

Federal Budget Reconciliation Bill & Impact on SNAP in Massachusetts

Mass Healthy Aging Statewide Network, 9/24/25

Massachusetts SNAP Caseload

- SNAP helps 1 in 6 MA residents put food on the table.
 - 662,000 households
 - 1,080,000 individuals

24%

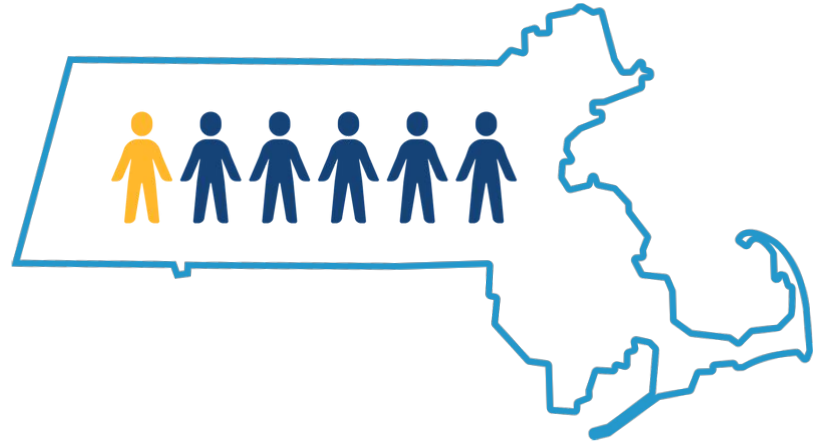
are 60 or older

28%

are severely disabled

32%

are children

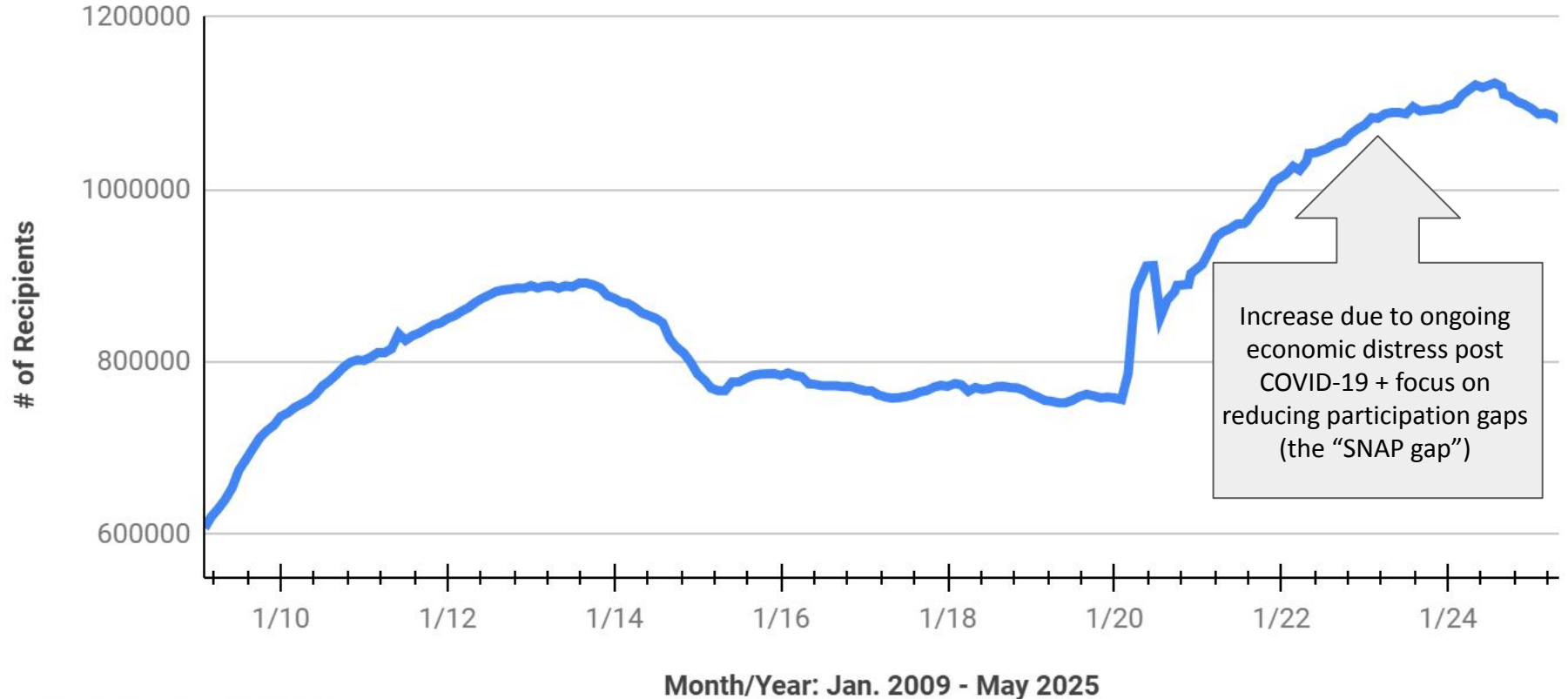


