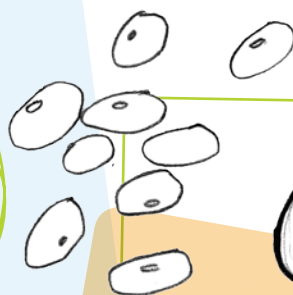


MEDFORD

Food Access Guide

A tool to help navigate food assistance programs



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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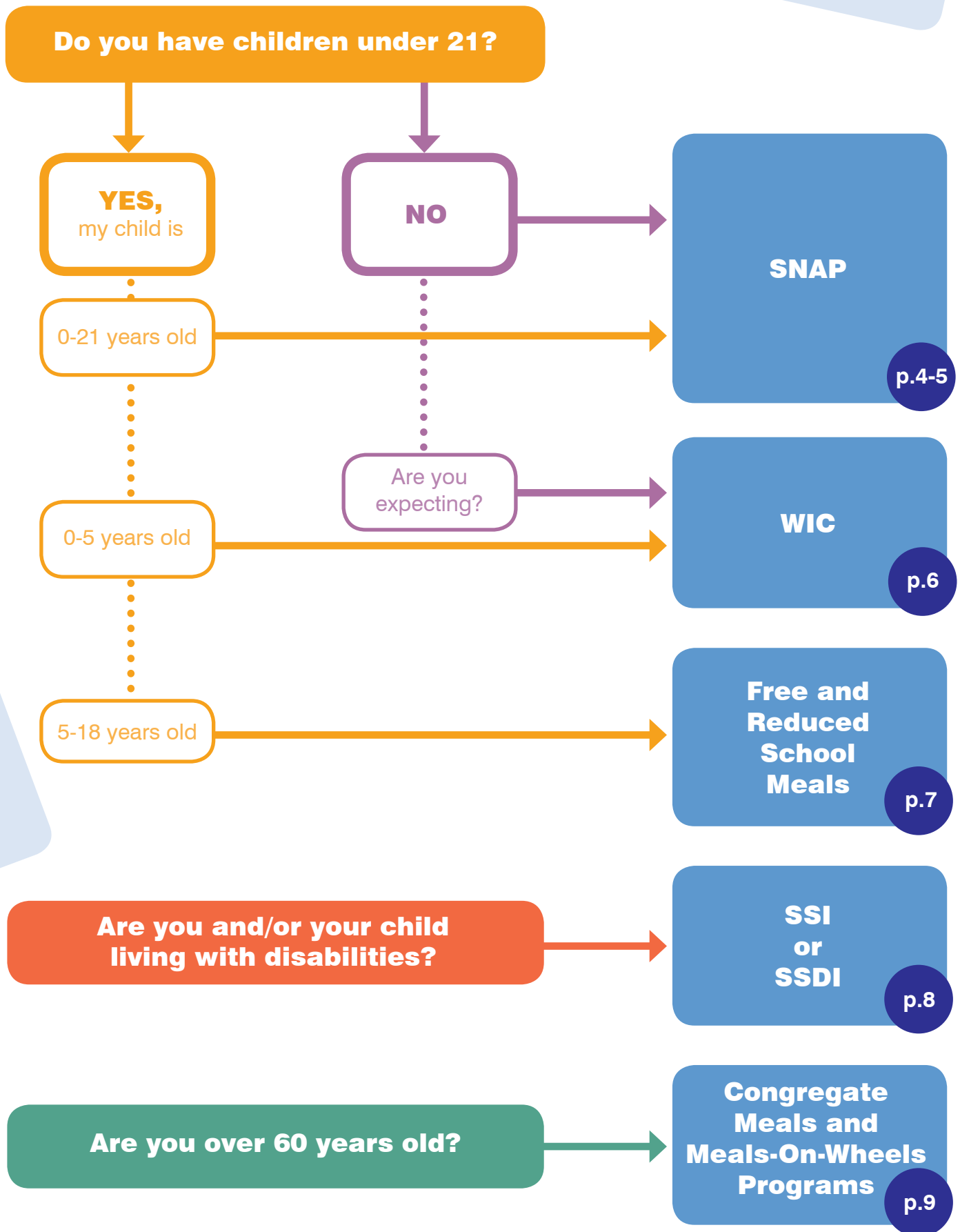


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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a collection of resources to help reduce food insecurity. The guide is designed as a repository of information, resources, and contacts to help Medford residents, families, and organizations better understand and access food support programs.

