financial, household composition and U.S. citizenship or legal immigration status rules of the SNAP program.

If your course of study is not career focused or you are not a community college student, there are other special SNAP rules for low-income college students ages 18 to 49 enrolled at least half-time in a post-secondary program. If you fall into that category, you may be eligible if you:

- Got a Work Study award, and you work or expect to work during the semester
- Receive MASSGrant financial aid
- 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
- Have a temporary or permanent disability
- Are experiencing chronic homelessness
- Receive services through the MassAbility (formerly Mass Rehab)

How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

You can apply through Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA):

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

If you live with other people who get SNAP, see below.

What proofs do I need to give DTA?

DTA may ask for proof of things like Massachusetts residency or income.

If DTA asks you to send in forms about your financial aid or from your school, email info@masslegalservices.org.

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 within 7 days. If you are approved, SNAP benefits are put on an EBT card (like a debit card).

February 2026

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. To see the current maximum SNAP benefit amounts, visit Mass.gov/SNAP.

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 educational aid, loans, grants, or scholarships ***do not count*** as income.

What if I live with other people?

Roomates	If you buy and prepare more than half 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 share the food purchased), you must apply for SNAP with your roommates—and they must report their income and meet other rules.
Parents	*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. *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.
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. Even if you are on a meal plan that makes you ineligible for SNAP during the school year, you may become SNAP eligible if your meal plan ends for summer break.

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. Or, call (617) 348-5321 to request a hearing by phone. The hearing will be by phone unless you ask for a Zoom or in-person hearing.
- Contact your local **Legal Services** office for help: MassLRF.org
- For more information visit Masslegalservices.org/food4students