

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Overview for MA Health Care Training Forum

SNAP Outreach Unit,
Department of Transitional Assistance
October 2020

Agenda



- SNAP Eligibility
- Household Composition
- Financial Eligibility
- Emergency Allotment
- Verifications
- Maximizing SNAP Benefits
- SNAP certification
- Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)
- Healthy Incentives Program
- Accessing SNAP Benefits (EBT)
- EBT Online Purchases
- Resources: find a pantry or meal site

DTA Mission Statement

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) assists and empowers low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life and achieve long term economic self-sufficiency. DTA serves one in nine residents of the Commonwealth with direct economic assistance (cash benefits) and food assistance (SNAP benefits), as well as workforce training opportunities.

Department of Transitional Assistance caseload at-a-glance



1:9 residents served



21.4% of MA SNAP recipients are age 60 or older



33.6% of MA SNAP recipients have a disability

(August 2020 DTA Scorecard
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/performance-scorecard-august-2020-0/download>)

DTA Programs

- **SNAP** - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 - SNAP Path to Work (voluntary)
 - SNAP Nutrition Education (voluntary)
- **TAFDC** - Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children
- **ESP** - Employment Services Program (employment and training programs for TAFDC clients)
- **EAEDC** - Emergency Assistance for the Elderly, Disabled and Children
- **SSP** - State Supplement Program (administered by UMMS)



Methods of Application: SNAP, TAFDC & EAEDC

- Apply online @ DTAConnect.com
- Fax an application to: DTA Document Processing Center (617) 887-8765
- Mail an application to:
DTA Document Processing Center, PO Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780
- Call the DTA assistance line: 877-382-2363 & apply over the phone
- Go to: Mass.gov/SNAPOutreachPartners for a list of outreach partners to apply by phone

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) & Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC)

- Applicants can apply by calling their local DTA office or they can apply online at: DTAConnect.com

DTA Connect

DTA Connect is a free mobile app and website.

DTAConnect.com

- All information on DTA connect is secure and confidential
- At any time, a client can:
 - Complete a SNAP application
 - Check their case status and SNAP amount
 - Upload and submit documents
 - Find out if documents sent to DTA have been processed
 - Get alerts for appointments
 - Read and print notices



SNAP Eligibility Standards

Non Financial

- Residency
- Citizen/Noncitizen Status
- Elderly/Disabled Status
- Work Requirements
- Social Security Number
- Identity
- Student Status
- Household composition

Financial

- Earned or Unearned Income
- Actual and anticipated "Reasonably Certain" income used to determine eligibility and benefit level

SNAP Household Composition

<p>A SNAP Household (HH) is defined as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ An individual who lives alone.➤ An individual who lives with others and <u>purchases & prepares</u> most meals separate from others.➤ A group of individuals who live together <u>and purchase and prepare</u> meals together.
<p>Persons that CANNOT be separate households</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Spouses living together.➤ Partners living together with children in common.➤ Children under 22 living with parents.➤ Unrelated children under 18, where adult supervises or financially supports .
<p>Some Ineligible Households</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Residents of commercial boarding houses.➤ Residents of institutions that provide more than 50% of meals as part of their regular services.➤ College Students on meal plans that provide more than two-thirds of their meals (Effective August 2017).



Financial Eligibility/Verifications

SNAP Gross Income Limits

Gross Monthly Categorical Eligibility Income Standards as referenced at:
106 CMR 364.976 - Effective 2/1/2020

Assistance Unit Size	200% of Federal Poverty Level
1	\$2127
2	\$2873
3	\$3620
4	\$4367
5	\$5113
6	\$5860
7	\$6607
8	\$7353
For each additional member add:	\$747



SNAP Benefit Levels

Maximum Allotments for FY 2021, Effective 10/1/20 - 9/30/2021

Assistance Unit Size	Maximum Benefit Levels
1	\$204
2	\$374
3	\$535
4	\$680
5	\$807
6	\$969
7	\$1071
8	\$1224
For each additional member add:	\$153

Expedited Benefits

Determining eligibility for “emergency” or expedited benefits is a two step process requiring an interview.

Step 1: Does the Household Qualify for Expedited Service?

Step 2: Does the Household Appear to Be Eligible for SNAP?



Expedited Benefits (cont.)

Households are eligible for expedited service if they meet one of the following criteria:

The household's gross income in the month of application does not exceed \$150 & countable liquid assets do not exceed \$100;

The household's combined monthly gross income & liquid assets are less than the combined monthly rent (or mortgage) & utilities

The household is a migrant or seasonal farm worker

Identity is the only eligibility factor that must be verified within the 7 day expedited time frame.