NON-US CITIZENS

Many food assistance programs are available to all residents, regardless of immigration status. However, it is important to be mindful of modified rules surrounding “**public charge**.” Please refer to the section on public charge (page 10) to understand the programs that you and your family can access without fear of reprisal. You can then refer to the sections on specific programs for more information. The language from the government can be vague, complex, and intimidating, but remember that you deserve to receive the aid that you need irrespective of your immigration status.

US CITIZENS

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is a nutrition benefit for families or individuals facing low-income. There may exist additional programs depending on your unique situation. You can begin by reading through the flow-chart to see what programs you can qualify for, and then refer to those sections for more information about each specific program.

Public Charge

p.10

As the City of Medford Board of Health recognizes the silent struggles of immigrant residents as they seek economic security, housing security, and food security both for themselves and their families, this guide includes a section addressing public charge.

Emergency Food Assistance

p.11

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



What is SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is a federal nutrition benefit program for families with low incomes that provides monetary supplement for certain food purchases. SNAP benefits are loaded onto an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card monthly and can be used at grocery stores or smaller food retailers. SNAP benefits can only be used for food and for plants and seeds to grow food for your household to eat. SNAP benefits cannot be used to buy:

- Any hot foods or food that will be eaten in the store
- Vitamins and medicines

Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) is a benefit for SNAP clients designed to stretch your dollar. If you are a SNAP household, you will be automatically enrolled in HIP. You can use your SNAP benefits to buy fruits and vegetables from a HIP-authorized farm or vendor. Look for the HIP logo or ask the vendor if they participate in the program before you pay for your purchase. You must have a SNAP balance to earn the HIP incentive benefit.

You will receive \$1 for each dollar you spend on eligible fruits and vegetables, up to a monthly limit. Your monthly cap is based on your household size (1-2 persons: \$40; 3-5 persons: \$60; 6+ persons: \$80). Although Medford does not currently have any HIP vendors, you can earn HIP incentives at participating:



Farmers' markets

- *Medford Farmers' Market*
 - June to October, Thursday, 3-7pm
 - matches up to \$20 in SNAP/EBT
 - medfordfarmersmarket@gmail.com

Mobile Markets

- *Davis Square Farmers' Market*, Somerville, MA
 - May to November, Wednesday, Noon - 6pm
- *Somerville Winter Farmers' Market*
 - 191 Highland Ave, Somerville, MA
 - December to April, Saturday, 9:30am - 2pm

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm share programs

- *Brookfield Farm* - CSA, Arlington, MA
 - (413) 253-7991
- *Farmer Dave's* - CSA, Malden, MA
 - farm@farmerdaves.net; (978) 349-1952

SNAP Eligibility

ONLINE SCREENING TOOL:

<https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/screening>



To figure out if you qualify for SNAP in Massachusetts, you will need to share your:

Household size

This includes both people you live with and buy/make food with.

- Children (under 22 years old) always count as household members
- Seniors (60+ years old) and people with disabilities count as household members if you buy/make food for them or buy/make food together.
- Tenants who are renting a room, and adult children (22+ years old) do NOT count towards your household size

Gross Income

How much money your household makes. This includes both earned income (the money you make from jobs) and unearned income (cash assistance, Social Security, unemployment insurance and child support, etc.)

Net Income

Factors in deductions and taxes. This can be a complicated task to do on your own. If your household income is under the gross limit, apply to figure out whether it's within the net limit.

Citizenship/Non-citizen status

Non-citizens are eligible (for more information for non-citizens, please see page 10 on Public Charge).

SNAP Benefits

The SNAP benefit formula assumes that families will spend 30% of their net income for food; SNAP makes up the difference between that 30% contribution and the cost of the "Thrifty Food Plan," a diet plan the U.S. Agriculture Department (USDA) establishes that is designed to be nutritionally adequate at a very low cost.

Household Size*	Gross Monthly Income Limit**	Max Benefit
1	\$2,126	\$204
2	\$2,873	\$374
3	\$3,620	\$535
4	\$4,366	\$680
5	\$5,113	\$807
6	\$5,860	\$969
7	\$6,606	\$1,071
8	\$7,353	\$1,224
For each additional member	+\$746	+\$153

* Minimum benefit level for one and two person households is \$16.

** If your household includes a senior (60+ years old) or person with disabilities, a higher gross income might still qualify.

