

# SNAP/Food Stamps Workshop

**SHC**

A partnership with the Somerville Homeless Coalition, the Community Action Board on Food Security, the Somerville Community Health Agenda, and Tufts University

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PHONE

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Visit

<https://sites.google.com/site/foodresourcesforsomervillema/home>

# SNAP/Food Stamps Workshop

## Purpose

- Today you will learn:
  - General information about the SNAP program
  - How to determine if you are eligible
  - How to apply for SNAP benefits
  - How to keep your benefits
  - How to teach others about the SNAP program
- To ultimately increase access of food resources by all populations, especially those vulnerable to food insecurity



### WHAT IS SNAP?

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, Food Stamps) **is a government assistance program that helps low-income households buy food.**
- Can be used to **buy almost any food item** in any supermarket where you usually shop.
- The monthly amount you receive is determined by: **household's size, income, and expenses.**
- The benefits are loaded each month onto a debit card, called the **Electronic Benefits Transfer Card (EBT)**

### Who Uses SNAP?

- **People of all ages use SNAP.** Children, adults, and elders can all qualify for benefits;
- **People of all backgrounds use SNAP.** Both U.S. citizens and non-citizens can qualify for benefits;
- **People who are working** or have other regular income, such as Social Security or a pension, can often get SNAP;
- **People who are unemployed or disabled** can qualify for benefits.

#### What SNAP Can Buy

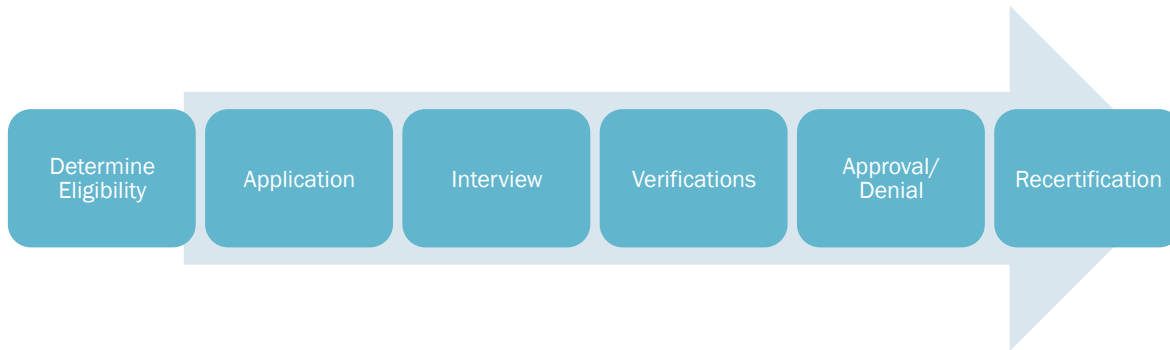
- Breads and cereals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meats, fish and poultry
- Dairy products
- They can also buy seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat.

#### What SNAP Cannot Buy

- Beer, wine, or liquor
- Cigarettes or tobacco
- Nonfood items
- Vitamins and medicines
- Food that will be eaten in the store
- Hot prepared foods, such as rotisserie chicken

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## Applying for SNAP Benefits



### Determining Eligibility

- EVERYONE has a right to apply for SNAP benefits.
- The DTA defines a SNAP household as **people who live under one roof who purchase and prepare food together**. There are:
  - **INCOME REQUIREMENTS**
  - **EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Project Bread's SNAP Calculator is an excellent resource for determining your SNAP eligibility before applying.

- Project Bread's SNAP Calculator
  - <http://www.gettingfoodstamps.org/SNAPCalculator/index.cfm>

### INCOME

- Varies by type of household
  - **Family:** Gross family income is set at 200% of the federal poverty level.
  - **Elders (60 years or older)/Disabled:** No gross income level requirement.
  - **No children, no elders, no disabled:** Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD). Gross income eligibility is 130% of the federal poverty level.

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## SNAP Food Stamp Program Income Eligibility Standards 2011-2012

People in Household	130% FPG* Gross Monthly Income Standard	100% FPG* Net Monthly Income Standard	200% FPG** Gross Monthly Income Standard (family limits)
1	\$1180	\$908	\$1862
2	\$1594	\$1226	\$2522
3	\$2008	\$1545	\$3182
4	\$2422	\$1863	\$3842
5	\$2836	\$2181	\$4502
6	\$3249	\$2500	\$5162
7	\$3663	\$2818	\$5822
8	\$4077	\$3136	\$6482
Each additional person	+\$414	+\$319	+\$660

## EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Unemployed SNAP household members between the ages of 18 and 59 are required to register in the **SNAP/Education and Training program**, search for employment, and accept any reasonable job offer.
- **Exemptions:** student status, working 30+ hours per week, child care under 6, pregnant, physically/mentally unfit, etc.
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## Eligible Non-Citizens:

### Refugee/Asylees – do not have the 5 year waiting period

- Refugees
- Parolees
- Asylee
- Amerasians
- Cuban/Haitian Entrants
- Trafficking victims
- Deported/Withheld
- Iraqi/Afghan with Special Immigration Status

### Special Status – do not have the 5 year waiting period

- Native Americans (from Canada/Mexico)
- Hmong/Highland Laotian Tribe
- Veteran of US military and active service member or spouse, widow or dependent of one who is lawfully residing in the US

### Legal Permanent Resident, Battered Non-Citizens, Parolees- 5 year waiting period required

- Green Card Holders
- Certain Battered Non-Citizens
- People who were baroled as asylees/refugees for at least 1 year
- Conditional Entrants

### These categories are exempt from the 5 year minimum residency IF:

- LPR with 40 qualifying quarters of work history (their parents earned before 18; spouse's earned during marriage; their own)
- Blind or disabled
- Under 18
- Lawfully living in US since 8/22/96 and 65+ years old

