

Food Assistance during the COVID-19 Emergency

If you need food assistance, you are not alone. As a result of COVID-19, one in three people in Massachusetts faces food insecurity, many for the first time. Several programs can help you and your family get the food you need to stay healthy.

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SUPPORT FOR ALL AGES

SNAP

Many people who are insured by MassHealth are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides a monthly benefit to buy nutritious foods. To get SNAP, you must meet income guidelines, and you must be a U.S. citizen or legal noncitizen (restrictions apply).

Check if you are eligible and apply at www.DTAConnect.com or call the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline at (800) 645-8333. You can also fill out and mail or fax a paper application that can be found at www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-snap-benefits-food-stamps. Scroll to the bottom of the page. The paper application is under "Downloads." The mailing address and fax numbers are on the application.

Once you have applied, visit www.DTAConnect.com or the DTA Connect mobile application to view your case status, check your balance on your Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card—a card used to pay for groceries—and to upload and submit documents, and more.

If you need help applying for or keeping your SNAP benefits, DTA's SNAP outreach partners can help you. Find a list of partners at www.mass.gov/doc/snap-outreach-partners/download.

SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—otherwise known as WIC—is a nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding support, and referrals to other health and social services, free of charge, to Massachusetts families who qualify. During the COVID-19 emergency, all WIC appointments can be done by phone.

WIC serves pregnant women and new mothers, infants, and children up to the age of five.

Families already receiving SNAP and Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC—a cash assistance program for eligible families with children under 18), and many people who are insured by MassHealth are automatically eligible for WIC. For other families, the WIC income guidelines are on the WIC website. If you are newly unemployed, WIC staff can work with you to see if you are eligible. All foster children in Massachusetts under the age of five are also eligible for WIC.

To connect with the WIC Program, visit www.mass.gov/wic. If you are applying for the first time, click "Apply Online for WIC" to get started. After you complete the online application, it will automatically be sent to the local WIC program closest to your home. WIC staff will respond soon after they receive the application. Interested families can also contact a local WIC program directly by phone or email. The complete list of contact information can be found on the WIC website. **Information is also available by calling (617) 721-6601 or (800) WIC-1007.**

PANDEMIC-EBT (P-EBT)

P-EBT is a new benefit created in response to COVID-19. All Massachusetts families with school-aged children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals can receive this new benefit that is \$28.50 per week, per child. Families can receive both P-EBT and the grab-and-go school meals described on the next page. Households receiving DTA benefits will receive the benefit automatically on their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card—a card used to pay for groceries. This benefit adds to their existing DTA benefits. Households not receiving DTA benefits but with children eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals will receive a P-EBT card for each eligible school-aged child.

For more information about P-EBT eligibility and how to receive this benefit, please visit www.map-ebt.org/ or call the **Project Bread FoodSource Hotline at (800) 645-8333.**

SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals on Wheels can provide home delivered meals for individuals with certain needs who are ages 60+, and their spouses. This program is run by the senior nutrition agencies throughout Massachusetts.

To **find a program call (800) 243-4636**. Agency staff will assess eligibility for home deliveries. For additional information, please visit www.mass.gov/nutrition-program-for-seniors.

EMERGENCY FOOD OPTIONS

If you need food now, you can go to a food pantry or meal program.

FOOD PANTRIES AND MEAL PROGRAMS

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A **food pantry** is a place where you can get groceries free of charge. Anyone can get food at a food pantry, no matter age or immigration status—you will not be asked about either. Most communities in Massachusetts have food pantries.

At a **meal program**, you can receive a prepared meal for free or at a low price.

You can find food pantries and meal programs in eastern, central, and western MA with just a zip code. Some food pantries and meal programs are reserved for residents of certain towns/cities—specific details may be found at the “Healthy Food in a SNAP” web page at www.mahealthyfoodsinsnap.org/healthy-foods/food-pantries. Scroll down to see each section of the state—eastern, central, and western Massachusetts, and then follow the instructions on the page.

FREE GRAB AND GO MEALS FOR YOUTH AGES 0-18

Over 1,300 places across the Commonwealth serve school meals. School districts are working hard to provide free grab and go meals for youth ages 0-18.

To find a location, please visit www.meals4kids.org/summer or call your local school district.

PROJECT BREAD FOODSOURCE HOTLINE

You can also call the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline at **(800) 645-8333** for more information about any of these programs.

All of these programs have taken additional measures to distribute food safely to the public. Some have added new ways you can receive food, so please call them if you cannot visit them in person.

Helpful Phone Numbers and Websites	Project Bread FoodSource Hotline	Information source for additional food resources	(800) 645-8333 www.projectbread.org
	Statewide Resource Information Hotline	Information source for both food and non-food resources, such as utilities	211 www.mass211.org
	MassOptions	Services resource for elders and individuals with disabilities	(800) 243-4636 www.massoptions.org