

Massachusetts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Veterans' Guide



**Department of
Transitional
Assistance**



About the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)

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. The

Department of Transitional Assistance 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

To learn more about the Department of Transitional Assistance, visit [Mass.gov/DTA](https://www.mass.gov/DTA).

“SNAP is the Commonwealth’s first line of defense against hunger, and we owe it to our veterans to support them. We’re proud to commit to giving back to the people who gave to our country, and are excited about our joint efforts with the Department of Veterans’ Services to help fight food insecurity among veterans.”

- Commissioner McCue

About the Massachusetts Department of Veterans’ Services

The mission of the Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS) is to advocate on behalf of all the Commonwealth’s veterans and provide them with quality support services and to direct an emergency financial assistance program for those veterans and their dependents who are in need.



To learn more about the Department of Veterans’ Services, visit [Mass.gov/orgs/Massachusetts-department-of-veteran-services](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/Massachusetts-department-of-veteran-services).

“The Baker-Polito Administration continues to recognize and honor the sacrifices and commitments made by our veterans and with collaborations between agencies is how Massachusetts leads the nation in serving veterans. Partnering with DTA, our VSOs and other service organizations will ensure that veterans who now face food insecurity will receive benefits and support so that they need not face a hungry day.”

- Secretary Urena



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Introduction

This guide is for prior and active service members and their families, as well as organizations that assist them, to understand the SNAP application process. It explains how different veteran and service member benefits may or may not affect SNAP benefits and eligibility. Although there are numerous benefits available, this guide does not contain an exhaustive list, but only the most utilized benefits.

If you have questions or concerns about this guide, please email the DTA Outreach Unit at: DTA.SNAPoutreach@massmail.state.ma.us.

For more information on DTA, visit the website at Mass.gov/DTA or call the DTA Assistance Line at (877) 382-2363.

Disclaimer

The information in this guide is based on rules and regulations effective 2019. As rules and regulations may change, portions of this guide may become obsolete or outdated. For the most up to date information, please see the online version of this guide.

SNAP Overview

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program that provides money to low-income individuals and families to purchase healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. As of December 2018, 765,641 people in Massachusetts received SNAP benefits¹. In addition, there are also nearly 365,000 veterans in the state, of which an estimated 24,000 receive SNAP benefits². Eligibility and benefit amounts are based on household size, income, and expenses. A household generally includes all people who purchase and prepare meals together with certain spousal, age, and living arrangement exceptions.

How to Apply

To apply for SNAP benefits, an applicant will need their Social Security number (if they have one), birth date, home address (if they have one), income and expenses. Prior to applying for SNAP benefits, an applicant has the option to check eligibility using DTA's [screener](#)³. The screener is confidential and is not a required step before filing an application.

A SNAP application will take 20 minutes or less. There are several ways to apply for SNAP benefits:

Online

Visit [DTA Connect](#)⁴ online to apply for SNAP benefits.

In Person at a Local Office or Community Partner

Visit one of DTA's local offices where a staff member can help an applicant apply. Find a list of DTA local offices [here](#)⁵. DTA's outreach partners across the state can also assist with applications. A list of organizations can be found [here](#)⁶.

¹For most up to date data on SNAP in Massachusetts, visit DTA's facts and figures page at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/departments-of-transitional-assistance-facts-and-figures>.

²Estimate from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, available at: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-almost-15-million-low-income-veterans-including-thousands-in>.

