

Massachusetts SNAP Challenge 2018

This month, Congress will be pushing to update the Farm Bill, which governs policy that affects farms and food. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) is part of the Farm Bill and is in danger of being cut drastically. To bring awareness to the importance of SNAP for people at risk of hunger, organizations across Massachusetts are coordinating a “SNAP Challenge.”

What is the SNAP Challenge?



SNAP provides food-purchasing assistance for 770,000 Massachusetts residents (1 in 9 people), serving as the first line of defense against hunger. SNAP offsets the cost of food so that families can better afford to pay for rent, utilities, healthcare, childcare and transportation. It's a vital resource and, without it, many would have to make difficult choices between food and other necessities. And unfortunately, it's not always enough.

The SNAP Challenge is not a game. It is an action in support of, and in solidarity with, the millions of low-income Americans for whom SNAP is a vital resource. It offers participants a view into the struggle of obtaining enough healthy food on a SNAP budget. Participants are invited to live on the average SNAP budget for one week. They'll learn how difficult it is to afford nutritious food, to stay healthy, and to avoid hunger. And they'll be encouraged to consider what life would be like if the benefit weren't available, if they had even *less* to spend.

From Monday, June 11th to Friday, June 15th, participants will live on the average individual SNAP allowance in Massachusetts (\$4.56 per day, \$22.80 total) to afford everything they eat and drink for the week. Participants are encouraged to utilize social media to share their experiences and tag legislators, demanding accountability and encouraging them to strengthen SNAP!

Who can participate?

Anyone who wants to show support of, and in solidarity with, SNAP recipients and who shares our commitment to strengthening SNAP can join The Greater Boston Food Bank, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, the Worcester County Food Bank, and others by signing up [here](#) and staying updated [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact your closest food bank:

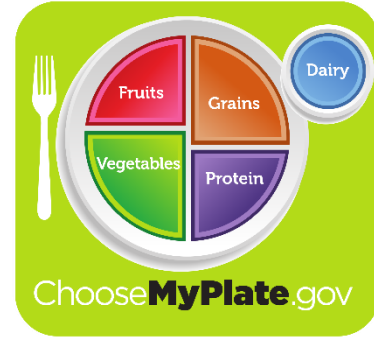
Eastern MA: Dan McCarthy at dmccarthy@gbfb.org or 617-598-5012.

Central MA: Liz Sheehan Castro at lsheehancastro@feedingamerica.org or 508-842-3663

How do I participate?

DO:

- Only buy and eat/drink items you would be allowed to purchase on a SNAP EBT card. See list below.
- Try to include produce and a healthy protein each meal.
- Take a picture of your grocery purchases and receipts. Keep a log of your daily meals and snacks. Keep a daily journal of the experience. Did you feel deprived or restricted? Did you eat differently than usual? Were you hungry?
- Invite others to join you, including friends, family, co-workers, local news media, your elected officials...
- **Share your #MASNAPChallenge story on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Status updates, photos, and short videos are great!**
- **If, at any time, you feel that you need to stop the challenge for your own well-being, please do.**



DON'T:

- Spend any more than \$4.56 per day, including beverages.
- Use food already on hand unless you deduct the value from your daily amount. Salt and pepper do not count against the daily cost allowance, but all other seasoning, cooking oils, condiments, snacks and drinks do.
- Accept food from family, friends, co-workers and others. Participants should avoid free food anywhere.
- Eat out or order takeout, since you cannot use SNAP benefits on hot meals.

<i>What CAN you buy?</i>	<i>What can you NOT buy?</i>
Produce and canned goods	Alcoholic beverages
Meat and dairy products	Cigarettes
Dried goods, beans and rice	Hot food or any food that you eat in-store
Breads and cereals	Medicine and vitamins
Baby food and infant formula	Non-edible household items like paper towels, toilet paper and soap
Soda, chips and candy	
Coffee and tea	
Seeds (whether for eating or planting)	

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