Emergency Allotment due to COVID-19

- Each month, if a household does not receive the maximum SNAP benefit for their household size or are not made whole through a supplement issued by a case manager, the household will receive the difference in benefits
- The emergency allotments are expected to continue **as long as both a state and federal state of emergency are in effect**
- Cases that are pending to close due to the closing reasons listed below, are not eligible to receive the SNAP Emergency Allotment:
 - Death
 - No longer MA resident
 - Incarcerated
 - Institutionalized, including incarceration
 - Fleeing felon
 - Outstanding Default Warrant
 - Parole or Probation Violations
 - Intentional program violations



Mandatory Verifications

Some Documents the Client May Provide	
IDENTITY	Driver license, birth certificate, hospital birth record, court records. <i>(Note: Identity must be verified by applicant and any authorized rep applying on behalf of the Household).</i>
PROOF OF MA RESIDENCE	Current rent receipt or lease, deed, mortgage statement, Landlord Verification Form, Shared Housing Verification Form, Voter Registration Card, Letter of Intent to Reside (must be met by all household members).
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	Must be provided orally or in writing for all household members.
EARNED INCOME	Proof of gross income for all household members, pay stubs of the last 4 weeks, a statement from the employer written on company letterhead, termination letter if job ended within the last 60 days, Schedule C or Business Records for self-employed, etc.
UNEARNED INCOME	Electronic interfaces with other agencies: i.e. Social Security or Unemployment. Benefit or award letter, copy of payment document or check, or written statement from agency making the payment, Child Support income (e.g. letter from non-custodial parent if not through Department of Revenue, Contribution letter specific).
NONCITIZEN STATUS	US Citizenship can be self-declared and won't need to be verified unless the case manager finds the information questionable. Permanent Resident Card, Employment Authorization Card, Temporary Resident Card, Arrival-Departure Record or other written documentation from USCIS .



Note: DTA can *usually* verify certain income and eligibility factors such as Noncitizen status, RSDI or SSI income.

Optional Verifications

Optional Verifications *may be verified* to maximize SNAP benefits.

Verification	Some Documents the Client May Provide
Shelter Costs**	Current rent receipt, Landlord Verification Form or lease agreement, mortgage statement. Self-Declaration
Dependent Care Costs (Child or Adult Care)**	Written statement from the child/adult care provider or a canceled check or money order paid to the child/adult care provider. Self-Declaration
Heat and Utilities**	Current bills for oil, gas, electricity, telephone (including cellular phone), fuel assistance letter. Self-Declaration
Medical Costs	Only applicable to the Elderly or Disabled and only if costs exceed \$35 per month. Receipts for out-of-pocket expenses, such as co-payments or premiums on health insurance, prescription costs, transportation expenses, vitamins, service animal expenses, etc.
Child Support Payments	Court documents showing a legal obligation AND proof of payment.



A self-declaration is a written statement from the client, attesting to an expense amount or other circumstances related to their case.

Maximizing SNAP Benefits



7 Allowable Deductions

- 20% Earned Income
- Standard Deduction
- Child Support
- Dependent Care
- Excess Medical Expense
- Shelter Deduction (Rent/Mortgage & Standard Utility Allowance)
- Homeless



Earned Income Deduction



Standard Deduction

Households are allowed a standard deduction based on the number of household members.

Household Size	Standard Deduction Amount
1-3 members	\$167
4 members	\$181
5 members	\$212
6 or more members	\$243



Legally Obligated Child Support

Verification of Legal Obligation

- Court or Administrative order
- Legally enforceable separation agreement
- Divorce decree
- Department Of Revenue (DOR) lockbox bill or other DOR documentation

Verification of Payment

- Recently cancelled checks
- Wage withholding statements
- Verification of withholding from unemployment compensation
- Written statements from the custodial parent regarding direct payments
- Proof of payments by the noncustodial parent paid to a third party on behalf of the custodial parent
- SSA statement verifying garnishment amount and reason



Dependent Care Deduction

The actual costs of the care of a child or elder necessary for a household member to:

- accept or continue employment
- comply with SNAP Path to Work
- attend training or education preparatory to employment



Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to:
Transportation to and from program site, child & adult care costs, before school, after school &/or extended day programs, mileage, etc.



