



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of
Health and Human Services

Governor's Anti-Hunger Task Force

Hybrid Meeting: October 27, 2025



Agenda



1. SNAP Changes & Federal Updates
 - Federal shutdown
 - OBBB Implementation
 - Payment Error Rate Reduction Strategies
2. Discussion of coordinated strategies to mitigate cuts
3. Listening Sessions



SNAP Changes & Federal Updates



Impact of Federal Shutdown on November Issuances

If the shutdown continues past Nov 1st, there may be a delay in SNAP benefit issuances until the government reopens.

- The Trump Administration has communicated to states that they plan to delay November SNAP allotments to clients.
- DTA will provide timely updates via text messages, banners on Mass.gov and DTA Connect, DTA Assistance Line, and social media.
- Clients will be able to use benefits on their EBT cards at retailers.
- Residents can still access WIC and school meals. State funded programs like the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), and cash assistance programs TAFDC and EAEDC are not impacted.
- Residents in need of immediate food assistance will be directed to Project Bread's Food Source Hotline



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food? Let's chat.**

CALL: 1 (800) 645-8333

Hotline Hours Mon-Fri: 8am-7pm Sat: 10am-2pm



Congressional cuts to SNAP

In July 2025, Congressional Republicans passed a bill that made the largest cut to SNAP in the program's history. These cuts will have adverse impacts on people and communities across Massachusetts.

Immediate changes to SNAP:

1. Expansion of strict work requirements to include older adults and parents of children over age 14 as well removing waiver options for geographies with high unemployment or few jobs and exceptions for people experiencing homelessness, veterans, and former foster youth, significantly increasing the number of households at risk of losing benefits.
2. Elimination of eligibility for certain immigrants including refugees and asylees
3. Eliminating eligibility for an automatic deduction in utility costs for certain households who receive third party fuel assistance
4. Elimination of \$9.1M in SNAP nutrition education grants

Future SNAP impacts, but require near-term preparations

1. Implementation of a benefit cost-share with states tied to payment accuracy measures starting in FFY28, which could result in up to \$394M in benefit costs for MA.
2. Increase in administrative cost share for states for 50% administrative costs to 75% administrative costs starting in FFY27 resulting in \$53M in additional costs to MA.
3. Limitation on increases in the Thrifty Food Plan calculation, the cost basis for SNAP, which will erode the value of SNAP benefits over time



Harmful impact of cuts from federal law change to SNAP

Populations, communities, and sectors facing highest potential impacts from cuts to SNAP:

- Households newly subject to strict work requirements:
 - Adults 55-65
 - Adults with children over 14
- Communities that lost geographic waivers exempting households from strict work requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Western MA
 - Central MA
 - Southeastern MA
 - Cape Cod & Islands
 - Merrimack Valley - Lowell, Lawrence
 - North Shore – Revere, Saugus, Lynn, Salem, Gloucester
- Immigrants, their families, and communities
- Local food economies – farmers, producers, retailers
- Emergency food systems (food banks & pantries, grassroots food access organizations, congregate meal sites)

Quantifying the impacts:

~99,000

People newly subject to strict work requirements over the next year

~9,500

Immigrants losing eligibility over the next year

~ 45,000

Households at risk of having benefits reduced due to changes in utility allowance over the next year

\$447M

Potential costs shifted to Massachusetts for SNAP benefits and administrative costs



Implementation of Required SNAP Changes

The Trump Administration is requiring states to implement SNAP eligibility and benefit changes by November 1st or assume additional risk to the payment error rate.

All changes will apply to **new** applicants and existing applicants at their **next recertification**

Expanded Work Requirements

- Adults ages 18 to <65 without dependents <14 years required to work 80 hours per month unless they meet an exception
- Removes exceptions for homeless individuals, veterans, and <24yrs who aged out of foster care
- Adds new exceptions for “Indian”, “Urban Indian”, and “California Indian”

Non-Citizen Eligibility

- Non-citizen eligibility limited to:
 - Legal Permanent Residents
 - Cuban-Haitian Entrants
 - COFA citizens
- Households without an eligible member will have SNAP cases closed at recertification and ineligible members will be removed from mixed-status households.

Standard Utility Allowance

- SNAP households receiving energy assistance (H-EAT/LIHEAP) that include an elderly or disabled member will continue to automatically qualify for the Standard Utility Allowance
- Households without elderly or disabled members must verify utility expenses to qualify for the Standard Utility Allowance



New Federal Penalties tied to Payment Accuracy

Beginning October 2027, the federal government will no longer pay 100% of SNAP benefits if a state's Payment Error Rate exceeds 6%. States face severe, escalating benefit cost share penalties tied to their error rate.

MA issues \$2.7B in SNAP benefits annually. Draconian cost share measures threaten significant costs to the state.

5% cost share

\$131M

6-8% PER

10% cost share

\$270M

8-10%% PER

15% cost share

\$394M

>10% PER

What is the Payment Error Rate (PER)?

