EBT Card to Culture

Access the power of culture with your EBT Card

CHEAT SHEET FOR STAFF

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

EBT Card to Culture is a partnership between the Mass Cultural Council and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services’ Department of Transitional Assistance. It ensures the state’s best cultural and educational experiences are accessible to low-income residents. There are more than 150 organizations participating all across Massachusetts – including museums, symphonies, theatre companies, community arts and music schools, environmental science organizations, and more. Please refer your patrons to mass.gov/cardtoculture for the full list.

HOW IT WORKS

Visitors use their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to identify they are eligible for a discount; the card is not for payment. If your institution is taking monies, they should be collected in the regular ways your institution uses (cash, credit card).

YOUR ORGANIZATION’S POLICIES

The EBT Card to Culture discount must be available any time for general admission, granted to the adult individual holding the card, and administered in the same way other discounts at your organization are. However, the extent of the discount, and the number of people that the discount extends to per card, is up to each participating organization to decide.

Certain special performances or exhibits may be exempt from the discount. Your organization may limit the number of spots available to EBT cardholders, if there is limited capacity for a class or performance. Your organization may choose to offer extra perks on top of admission, such as free membership. In cases of suspicions of fraud, please follow your own organization’s policies. All cases of returns or refunds should follow your organization’s policies.

TRACKING USAGE

You will need to report annually on the use of this discount. Please keep track of:

1. How many times was this discount used at your organization? (the # of instances, of physical cards presented, ex. 100 in the last year)
2. How many adults attended? (the card holder and their adult guests, ex. 300/month)
3. How many children attended? (the card holder and their child guests, ex. 300/month)
FAQs

Who is eligible for free or discounted tickets/admission/services through the program?

Any bearer of a Massachusetts-issued EBT card. There is only one card issued per family, so the name and photo on the card may not be the individual who requests the discount.

The discount must extend to the adult individual receiving food assistance, not only children. It is likely that patrons will visit your organization or attend your event with someone, so please consider extending the discount to cover at least two people.

Do patrons use the EBT card as payment?

No. The EBT cards are simply used by their bearers as identification, showing that they are eligible for your discounted rate. They must use a method your organization accepts to pay (e.g. cash, credit card, check, etc.).

Can I accept an EBT card over the phone, or through an online ticketing system? Do they have ID numbers?

Yes, it is possible to set-up a system to accept the EBT card discount virtually. Some organizations may select to have a discount code – i.e. “FREEEBT.” You may advertise this discount and code on your own website, or if you’re afraid it will be abused by the general public, you can choose to only share the code with EBT cardholders via the DTA’s website and flyers. Include the discount code when you sign-up for this program.

Alternatively, all EBT cards start with the same six digits… 600875. Places that require a code could say “enter the first six digits of your EBT Card Number.” Please do not ask for the entire card number, as that must remain confidential per the contract with our card vendor.

Are patrons with EBT cards from other states eligible for this rate?

It is not required, but highly encouraged. This program aims to increase accessibility for everyone, and many families travel to visit our cultural assets in Massachusetts. Know that each state’s EBT card looks different.

What does the Massachusetts EBT Card look like? Does it have the card holder’s photo on it? Is it OK for me to ask for a photo ID in addition to the EBT card?

We do not recommend you ask for a photo ID in addition to the EBT card. Not all Massachusetts EBT cards photos on them, however EBT cards without photos are still valid for other benefits and should be accepted for the discount.

Also know that there is only one card issued per family, so the name and photo on the card may not be the individual who requests the discount. It could happen that a two-parent family of four receives SNAP benefits and the parent who is bringing their child(ren) to your institution is not the “head of household” so does not have their photo on the card.