Medical Expense Deduction

Verified Medical Expense Amount	Amount of Medical Expense Deduction
\$35.00 per month or under	\$0.00
\$35.01 to \$190. per month	\$155.00
\$190.01 a month or more	Excess over \$35.00

Medical Expense Guidelines

- A client with less than \$190/month in medical expenses need only verify the minimum of \$35.01
- Clients receiving the maximum benefit do not need to claim medical expenses
- Clients with medical expenses > \$190. should submit verification
- Clients with higher income and low deductible costs may not see an increase in benefits

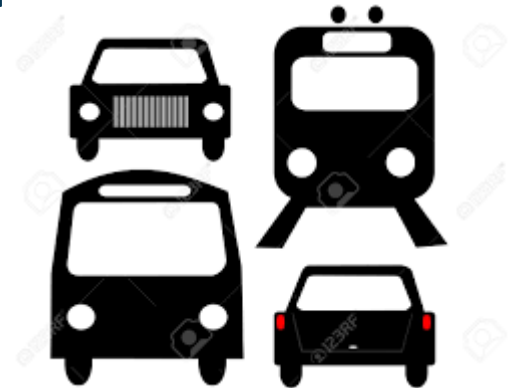


Medical Expense Deduction

(slide 1 of 4)

Health Insurance:

- Health insurance and hospitalization policy premiums.
- Medicare premiums or monthly subsidy.
- Medicaid spend-down or cost-sharing.



Transportation/Lodging to Obtain Medical Treatment or Services:

- Mileage for use of private car, friend or family member driving you to pharmacy or medical appointment.
- Actual cost of bus, subway, the RIDE, shuttle or taxi.

Medical Expense Deduction

(slide 2 of 4)

Medical Care:

- Doctor /clinic visits
- Psychotherapy
- Hospital /outpatient care
- Prescribed alternative therapies
- Dental care
- Rehabilitation services
- Nursing care / home nursing care
- Service animal expenses

Health Related Supplies:

- Foot care
- Dentures
- Hearing Aid Batteries
- Incontinence supplies
- Heating pads
- Hearing aids
- Contact lenses
- Eyeglasses



Medical Expense Deduction

(slide 3 of 4)

Prescription Medications:

- Direct payments
- Co-pays
- Postage and handling costs for receiving medications by mail



Medical Equipment:

- Sickroom equipment (including rental)
- Purchase / repair of wheelchairs or mobility aids
- Prosthetics
- Personal emergency response systems (Lifeline)
- Communication equipment for the hearing or visually impaired

Medical Expense Deduction

(slide 4 of 4)

Over the Counter Medications:

These **DO NOT** need to be approved by a licensed medical practitioner or a qualified health professional.



- Pain relievers
- Skin care ointments
- Foot care supplies
- Vitamins
- Herbal supplements
- Dietary supplements
- Antacids
- Insulin



Senior Assistance Office

The SAO seeks to:

- Increase the number of senior households receiving a medical deduction through comprehensive screening
- Decrease the number of households in receipt of the minimum monthly benefit amount and
- Decrease the churn rate for this population
- Increase the number of resource referrals

Senior Assistance Office Address:

72-100 Front St., Holyoke, MA
01040*

Phone: **833-712-8027**

*Note: there are no in-person appointments, all interactions are by phone and mail. If clients prefer to do an in-person interview, they can still go to their local DTA office.

If faxing proof documents:

Send to the Document Processing Center: Fax: **617-887-8765**

Mailing address:

DTA Document Processing Center,
P.O. Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780-
0420

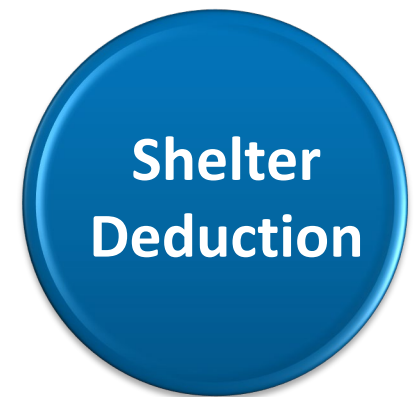
Shelter Deduction



Rent, mortgage,
property taxes,
homeowners
insurance, condo
fees, mobile
home park rent



Heating/Cooling:
\$646
Non-heating:
\$396
Telephone: \$45



Maximum Shelter
Deduction \$586
(cap)
Note: cap does
not apply to
anyone elderly or
disabled



Homeless Deduction

Verification: Self-declarable

A homeless individual is a person who lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence or whose primary nighttime residence is:

- a supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as a hotel/motel or congregate shelter)
- a halfway house or similar institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized
- a temporary accommodation in the residence of another individual for no more than 90 days or
- a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for people (a hallway, a bus station, a lobby or similar place)

Homeless Shelter Deduction = \$157

SNAP Certification

SNAP Certification (slide 1 of 3)

After being approved as a SNAP recipient, clients will be designated a benefit certification period of 12 or 36 months depending on their household situation:

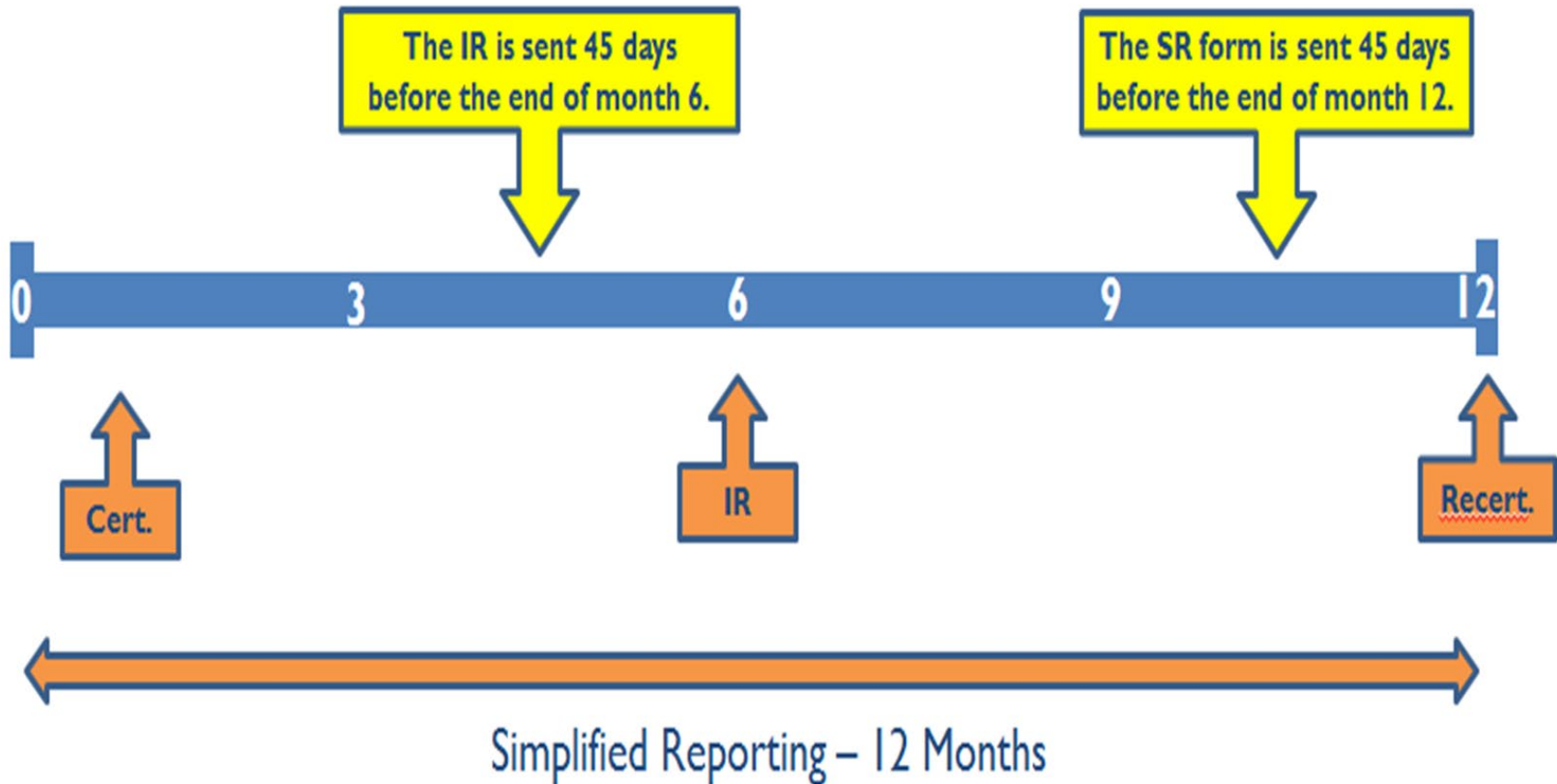
SIMP-12

These households are certified for a 12-month period with an Interim Report (IR) required at month 6. These households typically have earned income, mixed income types and/or mixed household composition and may include an ABAWD.

