

# Massachusetts SNAP BENEFITS

## A Plain-Language Navigation Guide

For Individuals, Families, and Nonprofits Serving Vulnerable Populations | Updated May 2026

### What This Guide Covers

Eligibility rules • Income limits • Required documents • Step-by-step application • Work requirements • Why people lose benefits • Key contacts

### Federal Changes in Effect (2025–2026)

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed July 4, 2025, expanded ABAWD work requirements (now ages 18–64), narrowed non-citizen eligibility, and made other national changes to SNAP. This guide reflects rules as of May 2026. Always verify current rules with DTA at [mass.gov/dta](https://mass.gov/dta) or [dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us](https://dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us).

## Section 1: What Is SNAP?

SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In Massachusetts it is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). Benefits are issued monthly through a Massachusetts EBT Card accepted at authorized grocery stores, farmers markets, and major online retailers including Amazon and Walmart.

Massachusetts uses 200% FPL through BBCE with no asset test and has fully lifted the drug felony ban. SNAP is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and benefits are issued via EBT card. Massachusetts is fighting OBBBA SNAP cuts in court and has committed to no immediate state-level cuts, but an estimated 108,000–150,000 recipients could lose benefits during 2026 recertification waves if they cannot meet expanded work requirements. Project Bread (800-645-8333) is the premier SNAP outreach and assistance resource in the state.

### Massachusetts SNAP: Key Facts at a Glance

- 200% FPL gross income limit through BBCE — no asset test for most households
- Full drug felony ban lift — no conditions or requirements

- Massachusetts fighting OBBBA cuts in court — state has committed to no immediate additional cuts
- Project Bread (800-645-8333): free SNAP eligibility screening and application help statewide
- DTA Connect portal ([dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us](https://dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us)) for online applications and case management
- TAFDC (Massachusetts TANF) recipients are categorically eligible for SNAP

## Section 2: Eligibility Requirements

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### 2.1 Residency

You must currently reside in Massachusetts. There is no minimum residency period. You do not need a permanent address — a shelter address, transitional housing, or a signed statement from a non-relative can satisfy this requirement.

### 2.2 Citizenship and Immigration Status

The following individuals are generally eligible:

- U.S. citizens (born or naturalized)
- Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card holders) who have held status for at least 5 years
- Certain refugees, asylees, and Special Immigrant Visa holders

#### **2025 Change: Non-Citizen Eligibility Narrowed**

The OBBBA (July 4, 2025) removed SNAP eligibility for humanitarian parolees, most asylum seekers pending a decision, and several other previously eligible categories. U.S.-born children in mixed-status households may still qualify. Contact your local DTA office or legal aid if your immigration status is unclear.

### 2.3 Household Composition

Your SNAP household includes everyone who lives together and regularly purchases and prepares food together. Members who buy and prepare food separately may form their own household unit.

### 2.4 Income Limits

Massachusetts uses Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. There is no asset test for most households. TAFDC (Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children — Massachusetts's TANF) recipients are categorically eligible.

Exception: Households where all members are age 60+ or have a documented disability have NO gross income limit — only the net income test applies.

### Massachusetts SNAP Income Limits and Maximum Benefits (FY 2026, Oct. 1, 2025 – Sept. 30, 2026)

HH Size	Gross Limit	Elderly/Disabled Gross Limit	Net Limit (100% FPL)	Max Monthly Benefit
1	\$2,510	No limit*	\$1,255	\$292
2	\$3,398	No limit*	\$1,699	\$536
3	\$4,287	No limit*	\$2,144	\$766
4	\$5,178	No limit*	\$2,589	\$994
5	\$6,067	No limit*	\$3,034	\$1,155
6	\$6,956	No limit*	\$3,478	\$1,386
7	\$7,845	No limit*	\$3,923	\$1,532
8+	+\$889/person	No limit*	+\$445/person	+\$177/person

\* Elderly/disabled households have no gross income limit — only the net income limit applies. Massachusetts uses BBCE at 200% FPL. Limits update each October 1.

### How Net Income Is Calculated

Net income = gross income minus approved deductions. Standard deductions include:

- 20% earned income deduction — automatically applied to all wages and self-employment income
- Standard deduction: \$204/month for households of 1–3; higher for larger households
- Excess shelter deduction: rent/mortgage plus utilities exceeding 50% of net income after other deductions
- Dependent care deduction: childcare or adult care costs paid while working, searching, or in training
- Medical expense deduction: out-of-pocket costs over \$35/month for members 60+ or with a disability
- Child support deduction: legally obligated child support paid to someone outside the household

#### Massachusetts Deduction Note

Massachusetts has some of the highest housing costs in the country, particularly in the Greater Boston area, Cambridge, Somerville, and inner suburbs. For households near or above the 200% FPL ceiling, the excess shelter deduction (triggered when rent and utilities exceed 50%

of net income) is often the decisive factor. The shelter deduction is uncapped for elderly/disabled households. New England heating costs also make the Standard Utility Allowance significant statewide.

