

# It's Time to Close the **SNAP**Gap

Reduce Hunger. Improve Health. Support the Economy.

March 6, 2019

Honorable Members of the Massachusetts Legislature,

We, the members of the “Massachusetts SNAP GAP Coalition,” are truly grateful for your support and leadership in cosponsoring **S. 698, H.1173: *An Act improving public health through a common application for core food, health and safety-net programs.***

We are thrilled that over half of the legislature have signed onto this bill as a cosponsor (83 Representatives & 20 Senators) and believe that this **widespread bipartisan support** truly underscores the critical need for a solution to address the SNAP GAP in the Commonwealth.

As you know, the “SNAP GAP” refers to the over 700,000 individuals in Massachusetts who are currently MassHealth recipients and are likely eligible for SNAP but are not receiving the benefit. The average SNAP benefit for a household in MA is \$213 per month. Ensuring that as many low-income families as possible have access to adequate food reduces health care costs, improves educational outcomes, and has long-term positive effects. Furthermore, the establishment of a common application would result in increased state government efficiency and would bring in approximately \$1.2B in federal dollars that we are currently forgoing.

**At this time, we would also respectfully ask for your support of our FY20 SNAP GAP Budget campaign.** In conjunction with our lead legislative champions, Senator Sal DiDomenico and Rep. Jay Livingstone, we will also pursue language through the FY20 budget. The proposed language would require EOHHS to launch a pilot that would allow MassHealth and Medicare Savings Program applicants with very low-income to file an application for SNAP at the same time. The language would also task the Administration with identifying the costs needed to implement this process.

We remain truly grateful for your support and look forward to working with you throughout this legislative session to close the SNAP GAP in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

AARP Massachusetts  
Action for Boston Community Development,  
Inc.  
Action Inc.  
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative  
American Red Cross of Massachusetts  
Arise for Social Justice  
Ascentria Care Alliance

Atrius Health  
Backyard Growers  
Beverly Bootstraps  
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)  
Boston Children's Hospital  
Boston Public Health Commission  
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee  
Catholic Social Services of Fall River, Inc.

Central West Justice Center  
Children's HealthWatch  
City of Somerville - Health & Human Services  
Coalition Against Poverty  
Coalition for a Better Acre  
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.  
Community Servings  
Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)  
Fresh Truck  
Groundwork Lawrence  
Health Care For All  
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health  
Jewish Family & Children's Service  
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry  
Lowell Alliance  
Massachusetts Councils on Aging  
Massachusetts Food System Collaborative

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Public Health Association  
Massachusetts Senior Action Council  
Mayor's Office of Food Access  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
National Association of Social Workers - MA  
Chapter  
Operation A.B.L.E. of Greater Boston, Inc.  
Poor Peoples United Fund  
Project Bread  
Revere on the Move  
Rosie's Place  
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts  
The Food Project  
The Open Door  
The Pettengill House, Inc.  
Worcester County Food Bank  
Worcester Food Policy Council

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**Proposed Draft FY 20 budget language to amend EOHHS line item 4000-0300**

provided further, that the executive office shall establish a pilot to allow low-income applicants and recipients of MassHealth and Medicare Savings Program the option to initiate an application for federally-funded supplemental nutrition assistance benefits at the same time as their application or renewal for MassHealth or Medicare Savings Program; provided further, the executive office shall ensure that eligibility information and verifications provided by the applicant or recipient that are relevant to said nutrition program is transferred from MassHealth to the Department of Transitional Assistance for use in their determination of eligibility; provided further, the executive office shall provide a report no later than October 1, 2019 to the executive office of administration and finance and the house and senate committees for ways and means on the additional costs and federal reimbursement opportunities involved in a common application portal for all MassHealth and Medicare Savings Program applicants and recipients with gross incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level.