EDSAP -36

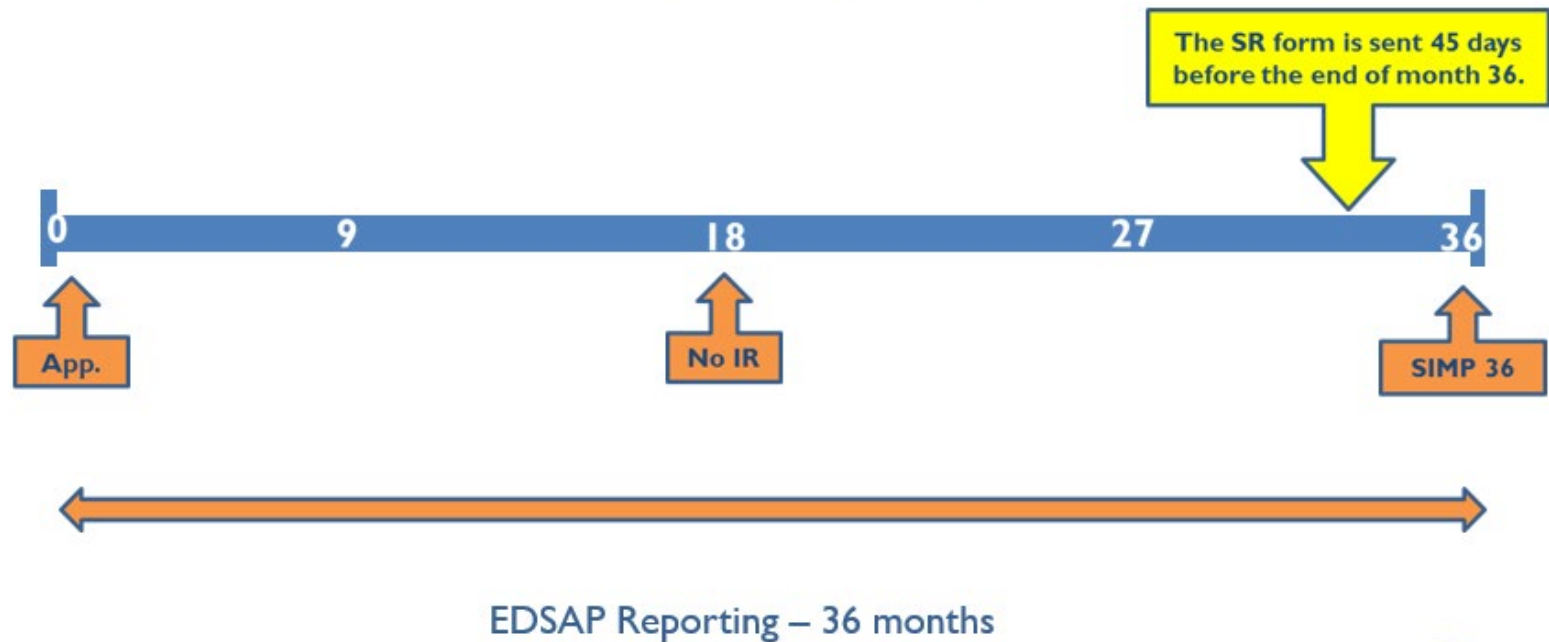
If the SNAP Household has unearned income only, and is elderly or disabled, it is placed on a 36 month certification period.

SNAP Certification (slide 2 of 3)



SNAP Certification (slide 3 of 3)

The Elderly & Disabled Simplified Application Project (EDSAP) allows the Department to assign a 36 month certification period to pure elderly/disabled households with no earned income. Unlike other simplified reporting cases, EDSAP households are not required to submit an Interim Report midway through their certification period.



P-EBT Benefits

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

What is P-EBT?

- P-EBT is a federal program. DTA in collaboration with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), received approval to operate this program in response to the COVID-19 related school closures
- P-EBT provides food supports to help families with children who were receiving free and reduced-price school meals pay for food
- For more information, visit map-ebt.org

September Issuance:

More P-EBT benefits will be added in September 2020 to cover:

- The days that school buildings are closed due to delayed start, and/or
- Students are at home learning remotely for at least 5 days in a row
- Benefits are for the days students are out of school in September, but will be distributed starting September 30 and into October

P-EBT

- Eligible clients will get a letter in the mail from DTA in October
 - Clients currently receiving DTA benefits (SNAP, TAFDC), will get their P-EBT benefits on their DTA EBT card starting 9/30/2020
 - Clients that received a P-EBT card in the past will get their P-EBT benefits on their existing P-EBT card starting 9/30/2020
- If a client did not get a P-EBT card in the past, they will receive a P-EBT card in the mail in October
 - If a client lost their card they can request a new P-EBT card: DTAConnect.com/pebt



P-EBT (continued)

Benefit Amount:

- For September P-EBT, a family will get \$5.86 per child per day for every eligible school day
- The P-EBT amount is based on each student's school learning situation confirmed by their school in September and can vary from student to student, even within a family

Activating the card:

- Clients will need the letter DTA mailed with the student's case number to activate the card. If the letter was lost, visit DTAConnect.com/pebt to view the student's case number
- Visit map-ebt.org/uyb for step-by-step guidance on how to activate (PIN) the P-EBT card

Using the P-EBT Card

- Receipt of P-EBT does not confer SNAP eligibility
- P-EBT cannot be used to access HIP benefits.
- P-EBT card holders will not have access to DTA Connect
- To check their balance, they can call the # on the back of the card



Use like an EBT card for purchasing groceries from approved retailers!