Economic Impact of SNAP in Massachusetts

- Each year, SNAP brings \$2.4 to \$2.6 billion federal nutrition dollars to both families and grocers/farmers across the Commonwealth.
- Each dollar of SNAP spent generates about **\$1.50 to \$1.70 for local economies.**



SNAP Recipients in Massachusetts: 2009 - 2025



H.R. 1 Federal Reconciliation Budget: Overview

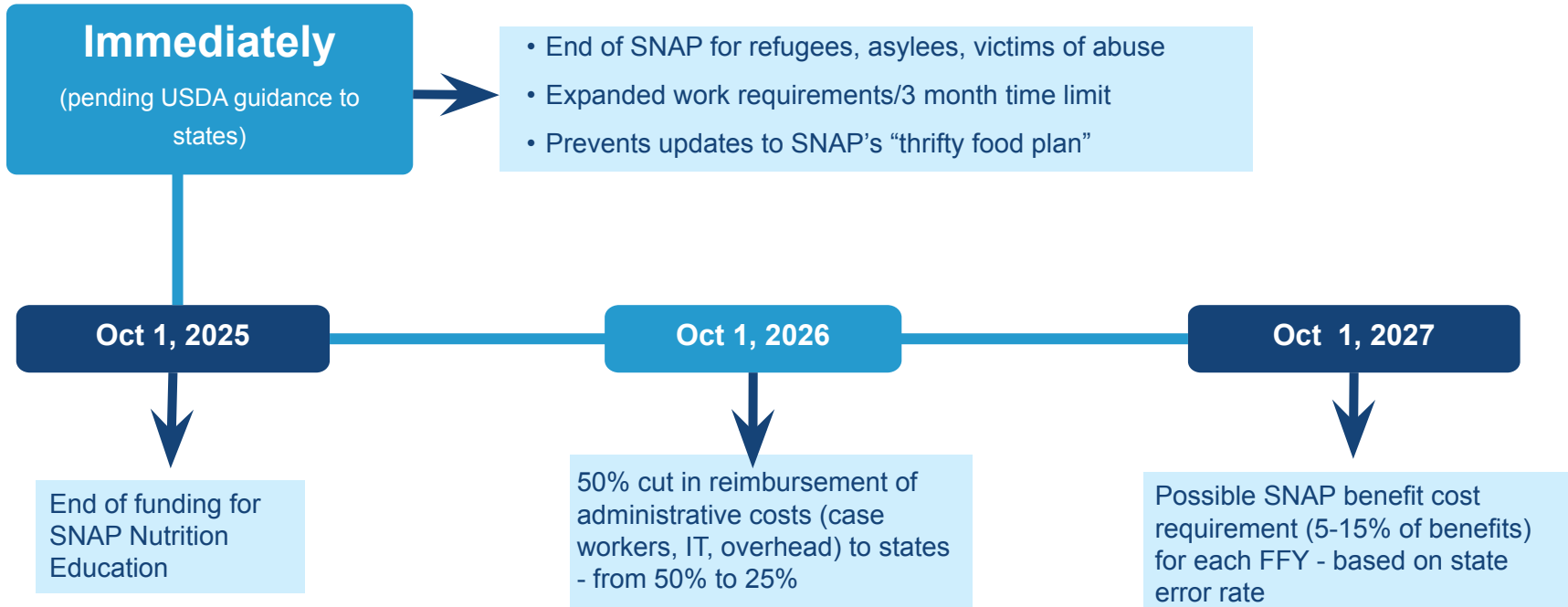
Eligibility cuts:

- Cuts SNAP for non-LPR refugees, asylees, victims of trafficking, battered/VAWA immigrants, parolees - impacting approx. @ **10K MA immigrants**
- Expanded work requirement (3 month time limit) - impacting up to approx. **100K MA residents** including adults 55-65, veterans, caretakers of kids 14+.

Cost shift to states:

- Reduces fed reimbursement for admin/caseworkers from 50% to 25%
- May trigger 5-15% state cost requirement if state “payment error rate” is 6% or higher
- End of SNAP Nutrition education funding

Implementation Timeline



Potential dollar impact to MA:



Cut to @ 10K legal immigrants	Approx \$20M/year , full fiscal year
Work restrictions/time limit imposed on @100K- 150K recipients	TBD
Loss of SNAP Nutrition Ed funding	\$9M
State administrative cost burden (workers, IT, training, overhead)	Approx \$50-60M/year
SNAP benefit cost requirement if error rate 6% or higher	Potentially \$250M to \$400M/year , (worst case for 2 yrs)

Which Immigrants May Lose SNAP* this year under H.R.1?

- Refugees

- Granted Asylum

- Victims of human trafficking

- Certain Humanitarian Parolees

- VAWA petitioners/battered immigrants

*Loss of SNAP also means loss of HIP, and possibly other benefits that flow from SNAP.

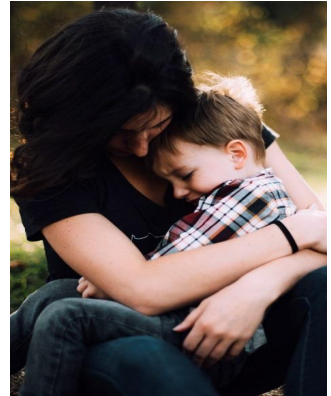
Qualified Immigrants Cut from SNAP in 2025 - Definitions

Asylee	Immigrants who apply for asylum status within the U.S. who have a well-founded fear of persecution because because of their beliefs, race, nationality, religion, political beliefs, or association to a particular group..Immigrants apply for asylum <i>within</i> the U.S. and can apply for a green card/LPR status 12 months later.
Refugee	Persons allowed to enter the U.S. with refugee status who have a well-founded fear of persecution because because of their beliefs, race, nationality, religion, political beliefs, or association to a particular group. Refugees can apply for LPR status 12 months later.
Human Trafficking	Persons subjected to force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of commercial sex, debt bondage, or involuntary labor. T-visas are provided to victims of severe forms of trafficking as determined by the US. Dept of Health and Human Services. Qualified victims get a work permit and stay in the U.S. for 4 years or longer, and may be able to apply for LPR status.
VAWA/ Battered Immigrants	VAWA petitioners (Violence Against Women Act) protects family members of abusive U.S. citizens and green card holders by allowing them to apply for LPR status without the help of their abusive family member (spouse, parent etc). Note, it is not just for women.
Humanitarian Parole	A discretionary temporary authorization allowing immigrants to enter the U.S.for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. Parole also provides temporary lawful presence in the U.S. for individuals facing emergency situations, such as medical emergencies, urgent family matters, or other crises where immediate action is required. No direct path to LPR status.