³https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/screening?_ga=2.65966510.1250319047.1543508835-317818602.1538592567

⁴<https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/>

⁵https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-transitional-assistance/locations?_page=1

⁶<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/snap-outreach-for-partners>

By Mail & Fax

Download a SNAP application and cover sheet, which are available in multiple languages, from DTA's [website](#)⁷. There is a separate, simplified application for seniors. The application and cover sheet can be faxed to DTA at (617) 887-8765, *OR* mailed to DTA at: DTA Document Processing Center, P.O. Box 4406, Taunton, MA 02780

Emergency SNAP Benefits

Emergency SNAP benefits provide applicants and their families immediate help, while giving them time to submit the verifications required to determine eligibility. Emergency SNAP benefits are issued if the applicant appears eligible **and** answers “yes” to one or more of the following questions:

- *Does your income and money in the bank add up to less than your monthly housing expenses?*
- *Is your monthly income less than \$150 and is your money in the bank \$100 or less?*
- *Are you a migrant worker and is your money in the bank less than \$100?*

If approved for emergency SNAP benefits, applicants will receive a letter confirming the amount of emergency benefits they are eligible for and what other verifications are needed to decide ongoing SNAP benefits. If not approved for emergency SNAP benefits, an applicant may still be eligible for monthly ongoing SNAP benefits. Applicants can call the DTA Assistance Line at (877) 382-2363, with questions about emergency SNAP eligibility or to disagree with a decision.

Basic Eligibility

Low-income U.S. citizens and certain legal noncitizens may be eligible for SNAP if they meet other financial and nonfinancial requirements. Certain noncitizen veterans, active duty members, and family members may qualify for SNAP benefits. For more information or questions about noncitizen service member or dependent eligibility, please visit DTA's [online guide](#)⁸ or call the DTA Assistance line at (877) 382-2363.

⁷<https://www.mass.gov/lists/departments-of-transitional-assistance-documents-and-forms>

⁸<https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/olg%20docs/regulations/fs/362.PDF>

Gross Income: Gross income is monthly income received before any deductions or taxes. The most up to date gross income levels can be found [here](#)⁹.

Most SNAP applicants must have a gross income under 200% of the federal poverty line to qualify for SNAP benefits. There is no gross income test for households that include a senior 60 years of age or older, or a disabled member. See the Disability section for information on the definition of disabled for SNAP purposes.

SNAP counts earned income from any part or full-time jobs, or from self-employment. SNAP also counts unearned income, including Veterans Administration Pension and Compensation benefits, Social Security and Unemployment Compensation. Some income is not countable, and special rules apply for veterans who receive Chapter 115 Veteran Service benefits which are paid directly to a landlord or other third party. See Appendix I to see how certain former and current service member income sources are treated.

Table 1. Monthly Gross Income Standards*	
Household Size	200% of Federal Poverty Level (\$)
1	2082
2	2818
3	3555
4	4292
5	5028
6	5765
7	6502
8	7238
For each additional member	Add 737
*As of February 2019. Find the most up to date information here ¹⁰ .	

Asset Limits: Most SNAP households do not have an asset limit.

⁹ <https://www.mass.gov/lists/department-of-transitional-assistance-program-eligibility-charts-and-tables>

¹⁰ <https://www.mass.gov/lists/department-of-transitional-assistance-program-eligibility-charts-and-tables>

What Happens After the SNAP Application is Filed?

There are two steps after a SNAP application is submitted: an interview with DTA and submission of verifications or proofs.

All SNAP applicants need to have an interview with a DTA SNAP case manager. Conversation with SNAP outreach providers or the Project Bread Food Source Hotline are not considered the SNAP interview. DTA will try to call the SNAP applicant directly. If the applicant misses the call, DTA will mail an appointment letter. An applicant can call the DTA Assistance Line at any time to have an interview with the first available worker at (877) 382-2363. Also, an applicant may go to DTA if they prefer to have an in-person interview.

After the interview, DTA may provide a list of documents that must be submitted to verify eligibility. DTA will decide eligibility within 30 days of application. Applicants are approved for 12 or 36 months, for a once a month benefit issuance.

How Can a SNAP Applicant Check on the Status of the SNAP Case or Benefits?

At any time, an applicant can check case status, Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card balance, next benefit issuance date, submit documentation, update contact information, and more, on DTA Connect.

