

COVID-19, SNAP and Unemployment Benefits in Massachusetts: What to Know

(Updated January 2021)

1. Many people who get Unemployment benefits are eligible for SNAP!

If you and your household have monthly gross income (income before taxes) below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, you should apply for SNAP.

- While most Unemployment benefits count as income, **the extra \$300/week you receive does NOT count as income for SNAP.** The extra \$300/week is called Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC).

Note: When you get your weekly unemployment from the Department of Unemployment Assistance, it typically goes into your bank account as one amount – that amount includes your base unemployment AND the extra \$300. Make sure to ignore the extra \$300 when calculating your income for SNAP.

EXAMPLE: Sarah Smith was laid off from her job. She has two children. Sarah gets \$400/week regular Unemployment and \$300/week FPUC. When she applies for SNAP, the state does not count the \$300/week as income. Sarah qualifies for \$616/month in SNAP.

Household Size	200% Federal Poverty Level (as of January 13, 2021)
1	\$2,147
2	\$2,903
3	\$3,660
4	\$4,417
5	\$5,173
6	\$5,930
7	\$6,687
8	\$7,433
Each add'l member	Add \$757

2. Who do I need to include as part of my SNAP household on the application?

If you live with your spouse or with children under 22 years old, you need to include them in your SNAP application. Otherwise, you only need to include other people you live with if you make and buy most of your food together.

3. How do I apply for SNAP?

- Online from your smartphone or computer on DTACONNECT.com, or
- Call the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) at 877-382-2363 (press #6) and tell the worker you want to apply by phone, or
- Call Project Bread at 1-800-645-8333 to do an application over the phone, or
- Go to Mass.gov/SNAP to get a paper application to send in by fax or mail.

4. How much SNAP will I get?

Currently, everyone who gets SNAP will get the maximum amount for their household size. Households whose normal SNAP benefit is less than the maximum amount will get a supplement to make up the difference.

- This supplement will continue as long as there is a federal and state public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The supplement is issued separately from regular monthly SNAP. It is issued the beginning of the following month. For example, a family of 3 who gets \$100 per month in SNAP on January 10th will get \$516 in a supplement around February 3 (a total of \$616, the maximum SNAP for 3 people).

Sample chart: Who can qualify for SNAP when getting Unemployment benefits!

This chart:

- **Includes the total amount a family would get with the supplement.** The base amount, the supplement, and the 15% boost in benefits are each issued as separate payments.
- Assume all members meet the US citizen or qualified immigrant and other eligibility rules,
- The household's *only income* is Unemployment benefits (UI, PUA, etc), *and*
- The only costs included in the SNAP math are shelter costs.

Sample Monthly SNAP Benefits for Households with Unemployment Benefits					
Weekly Unemployment for Household (<u>not</u> including the \$300/week FPUC)	Household Size + SNAP Benefit Amount				
	1	2	3	4	5
\$200/week	234	430	616	782	929
\$300/week	234	430	616	782	929
\$400/week	234	430	616	782	929
\$500/week	not eligible	430	616	782	929
\$600/week	not eligible	430	0* (no shelter costs), or 616 (max shelter costs)	782	929
\$700/week	not eligible	not eligible	0*	0* (no shelter costs), or 782 (max shelter costs)	929

Notes:

- SNAP households with shelter costs get a shelter deduction – the deduction amount is capped at \$586/mo unless household includes member age 60+ or disabled. Shelter costs include a “standard utility allowance” added to rent or homeownership costs.

* \$0 benefit households don't get a benefit, but they can report changes to DTA without having to re-apply.

→ For more on unemployment benefits, visit: Masslegalhelp.org/covid-19/UI.

→ For more on SNAP benefits, visit: Masslegalservices.org/DTA-COVID-19