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# **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Photo Requirement Exemptions**

January 5, 2016

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance



**REPORT ON CLIENTS EXEMPT FROM ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER CARD PHOTO  
REQUIREMENT  
DECEMBER 2015**

**DTA'S MISSION**

The mission of the Department of Transitional Assistance is to assist low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life. DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports to help individuals and families achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, including food and nutritional assistance, cash assistance, and employment supports.

DTA serves one out of every nine people in the Commonwealth including working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities.

**Description of the Report**

Chapter 18 Section 2 (B)(s) requires the Department of Transitional Assistance to file a report detailing the number of recipients exempt from having a photo on their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, including the reasons for exemptions.

**MGL Chapter 18 Section 2 (B) (k) – Requirement and Exemptions**

In August 2013, a law was passed requiring the use of photo identification on the front of each newly issued and reissued EBT card. This requirement was extended to any cardholder over 18. Exemptions were included in the law stating that any cardholder falling into one of the following categories was exempt from the Photo EBT requirement:

- 60 years of age or over
- Blind
- Disabled
- Victim of domestic violence

Any individual DTA has exempted from the Photo EBT requirement falls into one of those categories. Individuals who are exempt may still request and receive a photo on their EBT card.

DTA must comply with federal requirements, as well as this state law. To accomplish this, DTA has exempted those who meet one of the state defined exemptions, and those who state their religious beliefs prevent them from having a photo on their EBT card. DTA has also received federal guidance regarding non-applicants (see below).

**Breakdown of Recipients with a Photo EBT Exemption, by program**

**As of March 1, 2015:**

Exception	SNAP	TAFDC	EAEDC
Younger than 19	602	380	21
Older than 59	117,230	1,475	9,525
Domestic Violence	7,470	2,492	227
Disabled	216,964	11,953	11,378
Religious Exemption (federally defined)	21	3	0
Non-Applicant*	1,210	201	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>343,497</b>	<b>16,504</b>	<b>21,205</b>

\* The United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) has informed DTA that any Head of Household that is not included in the household benefit calculation is exempt from having a photo on an EBT card. These individuals are not clients, but are caretakers of clients unable to serve as a Head of Household.