



Date: Feb. 16, 2010

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New year brings continued demand for state assistance

January figures released today by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) show demand for food and cash assistance continued to rise in the first month of the new year. In January, enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) rose by more than 7,800 people. Enrollment in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which provides cash assistance for low-income families with children, rose by 484 families.

Overall, Oregonians receiving SNAP benefits rose to 683,661, a 27.8 percent increase over a year ago. Similarly, families enrolled in TANF totaled 26,153, a 15.7 increase from January 2009. In the past two years SNAP households have increased by more than 53 percent and TANF by more than 37 percent, reflecting the impact of the recession.

“This economic downturn has made it more difficult than ever for Oregonians and their families to be self-sufficient,” said Erinn Kelley-Siel, director of the DHS Children, Adults and Families Division. “SNAP and TANF help provide a safety net for people – helping families maintain stability while they find and keep jobs, protecting the health and well-being of low-income children, and supporting local economies.”

To be eligible for SNAP benefits, households must earn less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level and meet other criteria. Benefits are determined on a sliding scale. For a family of four, the income limit is less than \$3,400 per month, with a maximum benefit for the same household of \$684 per month. The overall average SNAP household benefit is approximately \$243 per month. As its name

implies, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits are intended to supplement a family's overall food budget, not to cover it entirely.

TANF cash assistance is available only to families with children age 18 or younger. Most participants are unemployed or underemployed, or the primary wage earner is incapacitated; therefore the program provides opportunities for job preparation and on-the-job training to build personal responsibility and self-reliance. Benefits are determined on a sliding scale. A two-parent family with two children and no other income and who meet specific criteria would receive a maximum monthly TANF benefit of \$647.

- To learn if you might be eligible for SNAP benefits, TANF, the Oregon Health Plan or other services, visit your local DHS office. You may also go online to www.OregonHelps.org and see if you may be eligible for these and other programs.
- To download applications for TANF and SNAP benefits, go to www.oregon.gov/dhs/assistance.
- DHS also partners with SafeNet to help people find local resources such as food pantries and other assistance. The number is 1-800-SAFENET (1-800-723-3638).
- Oregon veterans and their families are encouraged to find out about benefits you may have earned as a result of military service. Go online at www.oregon.gov/ODVA/BENEFITS/ to find out more.

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Monthly Caseload Report

	Individuals receiving SNAP benefits January 2010	Percentage change from January 2009	Households receiving TANF benefits January 2010	Percentage change from January 2009
District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook)	19,492	30.0%	422	2.4%
District 2 (Multnomah)	134,994	27.6%	7,408	21.2%
District 3 (Polk, Marion, Yamhill)	99,920	25.1%	4,599	19.3%
District 4 (Benton, Lincoln, Linn)	44,157	22.3%	1,396	1.5%
District 5 (Lane)	71,716	22.8%	2,011	6.1%
District 6 (Douglas)	23,936	16.9%	847	-1.7%
District 7 (Coos, Curry)	19,027	21.3%	698	10.3%
District 8 (Jackson, Josephine)	64,958	28.2%	2,110	16.7%
District 9 (Hood River, Gilliam, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler)	8,851	23.4%	203	3.6%
District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson)	40,052	35.4%	1,090	16.2%
District 11 (Klamath, Lake)	16,762	20.4%	430	20.1%
District 12 (Morrow, Umatilla)	17,188	19.7%	564	3.9%
District 13 (Baker, Union, Wallowa)	9,024	21.1%	286	12.6%
District 14 (Grant, Harney, Malheur)	9,976	22.0%	192	20.8%
District 15 (Clackamas)	41,447	40.7%	1,340	9.5%
District 16 (Washington)	62,161	44.8%	2,557	29.3%
STATE TOTAL	683,661	27.8%	26,153	15.7%