Which immigrants should NOT lose SNAP?

- Immigrants who have legal permanent resident (LPR) status - often called “green card” status*
- Immigrants who have naturalized (US citizens)
- Cuban/Haitian Entrants
- Compact of Free Association (COFA) Immigrants
(Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau).

* Some LPRs may be subject to 5 year wait to qualify





What can community orgs do?

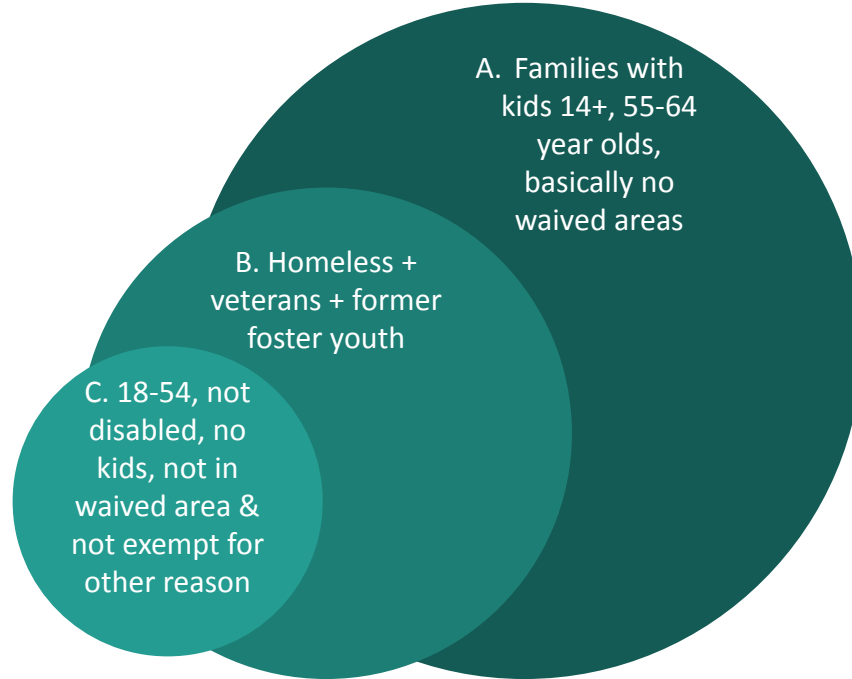
- Urge recipients to **notify DTA** if they now have LPR (green card) status
- Advise refugees/asylees without LPR status to **seek legal help** to file for adjustment status
 - Many can file after 1 year in refugee/asylum status
 - Don't file without legal advice
- Refer to local **emergency food community resources**
 - Area food pantries.
 - Use Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline. **1-800-645-8333**
 - Children are still eligible for free school meals
 - Unfortunately, no HIP if household loses SNAP

Expanded 3-Month Time Limit/Work Rules

- After 3 months of SNAP, certain adults must be **working**, in an **education/training program** or doing **community service**
- **H.R. 1 vastly expands time limit/work rules to:**
 - Older adults until age 65
 - Caregivers of children age 14+
 - Veterans (age 18 to 65)
 - Homeless (including homeless families)
 - Former foster youth
- **H.R. 1 eliminates state option** to waive in geographic areas in times of high unemployment or lack of job opportunities (limited exceptions in extreme circumstances)



Expanded Time Limit/Work Rules



Key:

A. Added by OBBBA/ Republican Mgbill

B. Added back in by OBBBA (FRA removed)

C. Since 1996 Welfare Reform (50-54 added in 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act - FRA)

Who is exempt from SNAP work rules?