Effective from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. Note: Use chart as a guide; income limits are subject to change.

SNAP Verifications

You must show the following information to complete the SNAP application process:

- Identity and/or Social Security Number (SSN)
- Massachusetts residency
- Earnings and number of hours worked
- Other income: If you get workers' compensation, Veterans' benefits, pension, child support, alimony, etc.
- Immigration status, if applicable.

Optional SNAP verifications - things you may show that may make you eligible for more SNAP benefits:

- Housing costs
- Utility costs
- Dependent care costs (child or adult day care costs)
- Medical costs
- Child support payment
- Certain business expenses, if self employed

How to Apply



APPLY ONLINE: <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/apply>



CALL YOUR LOCAL SNAP OFFICE: (781) 388-7300



SCAN ME

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



What is WIC?

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a free nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and other services to eligible Massachusetts families. WIC is for all kinds of families, including expecting and new mothers. If you're a parent or legal guardian of a child under 5 years old, you can apply for WIC for your child.

If you already have WIC, inquire with your local office about WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Coupons, which provides additional money to be spent on fresh food at any farmers' market.

WIC Eligibility

You can participate in WIC if you:

- Live in Massachusetts.
- Have a nutritional need (WIC staff can help you determine this).
- Have a child under 5 years old, be a new mom, or a pregnant or breastfeeding woman.
- Have a family income less than WIC guidelines (see table).

Household Size	Monthly Income Limit
1	\$1,968
2	\$2,658
3	\$3,349
4	\$4,730
5	\$5,421
6	\$5,421
7	\$6,112
8	\$6,802
For each additional family member	+\$691

Effective from June 10, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Use chart as a guide; income limits are subject to change.

You are automatically income eligible for WIC if you currently receive:

- MassHealth/Medicaid insurance plans.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) or cash assistance.



How to Apply

APPLY ONLINE: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/apply-for-wic-online>

CALL YOUR LOCAL WIC OFFICE: (781) 338-7578

Free and Reduced-Price School Meals

What are Free and Reduced-Price Meals?

Medford Public Schools offer meals every school day. Breakfast is free and lunch costs \$3.00 at the elementary schools and \$3.25 at the middle schools and the high school. Reduced lunch is priced at \$0.40.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals are meant to support families who may be facing challenges in accessing food or paying for school meals. If you recently lost your job, have applied for unemployment insurance, or are working fewer hours, your children may qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

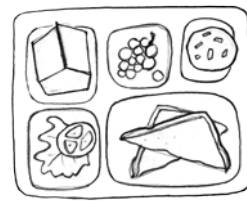
Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Household Size	Reduced-price-185% Monthly Income Limit	Free 130% Monthly Income Limit
1	\$1,968	\$1,383
2	\$2,658	\$1,868
3	\$3,349	\$2,353
4	\$4,040	\$2,839
5	\$4,730	\$3,324
6	\$5,421	\$3,809
7	\$6,112	\$4,295
8	\$6,802	\$4,780
For each additional family member	+\$691	+486

Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines effective from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Use chart as a guide; income limits are subject to change.

Additional Eligibility Info for Free Meals

- Children in households receiving benefits from:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
 - Specific categories of Medicaid
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program.
- Children who meet the definitions of homeless, runaway, or migrant (if your family relocates for work on a seasonal basis e.g. migratory agricultural work)



P-EBT offers food assistance in wake of school closures to families with children who were receiving Free & Reduced-Price School Meals. For more information, please call the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline: (800) 645-8333



SCAN ME

During school closures due to COVID-19, you can access free meals at various Grab n' Go sites, updated at <https://tinyurl.com/medfordfoodcovid>.

How to Apply



APPLICATION FORM:

(Start on page 6)
<https://www.mps02155.org/departments-programs/school-lunch/free-and-reduced-breakfast-and-lunch/>



SCAN ME

SEND TO: School Lunch, 489 Winthrop St., Medford MA 02155 or at child's school cafeteria. *Application forms are available in 26 different languages. Ask your school for a form in your preferred language.*

Important Information

- You can use one (1) application for all students in your household.
- You may apply or reapply at any time during the school year.
- Your child's application is only valid for the school year in which you applied and for the first few days of the next school year. **You must send in a new application each year** unless the school has contacted you with notice that your child is eligible for the new school year.

People with Disabilities

Due to additional expenses and challenges many people with disabilities face, SNAP program rules give additional consideration when determining eligibility and benefits.