- The Payment Error Rate (PER) is measurement of how accurately the state assesses SNAP eligibility and calculates benefit amounts.
- Errors occur when there is **an over- or under-issuance in benefit calculation**, either due to client error or agency error.
- PER is one measure USDA uses to assess SNAP administration among others including processing timeliness. PER is calculated based on a very small sampling of cases that are randomly evaluated for accuracy. Any household overpayment or underpayment over \$58 is an error.
- Payment errors are not fraud.

What is the PER in Massachusetts?

- Prior to 2020, MA had a low error rate – typically 4-6%
- During the pandemic, the SNAP caseload dramatically increased, and waivers were implemented to reduce administrative burden and promote access. As a result, in the following years, the PER increased significantly. In FFY24, MA's final PER was 14.1%.



Key drivers of payment errors & solutions

Top Drivers of Errors in MA



Wages and salaries



Household composition



Shelter expenses

Due to complexity of SNAP rules, 65% of errors are driven by client misreporting or underreporting information.

To avoid escalating cost-share penalties and preserve SNAP, DTA is taking steps to rapidly reduce the PER while seeking to maintain access to benefits for which households are eligible.

- ✓ Unwinding COVID-era policies and reinstating household interviews at recertification and requiring verifying income matches at interim report
- ✓ Improving technology platforms and phone lines to bolster eligibility and benefit determination work and improve client ability to report changes
- ✓ Leveraging internal and external data to identify and correct errors when necessary
- ✓ Hiring case workers to reduce client to worker ratios and improve staff ability to accurately process cases
- ✓ Enhancing staff development and training programs to focus on areas with high risk of errors
- ✓ Establishing a dedicated Quality Assurance team of highly skilled case workers to support payment accuracy efforts



Discussion of coordinated strategies to mitigate cuts



What we are seeing in other states

Based on a review of a 50 state analysis, as of October 25th, here is our understanding of how states are preparing for November 1st:

- **42 states** have not taken additional steps beyond notifying clients of the Nov 1 impacts
- **7 states** are taking various forms of additional actions to prepare:
 - West Virginia, Kentucky, Colorado, New Hampshire, and Iowa have announced potential plans to accelerate funding for food banks or targeted populations
 - Louisiana and Virginia have declared a state of emergency but not have not fully disclosed how they will use this authority
 - California has deployed the National Guard to coordinate food distribution logistics and accelerated funding to food banks
- **2 states (Vermont, Hawaii) and 1 territory (Guam)** have taken steps to put state resources to backstop SNAP



Massachusetts investment in food security: Building on strength

SNAP Healthy Incentives Program

Statewide supplement to SNAP EBT purchases for fruits and vegetables purchased at farmers' markets generating revenue for local farmers and bolstering health among residents.

Universal Free School Meals

Statewide funding to provide free breakfast and lunch to every K-12 student in the Commonwealth to reduce food insecurity among families with children and improve childhood outcomes.

Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)
Nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and other services, free of charge, to Massachusetts families who qualify.

Senior Nutrition Programs

24 regional programs administered by the Exec Office of Aging and Independence through agencies across the state providing food delivery and congregate meals to older adults.

MassHealth Health Related Social Needs

Funding for MassHealth Accountable Care Organization (ACO) health plans to provide medically-tailored or nutritionally-appropriate foods to eligible MassHealth members with certain health needs

MA Emergency Food Assistance Program

Resources for food banks and pantries supporting neighbors in every community with emergency access to food

Food Security Infrastructure Grants

Grant program that supports projects that improve local food distribution, strengthen the food supply chain, expand food access, and support emergency preparedness

The State cannot backstop the overwhelming number of federal cuts to Massachusetts, including replacing \$220 million in monthly benefits.

The Healey Administration will continue to advocate for federal action to ensure federally-funded SNAP benefits are dispersed on time.



Follow-up on opportunities to coordinate response

- Coordinated, community-based solutions for mitigating hunger, as seen in other crises, will be important for addressing any potential disruption in SNAP allotments.
- Task Force members have emphasized responses to take into account the following:
 - Immediate impact on the ability of families and individuals to purchase food;
 - Increased volume of people going to food pantries, community meal sites, and other food access hubs;
 - Loss of revenue for small businesses and local farmers, fishers, and producers;
 - Potential food waste from farmers, fishers, producers, and grocers due to lack of sales nor ability to donate food.
- Recommended solutions to quickly deploy:
 - All 13 United Ways across the Commonwealth have launched the United Response Fund to support efforts in communities to mitigate harm.
 - Opportunity areas:
 - Invest in organizations purchasing food directly from small farmers and fishers to distribute in communities
 - Provide grants for gift cards to local grocery stores
 - Increase opportunities for volunteer engagement and expansion of services
 - Strengthen food distribution infrastructure and direct connection between local retailers, farmers, fishers, and producers, and food access organizations



Next steps

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- Listening Sessions
 - Announcement coming soon on dates and locations for listening sessions.
 - Task Force and working group members are encouraged to promote listening sessions among their networks as an opportunity to provide input on recommendations for mitigating SNAP cuts.
- Anti-Hunger Task Force next meeting
 - Additional meeting to be scheduled in November to hear from working groups and discuss top recommendations for inclusion in the Task Force's report to the Governor
- Working Groups
 - Chairs of working groups will schedule meetings with their group to continue to refine recommendations and collaborate on solutions