

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

Reduce Hunger. Improve Health. Support the Economy.

An Act Improving Public Health through a Common Application for Core Food, Health and Safety-net Programs

Please Support **SB678** and **HB1173** sponsored by Senator DiDomenico and Representative Livingstone

The Problem:

- The SNAP Gap refers to the over 700,000 people who are MassHealth recipients and likely eligible for SNAP but are not receiving the benefit.
- MassHealth and SNAP, as well as many other safety-net programs separate application processes that ask for similar information. This duplicates efforts and creates more work for both the state and low income consumers.

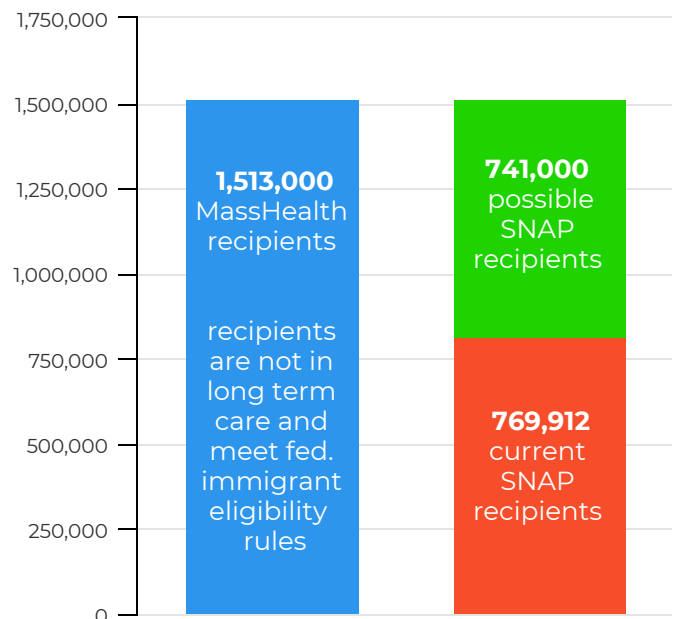
The Solution:

- Allow low income households to apply for MassHealth and SNAP at the same time. This lays the foundation for a common application portal for safety-net benefits, reducing duplicate data collection, and increasing efficiency of state government.

The Benefits:

- Streamline and improve the efficiency of the application process for core food, health, housing and other safety-net programs for Massachusetts residents.
- Increase access to 100% federally-funded nutrition dollars for low income households.
- **Help more low income residents meet their basic needs and lower healthcare costs.**
- Boost automatic certification for children for free school meals.
- **Generate \$1.5 billion in economic stimulus to the state and local economy.**
- **Increase food access for over 100,000 Massachusetts elders.**

How big is the **SNAP**Gap?



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Section by Section Summary of **SB678** and **HB1173**

SECTION 1: Addressing the MassHealth “SNAP Gap.”

- Requires the state to allow individuals and families seeking medical assistance to request SNAP benefits at the same time.
- Allows the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to share eligibility information between agencies to minimize the need for additional client information.
- The joint application would be an option for both MassHealth and the Medicare Savings Program for persons with gross income under 200% FPL.
- This could impact over 700,000 low-income MA residents who receive MassHealth but not SNAP.

SECTION 2: Development of a Common Application.

- Requires EOHHS, in coordination with other states agencies, to take steps toward creating a “common application” for other needs-based benefits including income eligible child care, housing, veterans services, fuel assistance and more.

SECTION 3: Information about SNAP through local school districts and DESE.

- Requires the school districts to provide information about SNAP to families applying for meals under National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Requires the Department of Early and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide a model NSLP application for districts that includes a check off box – where families can elect to have their contact information shared with a SNAP outreach provider like Project Bread.
- Approximately 37,000 MA children current receive “reduced-price” meals but may qualify for free meal status if they received SNAP because SNAP has a higher gross income threshold.

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