DTA Connect is both a [free mobile application](#) and a [website](#)¹¹. All information on DTA Connect is secure and confidential. If an applicant is concerned about an unauthorized person accessing their DTA case information, call the DTA Assistance Line to discuss an option to block access to DTA Connect. Further, an applicant can call the DTA Assistance Line for case information at (877) 382-2363.

How to Purchase Food

DTA will issue an EBT card by mail or in person to a SNAP household. The applicant can pick up one at a local DTA office to access SNAP benefits. If mailed, the EBT card will arrive in one envelope and the personal identification number (PIN) will arrive in a separate envelope. An EBT card looks like a credit card and can be used at the same payment terminal at any store or market that accepts SNAP.

¹¹<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-dta-connect>

Where Benefits Can Be Used

Food can be purchased at any store that accepts EBT cards, including convenience stores, supermarkets, and farmers' markets. The Hanscom AFB Commissary accepts SNAP benefits. To find a location, see USDA's [map](#)¹².

Any grocery item can be purchased with SNAP benefits, including seeds or plants for growing food. Alcohol or prepared meals sold hot and ready to eat (e.g. rotisserie chicken) and non-food items (e.g., pet food, soap, vitamins) cannot be purchased. For more information, please visit the USDA's [website](#)¹³.

Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

To help SNAP clients make healthy food choices. SNAP benefits can be used at participating HIP retailers to buy fruits and vegetables. SNAP clients will receive \$1 back on their EBT card for each dollar spent on eligible fruits and vegetables, up to a monthly limit.

HIP retailers include approved farmers' markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) farm share programs. To participate, a household must have a SNAP balance on their EBT card. The benefit can be used right away or saved. To find a list of HIP retailers, visit the [MassGrown Map](#)¹⁴.

Note: HIP is available on a seasonal basis, and the schedule can be found on DTA's [website](#)¹⁵.

Household Size	HIP Monthly Cap
1-2 persons	\$40
3-5 persons	\$60
6+ persons	\$80

¹²<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailerlocator>

¹³<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>

¹⁴<https://massnrc.org/farmlocator/map.aspx>

¹⁵<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/healthy-incentives-program-hip>

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a program that allows SNAP client to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farms monthly. SNAP clients in Massachusetts can use their EBT benefits to pay for CSA shares at participating retailers. CSA partners include direct marketing farmers, non-profit food buying co-ops, and farmers' markets. To learn more about this, visit DTA's [website](#)¹⁶.

Additional Information for Certain Populations

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

Individuals aged 18 to 49 years old, who are not disabled and do not have children, are considered ABAWDs. SNAP benefits are provided to ABAWDs for only three (3) months in a 36-month period unless the individual is exempt from a work requirement. This work requirement does not apply to individuals age 50 and older, or those receiving SNAP with a minor child.

Some examples of exemptions include a person with an impairment or disability, homeless individuals (persons without a stable night-time residence), and individuals in treatment programs. Veterans who receive Veteran's Administration (VA) disability compensation are exempt from SNAP work requirements, regardless of the individual's disability percentage rating (e.g. this even includes 10%). For more information on, and a complete list of, exemptions, visit DTA's [website](#)¹⁷.

If an ABAWD is not exempt, to keep SNAP for more than 3 months they must:

- work for 20 hours per week, on average;
- participate in a qualifying Employment and Training (E&T) or WIOA activity 20 hours per week;
- have a combination of work and E&T/WIOA for 20 hours per week, on average; or
- volunteer at a nonprofit or public organization for a specified number of hours per month (SNAP benefit / MA minimum wage)

For information on SNAP E&T opportunities, see the [SNAP Path to Work](#)¹⁸ section.