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## The Application

- Because the SNAP application is long and has multiple parts, the best way to ensure that your application is successful is to apply through an agency where the staff are trained to know about the SNAP program and are experienced in filing applications.
  - **The agencies are listed on the last page of this guide.**
- **You can also apply:**
  - Over the phone: call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline to start an application over the phone, or have it sent through the mail: 1-800-645-8333 (Hotline Hours: Mon - Fri, 8 am - 7 pm, and Sat 10 am - 2 pm)
  - In person at the local Department of Transitional Assistance: 80 Everett Avenue, Chelsea, MA, 02150 or 200 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148 (Office Hours: Mon - Fri, 7:45am - 5 pm)
  - By mail or fax
  - Online: [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta)

## The Interview

- The DTA will call you for an interview after you submit your application. Most of the interviews can be scheduled over the phone.

## Verifications

- You have 30 days to submit your verifications after your interview.

## YOU WILL NEED TO SUBMIT VERIFICATION OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Proof of identity
- Proof that you live in Massachusetts
- Your social security number\* (only if US citizens)
- Proof of income for the past month
- **If you are not a U.S. citizen, you need to provide proof of your status. This can be your alien card or other immigration documents.**

## 📍 VERIFICATION DOCUMENT EXAMPLES:

- Proof of Identity: Driver's license, birth certificate or other proof of your identity.
- Proof of Massachusetts Residence: Mortgage, tax, homeowners insurance or utility bills, rent receipt or lease; statement from a shelter
- Income: Pay stubs or written statement from employer on letterhead showing income before taxes for the past four weeks.
- Other Income: Most recent copy of Social Security check or copy of award letter, proof of unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, pension, child support or alimony.
- Self-Employment: Most recent federal tax return (Schedule C Form) or last three months of business records.
- Rental Income: If you get paid by someone who rents a room or apartment from you, a copy of the lease agreement or statement from your tenant showing the amount of rent paid.

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- Noncitizen Status: For all non-US citizens applying for SNAP benefits, alien registration card or other immigration document.

## Approval/Denial

- After you submit your verifications, you should hear from the DTA within 30 days with a decision.
- Denial: If DTA denies benefits because your application was missing verification documents, you have 30 days to submit the documents and ask the DTA to reopen the case.

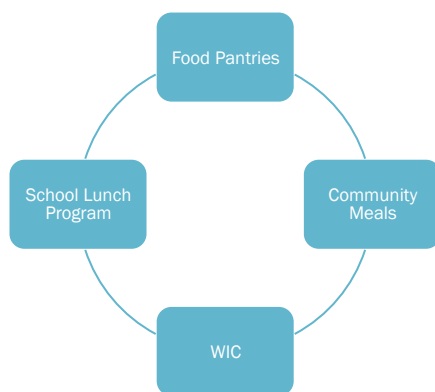
## What can I do if the DTA denies or cuts my SNAP benefits?

- If DTA denies your SNAP benefits or stops or lowers your monthly amount, you can ask for a “fair hearing.” A fair hearing is a formal meeting at the local DTA office or a formal telephone or video conference. A hearing officer runs the hearing and decides who is right.
- Fill out the appeal form on the back of the denial notice and send it into: Division of Hearings, DTA P.O. Box 120167, Boston, MA 02112
- You can also fax the hearing request to: 617-348-5311
- You should have a legal advocate present to help represent you.
- Visit <http://www.masslegalhelp.org/Income-benefits/food-stamps-advocacy-guide> for more information.

## Recertification

- Your SNAP application and benefits are only valid for a certain period of time, called the certification period.
- About 45 days before the end of the certification period, the DTA caseworker sends you a cover letter and a recertification form. Make sure you fill this out and send it in.

## OTHER FOOD RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN SOMERVILLE:



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## The Women, Infants and Children Program

- Provides income eligible (at or below 185% FPL) women who are pregnant, nursing or have a child under 5 years of age with food packages; also provides nutrition counseling
- No residency requirement or citizenship status requirement
- **Contact: Cambridge/Somerville WIC Program** 366 Broadway Street Suite 102 Somerville, MA 02145 (617) 666-5059

## The National School Food Program

- Children with families at or below the 130% federal poverty line qualify for free school lunch
- Provides nutritionally balanced, low cost school lunches to school children
- Schools send school meal applications home at the beginning of each school year
- You can also request an application through your child's school



## Food Pantries near Somerville (call for hours)

- Catholic Charities  
• 617-625-1920 | 270 Washington St, Somerville
- Elizabeth Peabody House  
• 617-623-5510 | 277 Broadway Somerville
- Helping Hand (residency requirement only on Thursdays and Saturdays)  
• 617-547-4070 | 1991 Mass Ave Cambridge
- Margaret Fuller  
• 617-547-4680 | 71 Cherry Street Cambridge
- Project SOUP  
• 617-776-7687 | 15 Franklin St Somerville
- Project SOUP West Pantry  
• 617-623-6111 | 1 Davis Square Somerville

## Community Meals

- Project SOUP: 617-776-7687, 89 College Ave, Somerville - Mon 5 PM
- First Parish Church: 617-876-7772, 3 Church St, Cambridge - Tues 5:30 PM
- Christ Church: 617-876-0200, Zero Garden St, Cambridge- Thurs 6 PM
- Mass Ave Baptist: 617-868-4853, 146 Hampshire st. Inman Square - Fri & Mon 6 PM
- Loaves & Fishes: 35 Magazine St, Cambridge- Sat 5:30 PM

For more information and resources, visit:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/foodresourcesforsomerville/home>