## 2.5 Asset Limits

For most Massachusetts BBCE-eligible households, there is NO asset test. Exception: elderly/disabled households whose income exceeds 200% FPL face a \$4,500 asset limit. Primary home and one vehicle are always exempt.

## Section 3: Work Requirements

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Work requirements are the most common reason people lose SNAP benefits.

### 3.1 Standard Work Requirements (All Adults 16–59)

All able-bodied adults between ages 16 and 59 must meet at least one of the following:

- Be employed (any number of hours)
- Be registered for work with MassHire Career Centers / SNAP E&T program
- Participate in an approved employment or training program
- Not have voluntarily quit a job without good cause or reduced hours below 30/week

### 3.2 ABAWD Rules

ABAWDs are adults ages 18–64 without dependents who are not disabled and not otherwise exempt. Massachusetts enforces ABAWD rules in areas without active waivers. Some areas may have county or regional waivers based on unemployment conditions.

ABAWDs must complete at least 80 hours per month (20 hours/week): employment, job training, volunteering, or participation in an approved work program.

Without meeting this requirement, ABAWDs can only receive SNAP for 3 months in any 36-month period.



#### Massachusetts ABAWD Note

Some Massachusetts areas may have ABAWD waivers based on local unemployment conditions — contact DTA at 1-877-382-2363 or your local DTA office to confirm current waiver status in your area. MassHire Career Centers offer employment and training programs that satisfy ABAWD requirements. Project Bread (800-645-8333) can screen you for exemptions

and help you understand current waiver status. The OBBBA expanded work requirements are expected to affect approximately 108,000–150,000 Massachusetts residents at their next recertification.

### 3.3 Exemptions from ABAWD Requirements

The following individuals are exempt from ABAWD time limits:

- Physically or mentally unfit for employment (documented by a physician or licensed clinical social worker)
- Pregnant
- Responsible for a dependent child under age 14 living in the same household
- Enrolled at least half-time in a recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education
- Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation program
- Age 15 or younger, or 65 or older
- Recently released from an institution (incarceration or psychiatric facility)
- Survivors of domestic violence
- Experiencing homelessness (may qualify under 'unfit for employment' — ask your caseworker)

### 3.4 How to Document Work or an Exemption

Report work activity or exemption status through DTA Connect ([dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us](https://dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us)), by phone, or in person at your DTA office. Submit documentation before your benefit period runs out.

## Section 4: Required Documents

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Gather these before applying. Missing documents are the most common cause of delays.

### 4.1 Always Required

- Proof of Identity: Driver's license, state-issued ID, passport, or birth certificate
- Social Security Number (SSN): For each household member applying
- Proof of Massachusetts Residency: Utility bill, lease agreement, official mail, or a signed statement from a non-relative

## 4.2 Income Verification

- Pay stubs from the last 30 days (for employed applicants)
- Most recent W-2, 1099, or tax return (for self-employment income)
- Award letter or benefit statement for Social Security, SSI, unemployment, or other unearned income
- Documentation of child support received or paid

## 4.3 Deduction Documentation (Strongly Recommended)

- Rent or mortgage statement
- Utility bills — especially heating bills (given New England winters, the Standard Utility Allowance is often significant)
- Childcare or dependent care receipts
- Medical bills for members 60+ or with disabilities

 **Tip: Apply First, Gather Documents Later**

Submit your application to lock in your application date — benefits are generally backdated to that date if approved. Your caseworker will specify what additional documents are needed.

## Section 5: Step-by-Step Application Process

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### Step 1: Check Your Eligibility

Use the SNAP eligibility calculator at [snapeligibilitycalculator.com](https://snapeligibilitycalculator.com), call 1-877-382-2363, or visit your local DTA office.

### Step 2: Apply

Method	Details
DTA Connect Online	<a href="https://dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us">dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us</a> — apply online, upload documents, track your case. Available 24/7. Recommended.
Phone	Call 1-877-382-2363 (Mon–Fri) or Project Bread at 1-800-645-8333.
In Person	Visit your local DTA office. Find locations at <a href="https://mass.gov/find-a-dta-office">mass.gov/find-a-dta-office</a> .
By Mail	Download application from <a href="https://mass.gov/dta">mass.gov/dta</a> ; mail to your local DTA office.

### **Step 3: Attend Your Interview**

After submitting, DTA will schedule a mandatory interview — typically by phone. Missing the interview is the most common reason applications are denied. Contact your office immediately to reschedule if needed.

### **Step 4: Receive a Decision**

DTA must process standard applications within 30 days. If approved, you will receive an EBT card by mail. If denied, you have 90 days to appeal.