¹⁶https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/!SSL!/WebHelp/SNAP/Nutrition_Education/CSA_Online_Guide_072715_with_FMN_Comments.htm

¹⁷<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/able-bodied-adults-without-dependents-abawd-work-program-rules>

¹⁸<https://www.mass.gov/snap-path-to-work-program>

Students

For SNAP purposes, students are individuals between the ages of 18 to 49 who are enrolled at least half time in college or other institutions of higher education. A low-income student may qualify for SNAP if they met all other SNAP criteria and are:

- doing a work study job
- working for pay for at least 20 hours a week, on average
- attending a community college or certain Vocational Technical Schools¹⁹
- disabled, or placed in college through the Mass Rehab Commission
- receiving MassGrant financial aid, or
- meeting another student exemption, which can be found [here](#)²⁰

Note: Students under the age of 22 who live with their natural, adoptive or step-parent are included in the same SNAP household. Students who live with roommates but buy and cook most of their food separately can get their own SNAP. If a student receives two out of three daily meals from a meal plan (i.e. more than 50% of meals), they are ineligible for SNAP.

Seniors

For SNAP purposes, seniors are defined as anyone age 60 years or older. DTA has a specialized Senior Assistance Office (SAO) for SNAP-only clients that can help seniors apply for SNAP benefits at (833) 712-8027.

DTA has a senior simplified SNAP application available [online](#)²¹ Seniors may claim medical expenses to possibly increase their SNAP benefits (see medical section).

¹⁹Enrolled under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV), or in a course of study that would lead to employment

²⁰<https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/olg%20docs/regulations/fs/search/365/710.PDF>

²¹https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/08/27/snap_app_seniors_english_fillable.pdf

Persons with Disabilities

Individuals are considered disabled for SNAP purposes if receiving Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, or other disability-based benefits, based on severity of disability. The definition of disabled for SNAP purposes can be found [here](#)²². Persons with disabilities may claim medical expenses to possibly increase their SNAP benefits (see medical section).

DTA is committed to ensuring that all clients with disabilities are provided the accommodations they need to have equal access to benefits and services at application, and as their disabilities change or continue over time, to maintain benefits. When an applicant applies for SNAP or other department benefits, they will be asked if they need an accommodation. An accommodation can also be requested at any time for anyone having difficulty meeting a department requirement. To learn more about accommodations, call the DTA Assistance Line at (877) 382-2363 and ask to speak with a Client Assistance Coordinator.

Homeless Individuals

Homeless individuals and households may be eligible for SNAP benefits. They do not need cooking facilities to get SNAP.

If a household does not have an address, they may use the address of a friend, relative, authorized representative or shelter where they can pick up their mail on a regular basis. If a household cannot provide a mailing address, the address of a local DTA office may be used.

For a list of homeless shelters and transitional housing, visit the DVS's website [here](#)²³.

For a list of soup kitchens and food pantries see the Other Food Resource section below and on DTA's [website](#)²⁴.

²²https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/!SSL!/WebHelp/SNAP/Eligibility_Requirements/Elderly_Disabled/SNAP_Disability_Requirements_and_Verifications.htm

²³<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-veterans-services>

²⁴<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-local-food-bank>

Make the Most of SNAP Benefits

Medical Deduction

Anyone who is age 60 or older or disabled for [SNAP purposes](#)²⁵, and has medical expenses of more than \$35 per month, can claim medical expenses. Claiming the cost of medical expenses can decrease the income used to calculate SNAP benefits, potentially increasing the benefit amount.

Examples of deductible medical costs include:

- prescription drugs
- over-the-counter medications
- health related supplies (e.g. hearing aids/batteries, contact lenses)
- health equipment (e.g. prosthetics, wheelchair)
- car mileage and public transportation costs to a medical appointment or pharmacy
- home health care costs (e.g. personal care attendant, adult day care)
- alternative medical treatments (e.g. acupuncture, massage)
- service animal expenses (e.g. veterinary bills, animal food)
- one time medical bills (such as for a dental procedure)

Receipts or bills will need to be provided to verify the expenses. If a SNAP household is entirely made up of people who are elderly or disabled, the household may submit the rent calculation worksheet used for public or subsidized housing as verification of medical expenses.

