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Need for economic assistance continues to grow – one in six Oregonians count on food stamps

Correction: *The figures in the right-hand column of the attached table (% Increase over May 2008) have been corrected.*

As Oregon's unemployment figures hit historic levels, the need for basic economic support such as food stamps and cash assistance continues to grow, the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) announced today.

Need for cash assistance (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or TANF) increased nearly 30 percent over May of 2008. Only very low-income families qualify for this assistance – the monthly income limit for a family of three is \$528 – and currently 25,509 families statewide are receiving assistance. Washington County saw the largest percentage jump with 50 percent more families needing assistance than last year at this time.

"We began to see the huge increases of people coming into our branches last year and those numbers continue to grow today," says Xochitl Esparza, TANF program manager for the DHS Children, Adults and Families Division.

The need for food stamps also continues to grow. The most recent statewide figures for May show that 601,706 Oregonians – nearly one in six – receive food stamp benefits. Demand jumped 27 percent over May of 2008. Clackamas led the counties in the largest increase at the local level, with a 36 percent jump over last year.

"We are working hard to get people the services they need as fast as possible," says Belit Stockfleth, Food Stamps program manager. "Our innovative food stamp intake

process means that people are getting same-day service so they can put food on the table tonight.”

Attached is a list of cash assistance and food stamp need by region.

Background on cash assistance and food stamps in Oregon:

To qualify for TANF, families must have very few assets and little or no income. The current maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is \$528.

To qualify for food stamps, families must earn less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level, along with other qualifying factors. For a family of four, the income limit is less than \$3,400 per month. Benefits are determined on a sliding scale, based on household income, and are distributed through the "Oregon Trail Card" that is used like a debit card to purchase food. Food stamp benefits are intended only as a supplement to a family's food budget, not to cover it entirely.

To learn if you might be eligible for food stamps, TANF, Oregon Health Plan or other services, visit your local DHS Food Stamps office. To download applications for TANF and food stamps, go to: www.oregon.gov/DHS/assistance/index.shtml.

DHS also partners with SafeNet to help people to find local resources such as local food pantries or other assistance. The number is 800-SAFENET (800-723-3638).

May 2009 TANF and Food Stamp case load

	Oregon families receiving cash assistance (TANF) May 2009	% Increase Over May 2008	Oregonians receiving food stamps May, 2009	% Increase over May 2008 for Individuals
District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia & Tillamook)	472	38.8	16,859	32
District 2 (Multnomah)	7,019	27.8	119,142	21
District 3 (Polk, Marion, Yamhill)	4,313	31.7	88,685	27
District 4 (Benton, Lincoln, Linn)	1,447	16.6	39,454	33
District 5 (Lane)	2,056	27.1	63,900	21
District 6 (Douglas)	909	12.2	22,338	19
District 7 (Coos, Curry)	728	29.5	17,042	18
District 8 (Jackson, Josephine)	2,070	31.9	56,843	14
District 9 (Hood River, Gilliam, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler)	207	(1.4)	7,839	23
District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson)	1,119	35	34,876	30.3
District 11 (Klamath, Lake)	414	27.8	15,139	16
District 12 (Morrow, Umatilla)	569	27.9	15,400	13
District 13 (Baker, Union, Wallowa)	256	23.1	8,017	20
District 14 (Grant, Harney, Malheur)	173	3	9,029	22
District 15 (Clackamas)	1,388	37.4	35,143	36
District 16 (Washington)	2,369	50.1	52,000	26
Statewide	25,509	29.6	601,706	26.6

See accompanying news release, [Need for economic assistance continues to grow – one in six Oregonians count on food stamps](#)