SNAP recipients are **exempt** from the time limit/work rules if they:

- Have any health condition that reduces their ability to work
- Participate in MassAbility (MRC), DMH, DDS or a substance use disorder program
- Live with a child under age 14 or are pregnant
- Care for a disabled adult or older disabled child
- Earn more than \$217.50/week (gross)
- Have applied for/receive Unemployment Insurance
- Do paid or unpaid work 20 hrs/week or more
- Attend any school, education or training program 20 hrs/week or more (additional rules apply to 18-54 year olds)

What can community orgs do?



- **Remember:** Most able-bodied adult SNAP recipients who can work, do work!
- **Advise recipients to:**
 - Look out for **DTA notices** about the SNAP work rules/time limits
 - Tell DTA if they have **any barrier to working full time** - temporary or long term impairment/disability or other barrier
 - Tell DTA if they are doing any kind of **unpaid volunteer work** (caring for family members or friends) - that counts
- **You can also:**
 - Help individuals get help to **address undiagnosed impairments**
 - Identify available **education & training programs** ([SNAP Path to Work](#)), free community college
- **Refer to Legal Services**, and to local **emergency food resources**.

What about community service?



- **How much?** Max of 20 volunteer hours/month - depends on value of recipient's monthly SNAP (divided by state min wage)
- **Community services can protect SNAP benefits - but:**
 - Can only be done at DTA-approved non-profit orgs (501)(c)(3))
 - Under MA law, CORI/SORI checks required for volunteers working with older adults, children, persons with disabilities
 - SNAP does not provide transportation reimbursement or other costs of participation
 - Requires agency supervision and training. (CBOs need to follow data privacy protocol)
- **Remember:** Many unemployed older adults **may be exempt from SNAP work rules** including if health condition reduces ability to work, performing unpaid caregiver roles, other exemptions.

The Payment Error Rate (PER)



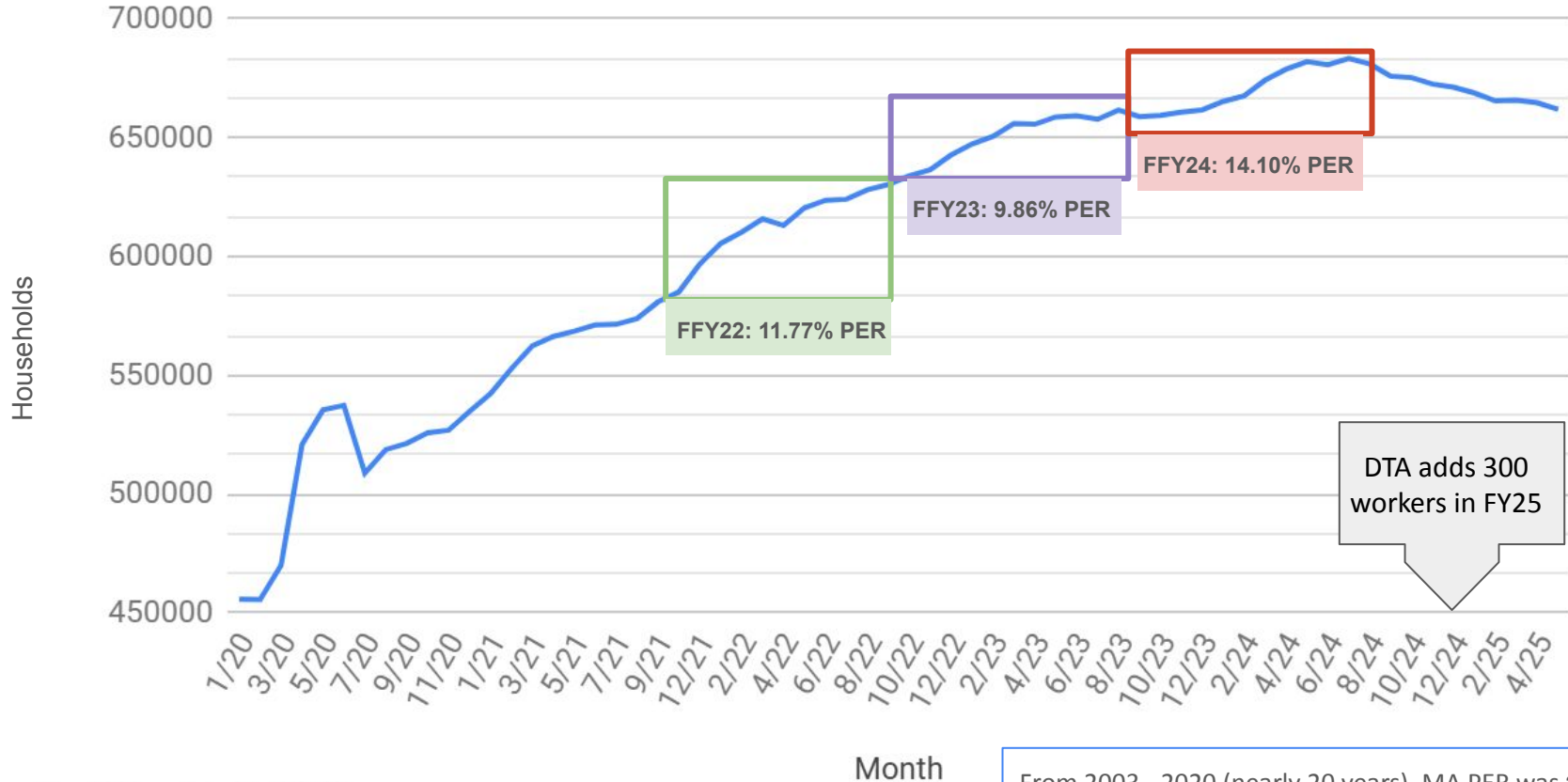
- Measurement tool to assess health of a state's SNAP system.
- State does a *random sampling* of @ 100 SNAP cases/month to check "payment accuracy" (1,200 out of 665K SNAP MA households annually)
- Sampling determines dollar value of incorrectly paid benefit. PER adds up both underpaid **and** overpaid benefits (not a "wash")