How you can help

- Send families to the MA P-EBT website:

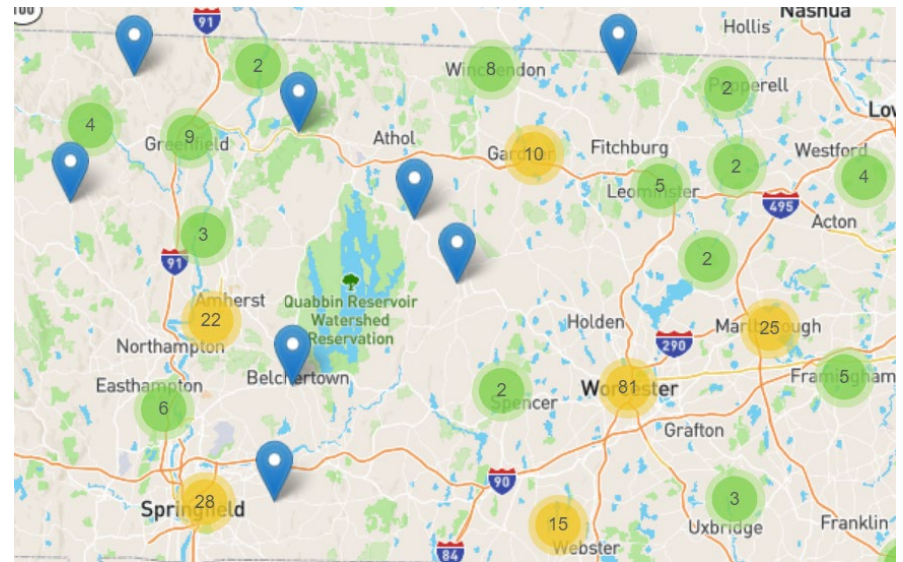
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Massachusetts P-EBT website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "Need help? Project Bread's FoodSource Helpline: (800) 645-8333". Below this, the website title "Massachusetts P-EBT (Programa de Beneficios Electrónicos de Transferencia de Beneficios) (P-EBT Program)" is displayed. The main content area features a large illustration of various food items like cereal, milk, and fruits. To the right of this illustration, there is a section titled "ABOUT P-EBT!" with introductory text. On the far right, there is a circular graphic showing a woman and a child wearing masks and holding a grocery bag. Below the main content, there are sections for "Partners", "Resources", and "School Resources". A red rectangular box highlights the URL "www.MAp-EBT.org" at the bottom left of the page.

Child Nutrition Outreach

Free Grab & Go meals are still available this fall!

Kids and teens can get free meals at hundreds of locations throughout the state, no registration or ID required. Meals will be available as late as 12/31/20. Check with your local school district or visit:

meals4kids.org/meals to find a site near you



Grab & Go meal site map

Healthy Incentives Program

Healthy Incentives Program

(slide 1 of 4)

Earn More SNAP Dollars
with the Healthy Incentives Program!

Spending your SNAP dollars on farm-fresh fruits and vegetables at participating Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) retailers and have the amount of your purchase instantly added back to your EBT card!

Healthy Incentives Program
Fresh. Growth. Good. Program.
It's HIP to be healthy!

Farmers Markets
Look for participating farmers at regularly scheduled markets in your town or nearby, selling fresh fruits and vegetables.

Farm Stands
On-farm stores where you can buy fresh fruits and vegetables, right from the hands that picked them.

Mobile Markets
Markets that bring farm-fresh produce right to your community.

CSA Farm Shares
Membership-based service that provides your family with fresh fruits and vegetables every week.

Look at what you can earn each month! (based on household size)

\$40 1-2 PEOPLE | **\$60** 3-5 PEOPLE | **\$80** 6+ PEOPLE

- The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) helps SNAP consumers buy more fruits and vegetables for their household.
- SNAP households are automatically enrolled in HIP.
- SNAP households will receive \$1 for each dollar they spend on eligible fruits and vegetables, up to a monthly limit.
- HIP incentives are earned at participating:
 - Farmers' markets
 - Farm stands
 - Mobile markets
 - Community supported agriculture (CSA) aka farm share programs