Important: must also be receiving disability benefits from either one of the **Social Security** and **Supplemental Security Income** disability programs.



Social Security Administration (SSA)

While the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs are different, the medical requirements are the same. If you meet the non-medical requirement criteria, monthly benefits are paid if you have a medical condition that is expected to last at least one year or is terminal.

Social Security uses a strict definition of disability:

- Adults (18+ years old): must be totally or partially blind or have a medical condition that keeps you from working and is expected to last at least one year or is terminal.
- Children (under 18 years old): the child must have a physical or mental impairment (or combination) that results in marked or severe limitation in functioning.
- Short-term or partial disabilities are not eligible.

What is SSI?

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources.

What is SSDI?

The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program pays benefits to you and certain family members if you are “insured”, meaning that you worked long enough – and recently enough - and paid Social Security taxes on your earnings. You should apply for disability benefits as soon as you become disabled.



ONLINE SCREENING TOOL: <https://ssabest.benefits.gov/benefit-finder>

CALL YOUR LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE: (866) 596-8598



Other Local Services for People with Disabilities and/or Older Adults

Mystic Valley Elder Services

For Older adults (60+)
Call (781) 242-5119

For Adults living with disabilities,
Call (781) 324-7705 ext.100

- Free advice
- Resources support
- Home care services
- Nutrition services
- Caregiver support
- Transportation
- Protective services
- Health insurance counseling

Department of Veterans Services

Contact Michael Durham at
Medford City Hall
mdurham@medford-ma.gov,
(781) 393-2505

- Assist veterans in need of shelter, clothing, food, employment, training and education
- Provide counseling to veterans and their dependents for SSI, SSDI, and Medicare

SCM Transportation, Inc.

Provides resident older adults and people with disabilities with medical and nutrition-related (Senior Center Meal Site & Shopping) transportation.

Call (617) 625-1191 for more information and to schedule a ride.

Older Adults (60+ Years Old)



SNAP SENIOR ASSISTANCE OFFICE:
(833) 712-8027



Congregate Meals and Meals-On-Wheels Programs

Mystic Valley Elder Services administers well-balanced meals to adults through congregate meals and home-delivered services. There is no charge for lunch, either at a dining site or by Meals-on-Wheels delivery.



Congregate Meals (Dining Sites)*

At the dining site, you will have the opportunity to socialize and meet new neighbors. Lunch is generally served right around noon, Monday through Friday. Please call the dining site directly to make your reservation, at least 24 hours in advance.

Medford Senior Center

101 Riverside Avenue, (781) 396-6010

West Medford Community Center

111 Arlington Street, (781) 324-7705 x300

Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays. Use the Meals-on-Wheels menu rather than the Senior Dining menu.



Home-Delivered Services

The home-delivered meal program also offers special meals to suit medical and religious dietary restrictions.

You can expect to receive your meal between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m, Monday through Friday.

For information regarding eligibility for Meals-On-Wheels, call Mystic Valley Elder Services, Nutrition Services at: 781-324-7705.

** Senior dining sites are temporarily closed during COVID-19 State of Emergency.*

Congregate Meals and Meals-On-Wheels Eligibility

- Any adult at least 60 years old may participate at the congregate, senior dining site.
- Adults, at least 60 years old, or **qualified adults with disability who are determined to be "homebound"** are eligible for home delivered meals.

Medford Senior Center

101 Riverside Avenue
(781) 396-6010

- Assist with SNAP application process and any questions about the program.
- Coordinate programs and services to seniors residing in the community.
- Medford Elder Food Pantry

Medford Elder Food Pantry

Pantry is temporarily closed during COVID-19 State of Emergency. 2nd Thursday of the month, 2-3pm.

To participate, you must be a resident of Medford, have an income that falls under the Federal Poverty Guidelines, and either be 60+ or be an adult living with disabilities who resides in Medford Senior Housing. Contact the Medford Senior Center to apply.

Household Size

Monthly Income Limit

1

\$1,063

2

\$1,436

3

\$1,810

For each additional family member

+\$373

Eligibility in effect as of January 15, 2020 through January 14, 2021. Use chart as a guide; income limits are subject to change.

Public Charge

The US Department of Homeland Security passed the “Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds” final rule on Feb. 24, 2020. In using certain public benefits, immigrants applying for a green card or visa may be labeled as a “public charge” and deemed “unable to care for themselves or their family.” Immigrants labeled as a public charge are not permitted to enter or remain in the US. Applicants for adjustment of immigration status are NOT required to report any public benefits before Feb. 24, 2020.