Causes of Payment Errors



- **Caseworker error** - not following up on information received, correctly enter client data, act on verifications
- **Recipient errors** - not reporting changes timely and/or challenges reaching DTA, incorrectly reporting info
 - **Note:** Erroneous SNAP denials/closings not included in payment error rate
- The SNAP error rates **is NOT a measurement of fraud**. According to Congressional Research Service (CRS), recipient fraud in SNAP is rare.

SNAP Households in Massachusetts: March 2020 - May 2025

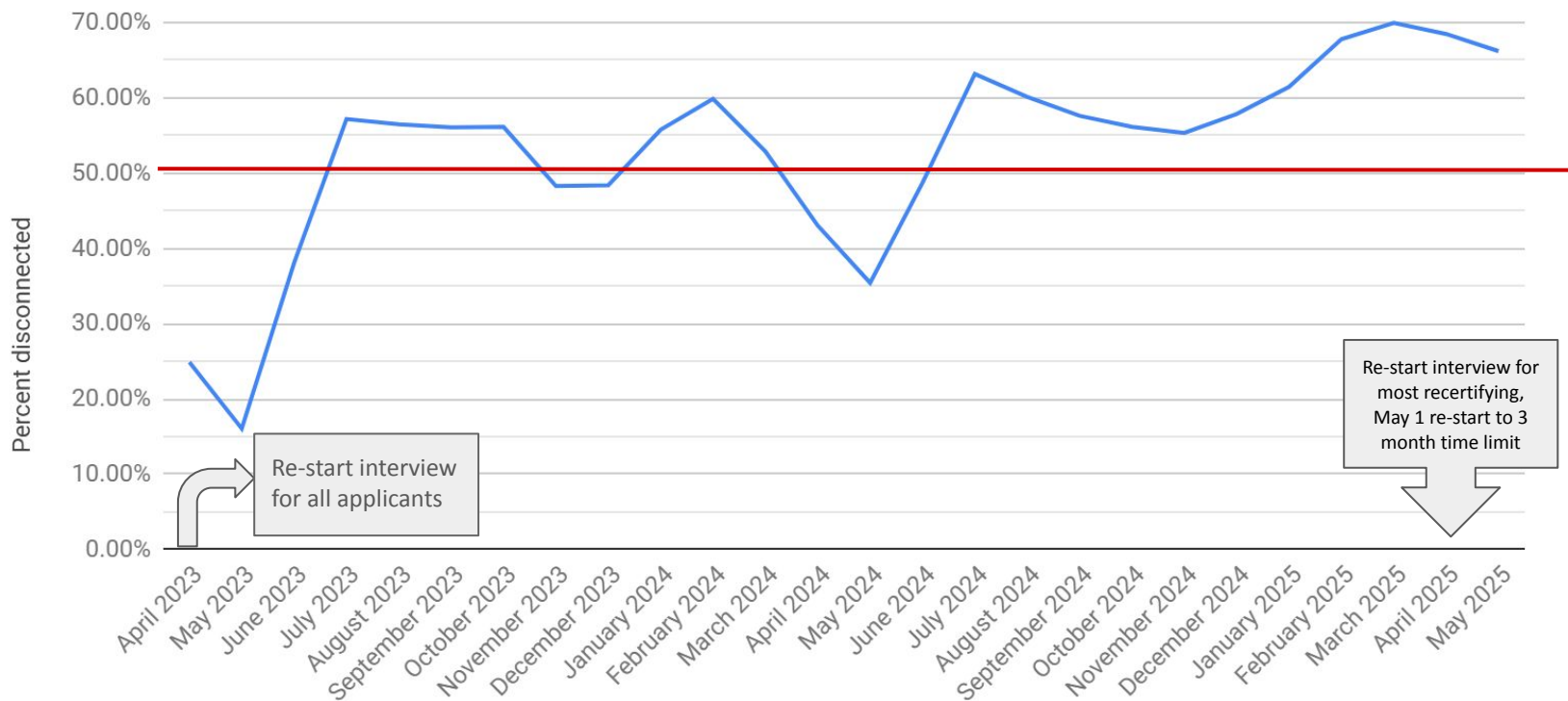


DTA's Payment Error Rate - Where is MA?

- Pre-pandemic, MA error rate 3-5% for nearly 20 years
- FFY24, MA error rate: 14.10%, (National average 10.93%) - why?
 - Unwinding of federal pandemic policies
 - MA's SNAP caseload increased substantially due to increased need **and** MA Legislature urging DTA to close "SNAP gap"
 - Insufficient workforce to handle both pandemic unwinding & increased SNAP caseload



Percent of calls trying to reach a SNAP worker cut-off due to high call volume: April 2023 - May 2025



What community groups can do?



- **Understand the “Payment Error Rate”** - It’s not fraud!
- Help recipients to **set up a DTAConnect accounts** to report changes, upload documents, check DTA notices
- **Report to DTA Ombuds** any constituent access barriers to DTA Assistance Line. Essential for SNAP households to be able to successfully report changes income, address, household comp; to get help with verifications, be screened for work rule exemptions.
 - DTA Ombuds Line: 617-348-5354
 - DTA Ombuds Director: Sara.Craven@mass.gov
 - Have written permission from client to speak with DTA (handwritten note uploaded to DTA Connect emailed to Ombuds Director is fine)

Thank you

More info/Qs:

Pat Baker, MLRI pbaker@mlri.org

- [MLRI analysis](#) of the GOP Megabill cuts to SNAP and Impact on Massachusetts
- Boston Indicators report, [Meeting the Moment: SNAP Cuts and the Local Fallout](#)