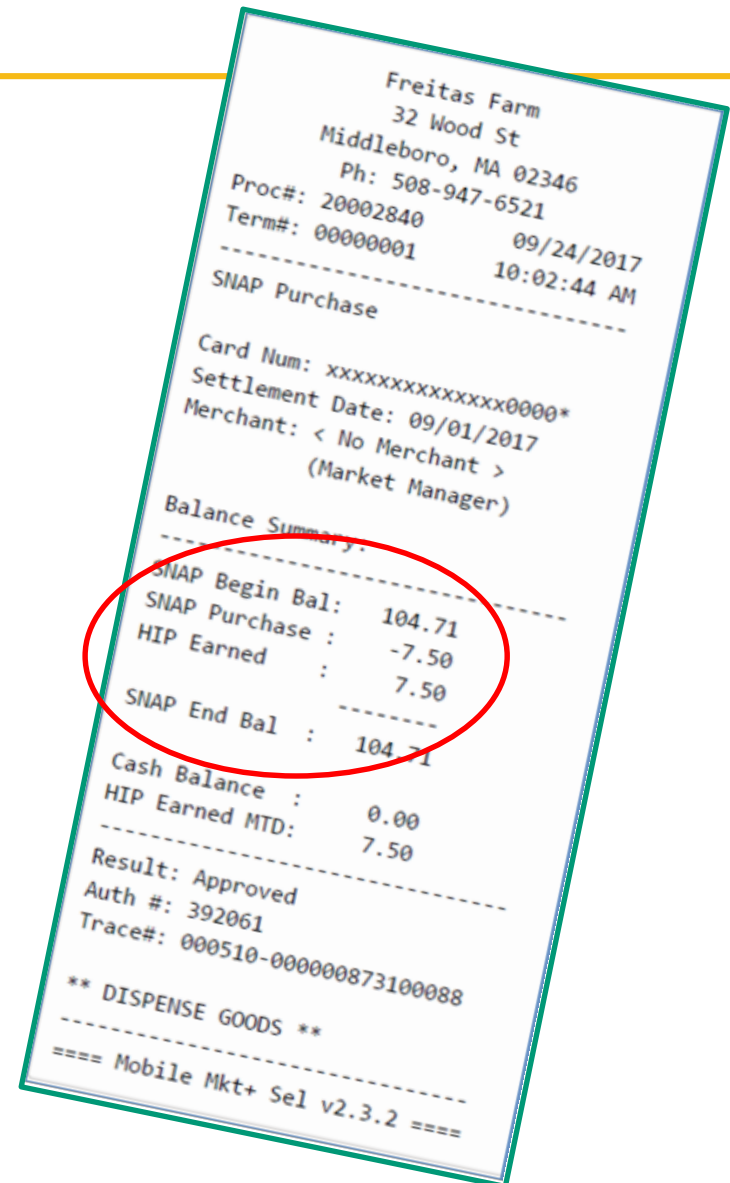
Department of
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The Healthy Incentives Program

(slide 2 of 4)

How does HIP work?

- Look for the HIP logo (at a farmers market, farm stand, CSA or mobile market)
- Make fruit & vegetable purchase
- Earn HIP incentive
- Take receipt & double check the incentive was earned
- Maximize benefit – reach monthly cap of \$40/\$60/\$80



The Healthy Incentives Program

(slide 3 of 4)

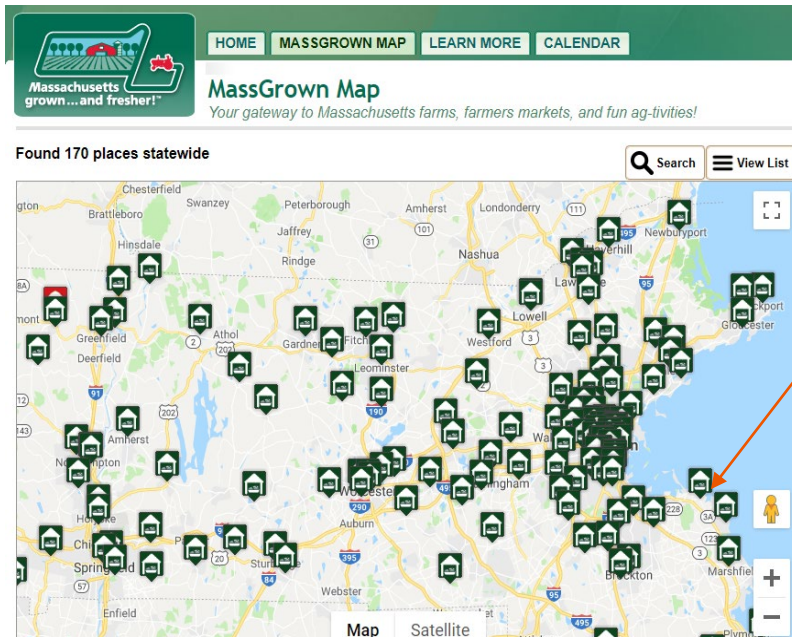
- Funds are immediately added to SNAP recipients' EBT cards. The earned incentives can be used right away or saved for a future purchase at any SNAP retailer on any SNAP eligible foods
- Families will need to SPEND SNAP dollars on local fruits and vegetables to EARN HIP incentives
- Incentives can be earned at 280+ participating agricultural retailers



The Healthy Incentives Program

(slide 4 of 4)

MassGrown Map:

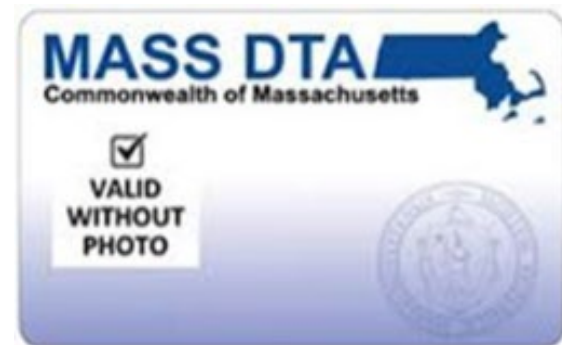


- For more information on HIP, a list of retailers where you can earn the extra benefit, and a list of HIP eligible fruits and vegetables go to www.mass.gov/HIP
- The Project Bread Food Source Hotline
Phone: **1-800-645-8333**
- **DTA HIP call-line: 1-888-987-4487**, Monday to Friday between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Email: dta.hip@state.ma.us

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

For more information on EBT, see the **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) brochure**. Clients can only buy eligible food items with their SNAP benefits. A list of eligible purchases can be found at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>



EBT Online Purchasing

- Clients can now use their SNAP benefits to buy food online at Amazon & Walmart
- At Amazon, spend \$35 or more & get free home delivery
- **For more information:**
[Mass.gov/SNAPOnline](https://www.mass.gov/SNAPOnline)



Resources

Many new SNAP clients experience food insecurity while they wait for their EBT card, they can contact:

- Project Bread
- The Greater Boston Food Bank
- The Food Bank of Western MA
- Worcester County Food Bank
- Merrimack Valley Food Bank

Q: What is the difference between a Food Bank and a Food Pantry?

A: There are 4 food banks in MA. Each food bank has a different coverage area. Many food pantries, meal sites and shelters are member agencies of the food bank that covers their catchment area. As member agencies, they are able to source all or part of their food resources at a reduced cost. To find out the list of pantries in your area go to the corresponding food bank's website.

Resources (continued)



Project Bread
FoodSource Hotline:
1-800-645-8333

To apply for SNAP or if your client has questions about food resources:

Call: 1-800-645-8333

TTY: 1-800-377-1292

Hotline Hours:

Mon-Fri: 8:00am-7:00pm

Sat: 10:00am-2:00pm

Multilingual

Project Bread connects people and communities in Massachusetts to reliable sources of food while advocating for policies that make food more accessible—so that no one goes hungry.

<https://www.projectbread.org/>

- Project Bread is a SNAP outreach partner and can complete SNAP applications by phone.



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The Greater Boston Food Bank



70 South Bay Avenue

Boston, MA 02118

Online: [GBFB.org/SNAP](https://www.gbfb.org/SNAP)

Call: 617.598.5022

Email: SNAP@GBFB.org

GBFB partners with 500+ hunger-relief agencies, including food pantries, community meal programs and other food assistance providers throughout the nine counties and 190 towns and cities across Eastern Massachusetts.

For a meal site near you go to:
<https://www.gbfb.org/need-food/>

- GBFB is a SNAP Outreach partner and can complete SNAP applications by phone

The Food Bank of Western MA



97 North Hatfield Rd.
Hatfield, MA 01038
Phone: 413-247-9738
800-247-9632

Since 1982, The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been feeding our neighbors in need and leading the community to end hunger. They distribute food to member agencies in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.

Go to The Food Bank's website and use their agency locator to find a pantry or meal site near you:

<https://www.foodbankwma.org/>

- The Food Bank of WMA is a SNAP Outreach partner and can complete SNAP applications by phone.

Worcester County Food Bank



474 Boston Turnpike
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
Phone: (508) 842-3663
Fax: (508) 842-7405

Last year, Worcester County Food Bank and their network of 115 local pantries and community meal programs helped to distribute nearly 6.1 million lbs. of donated food (enough for 5.1 million meals!) to 75,000 people from all 60 cities and towns in Worcester County.

- Worcester County Food Bank is a SNAP Outreach partner and can complete SNAP applications by phone.

Merrimack Valley Food Bank



**Merrimack Valley
Food Bank, Inc.**

**Feeding Families
Since 1991**

733-735 Broadway Street
Lowell, MA 01854

978-454-7272

Email: dcallery@mvfb.org

To find a pantry, go to:

<https://mvfb.org/>

The Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Inc. (MVFB) has been transporting, storing and distributing food to disadvantaged members of the community since 1991. They were founded as a program of the Middlesex Shelter in Lowell, MA (now known as Lowell Transitional Living Center) in response to the increased need for emergency food in greater Lowell.

Questions?



Department of
Transitional
Assistance

Contact Information:

For additional outreach questions please contact:

DTA.SNAPoutreach@massmail.state.ma.us

**Lorraine Ward, Deputy Director for SNAP Outreach and
Nutrition Education**

600 Washington Street | 5th Floor | Boston MA 02111

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