Chapter 115 Veterans' Service Benefits

Massachusetts provides a needs-based program to low-income veterans and their dependents who have limited income. Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care. For more information, call DVS at (617) 210-5480 or visit their [website](#)²⁶.

How SNAP Treats Chapter 115 Benefits

If the Veteran Services Office (VSO) sends a check directly to a household's landlord or utility company, for the household's housing or heating/cooling costs, these payments are excluded from income that is used to calculate the veteran's SNAP benefits. This may potentially increase the SNAP benefit the veteran and/or dependents receive.

²⁵https://eohhs.ehs.state.ma.us/DTA/PolicyOnline/!SSL!/WebHelp/SNAP/Eligibility_Requirements/Elderly_Disabled/SNAP_Disability_Requirements_and_Verifications.htm

²⁶<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-veterans-services>

SNAP Employment, Training and Education Opportunities

SNAP Path to Work

SNAP Path to Work is DTA's statewide voluntary Employment and Training (E&T) program for under and unemployed SNAP clients. The program connects people with job-focused education and training providers, at community organizations and community colleges, who provide skill building and job support opportunities to better compete in today's workforce. Programs include job search, job search training, job retention, education (e.g. ESOL, HiSet/GED), vocational skills training, work experience and apprenticeship. Clients can train for a career in healthcare, construction, culinary, and more!

To learn more about programs and services available and to find a provider, visit DTA's [SNAP Path to Work website](#)²⁷ or call (888) 483-0255 to speak to a SNAP Path to Work Specialist.

Work Participant Program (WPP)

The Work Participant Program (WPP) provides individualized, comprehensive job search coaching/assistance and career planning to SNAP and TAFDC clients. The goal of the program is to help clients find full-time employment that aligns with participant goals toward a career pathway. These include job readiness activities (e.g. resume writing), interviewing skills (e.g. mock interviews), job search techniques, apprenticeship opportunities, on-the-job training, and occupational training. Follow-up services are also available, such as retention workshops. For more information on WPP, visit DTA's [website](#)²⁸.

SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed)

SNAP-Ed provides nutrition education classes and resources to SNAP clients and individuals eligible for other federal assistance programs in the state. SNAP clients and others can find information on healthy food and healthy living on the MA Healthy Foods in a SNAP [website](#)²⁹ which has recipes, cooking ideas for shopping on a budget, guidelines for ways to be more physically active and suggestions on how to get the most out of farmers' market visits.

²⁷<https://www.snappathtowork.org/clients>

²⁸<https://www.mass.gov/tafdc-employment-services-program>

²⁹<https://www.mahealthyfoodsinasnap.org/healthy-foods>

Economic Assistance Offered by DTA

DTA offers economic assistance (cash benefits) programs to help families and individuals meet basic needs. The benefits include 2 monthly payments, health insurance, and employment supports, such as child care and transportation.

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)

TAFDC is a cash assistance program for families with children and pregnant women in the last 120 days of pregnancy, with little or no assets or income. To check TAFDC eligibility and learn more to apply, visit DTA's [website](#)³⁰.

Note: A veteran cannot receive TAFDC benefits and Chapter 115 benefits at the same time.

DTA's Employment Services Program (ESP) provides opportunities for TAFDC clients to gain education and training, resolve barriers to employment, and find jobs that will lead to economic self-sufficiency. TAFDC clients are referred to ESP training, education and job search programs. These programs include Young Parents Program, Competitive Integrated Employment Services programs (CIES), Secure Jobs, DTA Works Internship, Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI), and the Work Program Participant program through the MassHire career centers, along with other community-based training providers. For more information on each program, visit DTA's website [here](#)³¹.

Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC)

EAEDC is a cash benefit program for disabled adults, caretakers, people age 65 years or older, individuals getting training from a Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission program, and some children who are not able to get TAFDC. Veterans must also apply for Chapter 115 benefits when they apply for EAEDC, unless they have a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge and would not be eligible. Learn more about EAEDC [here](#)³².

Note: A veteran cannot receive EAEDC benefits and Chapter 115 benefits, or EAEDC and SSI, at the same time.

³⁰<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-tafdc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply>

³¹<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/choose-a-department-of-transitional-assistance-employment-services-program-activity>

³²<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply>

State Supplement Program (SSP)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). It provides monthly payments to certain eligible, low-income individuals who are age 65 or older, blind or disabled. Massachusetts adds more money to SSI payments for Massachusetts residents, so that certain individuals found over-income for SSI may still be eligible for a partial benefit from the state. Individuals who wish to receive SSP payments must first apply for federal SSI payments through SSA. To find out more, contact SSA at (800) 772-1213 or visit DTA's [website](#)³³.

Other Food Resources

For those who do or do not qualify for SNAP or need food sooner there are other local food resources.

Note: Some resources have income guidelines while others do not.

Project Bread FoodSource Hotline

(800) 645-8333

Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline can:

- refer callers to food resources in the community
- provide information about school meals, summer meal sites for kids, and elder meal programs

Hours: Monday- Friday 8AM to 7PM; Saturday 10AM to 2PM

³³<https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-state-supplement-program>

Food Pantries

There are many food pantries across the state that provide free food on an emergency basis.

To find a local food pantry:

- call the Project Bread Hotline at (800) 645-8333
- visit Project Bread's [website](#)³⁴
- visit the website of a food bank that will list the local food pantries:
 - ◇ [Greater Boston Food Bank](#)³⁵ (Eastern Massachusetts)
 - ◇ [Worcester County Food Bank](#)³⁶ (Central Massachusetts)
 - ◇ [Food Bank of Western Massachusetts](#)³⁷ (Western Massachusetts)
 - ◇ [Merrimack Valley Food Bank](#)³⁸ (Northeastern Massachusetts)

Mobile Markets

Some food banks also have mobile markets that provide high-quality, perishable food, where tables are set up farmers' market style. People can take fresh produce, dairy products, frozen soup and high-protein items at no cost. For more information on mobile markets, visit the Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) [website](#)³⁹ or the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts [website](#)⁴⁰.

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is a federally funded program that provides meals at congregate (onsite) meal centers and through home-delivered meals to senior citizens 60 years and older, and people under 60 years of age who live in certain senior housing buildings. Visit the Executive Office of Elder Affairs' website for information on eligibility and how to apply [here](#)⁴¹.

³⁴<http://www.projectbread.org/get-help/>

³⁵<https://www.gbfb.org/need-food/>

³⁶<https://foodbank.org/receive-assistance/food-assistance/>

³⁷<https://www.foodbankwma.org/get-help/locate-a-local-feeding-program/>

³⁸<http://mvfb.org/member-agencies/>

³⁹<https://www.gbfb.org/what-we-do/our-programs/mobile-markets/>

⁴⁰<https://www.foodbankwma.org/get-help/mobile-food-bank/>

⁴¹<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/senior-nutrition-program-eligibility-and-how-to-apply>

Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and other services to low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children, age five and younger. Check out the [WIC prescreening tool](#)⁴² to check for eligibility. For more information, email wicinfo.dph@massmail.state.ma.us or visit their [website](#)⁴³.

Red Cross

The Red Cross in Massachusetts runs food pantries, commodity supplemental food programs and mobile markets. For more information on the programs or pantry locations and hours, visit the Red Cross's [website](#)⁴⁴ or call (617) 236-2043.

