

TAFDC - Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children

During COVID-19

Who:

- Parent (or certain caregiver relatives) living with minor child(ren) (and in some cases 18 year olds); or
- Pregnant person in last trimester (pregnant teen is eligible *any* time in pregnancy)

What:

- Administered by the MA Department of Transitional Assistance
- Cash benefit paid twice per month. Maximum monthly amount is based on the number of people included in the household. Households with a housing cost and no housing subsidy get an additional \$40/month.

# in TAFDC household	Monthly amount
2	\$491
3	\$593
4	\$691

Financial eligibility:

- No income, or *very* low income¹
 - SSI and any other income of person receiving SSI doesn't count
- Assets limit of \$5,000 (not including value of 1 vehicle)

For information about applying for TAFDC during COVID-19, see next pages.

Contact your local [Legal Services](#) if you have a problem with TAFDC or questions about eligibility.

Immigrant eligibility:

- Ineligible non-citizen parents can apply for citizen & eligible non-citizen children.
- Legal Permanent Residents can get TAFDC if they have had LPR status for 5 years.
 - There are exceptions to the 5-year rule based on domestic violence, military duty, asylum/refugee status, and other situations where it does not apply.
- If questions, check with [Legal Services](#).

Key information:

- Many burdensome TAFDC rules are not in effect during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Parent/caregiver must cooperate in seeking child support from non-custodial parent(s). Can claim good cause if this is not safe due to domestic violence.
- Potential ongoing benefits of getting TAFDC, even after TAFDC case closes:
 - If TAFDC closes for earnings or other income like Unemployment, SNAP will continue for 5 months without counting the new income.
 - Child care for work, education or training any time within 12 mos. *after* TAFDC closes (possibly 24 mos. – check with Legal Services).
- TAFDC & Unemployment (UI): UI will make many families ineligible for TAFDC. If you expect UI will be delayed, consider applying for TAFDC in the meantime.

¹ The first \$200 in earnings are not counted in determining eligibility. There is a small deduction for child care expenses.

Applying for TAFDC during the COVID-19/coronavirus crisis

- Many TAFDC rules are not in effect. The application process is simpler.
- DTA offices are closed to the public. DTA is not holding any in-person appointments.

What is TAFDC?

TAFDC is a monthly cash benefit for some pregnant women and families with children who have no or very low income. Some people call TAFDC, "welfare." You can find basic information about who can get TAFDC on the Department of Transitional Assistance [website](#).

How do I apply for TAFDC during COVID-19?

1. Apply online at DTAConnect.com

- The application is very short. After you submit it, DTA will interview you by phone.
- You can fill out the online application in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, or Vietnamese.
- If you do not already get SNAP, your application counts as a SNAP application.
- If you have "Heightened Security" on your DTA case for safety reasons, call DTA's Ombuds Unit : 617-348-5354.

2. Apply by phone – call your local DTA office:

- Find contact information for your local DTA office [here](#). If you try your local office 2 or 3 times and you cannot get through, call DTA's Ombuds Unit: 617-348-5354.
- If you apply by phone, you can "sign" the application over the phone. DTA will mail you a copy of the application, but you do not have to sign or return it if you signed on the phone.

What else do I need to know to apply for TAFDC during COVID-19?

- DTA may ask you for more information to decide if you are eligible. For many things, DTA will accept your verbal statement instead of asking you to give them other proof. For example, you can tell DTA that you lost your job or your child support amount changed. This is a “self-declaration.”
- You must still complete child support forms when you apply for TAFDC, but the process is different right now:
 - DTA will mail you child support forms to sign, but DTA should decide your TAFDC case before they get the forms back.
 - If it is not safe for you to cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement agency, DTA will accept your statement that it is not safe. You will not need any other proof, for now.
- If you are applying for unemployment, it should not delay your TAFDC case.
- EBT card:
 - If you do not have an EBT card, DTA will mail one to you. It may take 7-10 days to arrive.
 - If you already have an EBT card, be sure to tell DTA you already have a card when you have your phone interview.

What are the other changes to the TAFDC program during COVID-19?

- Many TAFDC rules are not in effect during the COVID-19 crisis, including:
 - Pre-benefit job search and TAFDC orientation,
 - 24-month time limit,
 - Work program requirements,
 - Immunization and school attendance (“Learnfare”).
- **Direct deposit:** Even if you have a bank account, DTA will not require you to have your benefits deposited into the account. DTA will put your benefits onto your EBT card.

You may still get notices from DTA about some of these rules. But you can ignore them during the COVID-19 crisis.

What should I do if I start to get Unemployment while I am getting TAFDC?

- Tell DTA about your Unemployment within 10 days of getting your first payment.
- DTA will probably close your TAFDC case. Your SNAP should continue for 5 months and DTA should not count your unemployment income for those 5 months. You will get a separate notice when it is time to renew your SNAP.

How do I tell DTA about changes and submit documents?

Write to DTA about any changes. Put your DTA Agency ID or the last 4 digits of your SSN on all pages. Keep a copy and add a note to yourself about when and how you sent it.

1. Use the [DTA Connect app](#) on a smartphone or tablet. You can see information about your DTA benefits and upload documents.
2. Create an account on the [DTA Connect website](#). You can see information about your DTA benefits and upload documents.
3. Fax the information to (617) 887-8765.
4. Mail the information to:

DTA Document Processing Center
PO Box 4406
Taunton, MA 02780