Whom will this impact?*

Anyone in the U.S. seeking lawful permanent resident (LPR) status through a family petition:

- Individuals seeking LPR status through an employment-based visa.
- Individuals seeking a non-immigrant visa or seeking to extend or change their non-immigrant status.
- LPRs coming back to the US after a trip of 6 months or more.

What benefits are considered for public charge?*

Where any combination of benefits are provided for an aggregate of 12 months in the last 36 months:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Subsidized and Section 8 Housing assistance;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or
- Federal, state, or local cash assistance for income maintenance.
- Non-emergency Medicaid benefits;
- Institutionalization for long-term care at government expense.

Who is exempt from the public charge rule?*

- Individuals applying for or re-registering for Temporary Protected Status;
- Special Immigrant Juveniles;
- LPRs applying for citizenship;
- Individuals applying for a green card through:
 - Asylee or refugee status;
 - VAWA self-petitions, including derivatives;
 - U or T visas;
 - Amerasian petitions;
 - Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant petitions;
 - Cuban and Haitian Entrant petitions;
 - NACARA petitions; or
 - Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act.

What benefits are NOT considered for public charge?*

- Women, Infants and Children (WIC);
- School-based benefits (e.g. free lunch, P-EBT), food bank, and food pantries;
- Unemployment insurance;
- Energy Assistance;
- Veteran's benefits;
- Federal and state Old-Age, Survivors, and/or Disability insurance;
- Worker's compensation;
- Medicaid (MassHealth) for people under 21 and pregnant women (+ 60 days postpartum);
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Children Medical Security Plan (CMSP);
- State-only MassHealth Family Assistance;
- Subsidies under Medicare Part D;
- Government loans that require repayment; or
- Disaster relief and shelters.

How does this affect my children who might be using public benefits?*

Benefits received by family members - for example, if you get SNAP for you children - are also exempt for public charge. Your child's health and nutrition benefits do not influence your immigration status. Additionally, you do not have to provide your immigration status information when applying for your child's benefits.

For more info

More Questions on Public Charge?*

Email Jessica Chicco at jchicco@miracoalition.org at the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition.

FREE Immigration Legal Clinics

Rian Immigrant Center: Available by phone during COVID-19. Schedule an appointment at (617) 542-7654.

Greater Boston Legal Service: Available every other Tuesday. Schedule an appointment at (617) 603-1808.



*Source: Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) Immigration Services and Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition

Emergency Food Assistance

COVID-19 has placed additional hardships on families across the world. In response, there are multiple programs and modifications to address the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, applications are migrated online with additional application assistance available.

Hotlines



USDA National Hunger Hotline

(866) 348-6479 for English
(877) 842-6273 for Spanish

The USDA National Hunger Hotline representatives will find food resources such as meal sites, food banks, and other social services available near your location.

Project Bread FoodSource Hotline

(800) 645-8333
TTY: (800) 377-1292

The FoodSource Hotline is a comprehensive statewide information and referral service in Massachusetts for people facing hunger. Representatives work to fully enroll individuals in state and federal nutrition programs as well as refer callers to local food resources.

Local Food Resources



Food Resources in Medford, MA

<https://tinyurl.com/medfordfoodcovid>

The online COVID-19 Medford Food Resources sheet is regularly updated to reflect changing circumstances.

Medford Public School Grab n' Go Sites

<https://tinyurl.com/medfordfoodcovid>

The Mystic Valley Y has partnered with the Medford Recreation Department to provide free meals to anyone under 18 years old. No registration or identification is required. Medford Public School are also offering Grab n' Go meals at select locations.



Food Resource Google Map

<https://www.foodmedford.com/>

Map of local micro food pantries and other food resources

Regional Food Resources



The Greater Boston Food Bank

<https://www.gbfb.org/need-food/>

Enter your zip code into this website to find local food pantries/community meal programs

Pandemic Food Support



Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/pandemic-ebt-p-ebt>

P-EBT offers food assistance in wake of school closures to families with children who were receiving Free & Reduced-Price School Meals. If your child received Free & Reduced-Price School Meals in the last school year, you should have received a letter in the mail from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in May through early June. If you did not, you can call Project Bread FoodSource Hotline for help: (800) 645-8333.