School Meals

Children in households that receive SNAP benefits are automatically eligible to receive free school meals. Children in households that receive Chapter 115 benefits will also usually be eligible for free or reduced meals, but because DVS does not have the same data matching system, it will not happen automatically. It is important that households receiving Chapter 115 benefits actively apply for free or reduced school meals. A family can apply for school meal assistance at any time, even if a child in the household was not eligible earlier in the school year. For more information, talk to the school's food service director or visit the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [website](#)⁴⁵.

Summer Meals

The Summer Food Service Program (i.e. Summer Meals) provides free, nutritious meals to low-income children aged 18 years and younger during school vacations. To find a site, visit [meals4kids](#)⁴⁶, text "FOOD" or "COMIDA" to 877-877 or call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at (800) 645-8333.

⁴² <https://wic.fns.usda.gov/wps/pages/preScreenTool.xhtml>

⁴³ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-the-women-infants-children-wic-nutrition-program>

⁴⁴ <https://www.redcross.org/local/massachusetts/about-us/our-work/food-and-nutrition-programs.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/nslp.html>

⁴⁶ <https://meals4kids.org/>

Other EBT Cardholder Benefits

EBT Card to Culture

DTA partners with the Mass Cultural Council to offer discounted and free admissions to many of the Commonwealth's best museums and cultural institutions for SNAP clients. Most often, you will just need to show your EBT card at the ticket counter to receive a discounted admission price. Each organization is different, however, and a reservation may have to be made in advance. There is no limit to the number of times an EBT card can be used at a museum.

The list of participating organizations is updated frequently. For the most up to date information please visit the EBT Card to Culture website [here](#)⁴⁷.

MBTA Youth Pass

The MBTA offers low-income young adults 25 years or younger discounted LinkPasses (unlimited subway and local bus) for \$30/month across several cities and towns. People 19 to 25 years old must also be enrolled in either a state/federal benefit program (e.g. SNAP) or alternative education program or job training program to qualify. For more information, visit the MBTA website [here](#)⁴⁸.

Bluebikes

People with EBT cards can get discounted memberships for the Bluebikes program. A one-year membership is \$50 or spend \$5 for 30 days of riding. A membership includes the first 60 minutes of each ride. Fees will apply for more than 60 minutes a ride. For more information, visit the Bluebike website [here](#)⁴⁹.

⁴⁷<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/ebt-card-to-culture-organizations>

⁴⁸<https://www.mbta.com/fares/reduced/youth-pass>

⁴⁹<https://www.bluebikes.com/pricing/income-eligible-program>

Appendix I: Veteran Benefits & SNAP

There are many veteran and service member benefits that might affect SNAP benefits. To learn more about each benefit in general, please see the [Resource Guide](#)⁵⁰ for Veterans and Service Members issued by the Office of Attorney General. Also, to find out more information and to apply for veteran benefits, contact a local Veterans' Service Officer (VSO). Find local VSO offices [here](#)⁵¹. There are numerous veteran and service member benefits available. This is not contain an exhaustive list, but rather the most utilized benefits. For questions about how a certain benefit may or may not affect SNAP benefits, please call the DTA Assistance Line at (877) 382-2363.

Included in SNAP Benefit Calculation	Excluded from SNAP Benefit Calculation
Annuity Payments	One Time Bonuses
Basic Pay Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Drill Pay	Payments (\$200-\$1200 per month) given to the child of a Vietnam veteran disabled in any way by spina bifida
Chapter 115 benefits awarded directly to the client	Chapter 115 benefits given directly to landlord and/or utility company for housing or heating/cooling
Combat Pay received prior to deployment to a federally-designated combat zone	Combat Pay while one is actively serving in a federally-designated combat zone
State financial aid earmarked for costs of living	Federal financial aid Montgomery GI Bill Benefits Post-9/11 GI Bill payments earmarked for educational costs (e.g. tuition, books)
Disability Compensation, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), Special Monthly Compensation (SMC)	Charitable Giving up to \$300 in a 3-month period

⁵⁰ https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/11/09/vets-guide-110818_0.pdf

⁵¹ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/local-veterans-service-officers>