### **Expedited / Emergency Processing (7-Day)**

You may qualify if: gross monthly income is under \$150 AND liquid assets under \$100; OR combined monthly income and liquid assets are less than monthly rent plus utilities; OR you are a migrant/seasonal farmworker with liquid assets under \$100.

## **Section 6: Special Situations**

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### **6.1 Experiencing Homelessness**

You do not need a permanent address to apply. DTA accepts shelter addresses, transitional housing, or a signed statement from a non-relative. Dial 211 for local shelter and benefits navigation resources.

### **6.2 People With Disabilities or Elderly Members**

Households where all members are 60+ or disabled benefit from: no gross income test (only net income limit), uncapped shelter deduction, medical expense deduction, and higher asset limits (where applicable).

### **6.3 Drug Felony Convictions**

Massachusetts has fully lifted the federal drug felony ban. Individuals with any drug-related felony conviction are fully eligible for SNAP if they meet income and other standard requirements — no additional conditions, treatment requirements, or drug testing apply.

### **6.4 Students**

Students enrolled at least half-time must meet at least one exception: work 20+ hours/week, participate in work-study, care for a dependent child under 6, receive TANF, or be enrolled in an approved training program.

## 6.5 Project Bread — Massachusetts's Premier SNAP Resource

Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline (1-800-645-8333) is Massachusetts's leading SNAP outreach resource. Call the hotline to get free SNAP eligibility screening, help understanding current work requirements and exemptions, and referrals to local food resources. Project Bread operates statewide and is particularly valuable for households unsure whether they qualify, those with complex situations (mixed immigration status, students, seniors), and anyone facing ABAWD work requirement questions. In-person application help is also available through Project Bread partner organizations across the state.

## Section 7: Why People Lose Benefits — and How to Avoid It

### Most Common Reasons SNAP Benefits Are Cut Off

#### 1. Missing the recertification (renewal) deadline

Certification periods last 6–12 months. Set a calendar reminder 60 days before your certification end date and monitor your online account regularly.

#### 2. Failing the ABAWD work requirement without claiming an exemption

ABAWDs who do not work 80 hours/month and have not claimed a valid exemption are cut off after 3 months. Verify statewide or local waiver status and document any exemption in writing at every recertification.

#### 3. Missing the interview or not responding to agency notices

Keep your phone number and mailing address current. Check your online account regularly for notices.

#### 4. Failure to report changes in income or household composition

Report changes within 10 days. Failure to report can result in overpayments and case closure.

## Your Right to Appeal

If DTA denies or reduces your benefits, request a Fair Hearing within 90 days of the notice. If you request within 10 days of a termination notice, your benefits may continue during the review. Contact Greater Boston Legal Services ([gbls.org](http://gbls.org), 617-603-1700) or your local legal aid organization for free legal assistance.

## Section 8: Key Contacts and Resources

Resource	Contact / What They Help With
DTA SNAP Line	1-877-382-2363   <a href="http://mass.gov/dta">mass.gov/dta</a>

Resource	Contact / What They Help With
DTA Connect Portal	<a href="https://dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us">dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us</a> — apply, manage benefits, upload documents
DTA Office Locator	<a href="https://mass.gov/find-a-dta-office">mass.gov/find-a-dta-office</a>
Project Bread FoodSource Hotline	1-800-645-8333   <a href="https://projectbread.org">projectbread.org</a> — free SNAP screening and outreach
MassHire Career Centers (E&T)	<a href="https://masshirebcc.com">masshirebcc.com</a> — employment training for ABAWD compliance
Greater Boston Food Bank	<a href="https://gbfb.org">gbfb.org</a>   617-427-5200 — food resources across eastern Massachusetts
Massachusetts 211	Dial 211   <a href="https://mass211.org">mass211.org</a> — food banks, emergency resources
Greater Boston Legal Services	<a href="https://gbls.org">gbls.org</a>   617-603-1700 — free legal help with SNAP appeals

### A Note on Navigating Massachusetts's System

Massachusetts's 200% BBCE, no asset test, and full drug felony ban lift make it very accessible. Project Bread is the single most important referral for any Massachusetts resident who needs SNAP help — the FoodSource Hotline provides free, real-time eligibility screening and guidance. The most urgent issue in 2026 is the ABAWD expansion affecting an estimated 100,000+ recipients at recertification — advocates should help clients proactively document exemptions and identify waiver-covered areas before recertification packets arrive.

*This guide was compiled using information from the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and publicly available state SNAP resources. It is informational only and does not constitute legal advice. Rules may change — always verify at [mass.gov/dta](https://mass.gov/dta) or [dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us](https://dtaconnect.eohhs.state.ma.us) or by contacting your local office.*