



July 19, 2010

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More Oregonians expected to seek SNAP, TANF assistance as unemployment benefits end

The number of Oregonians who count on public services for help dealing with the state's economic downturn continues to rise, and that number is expected to grow even larger as long-term unemployed workers begin to lose benefits.

In June, the number of people depending on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps) grew by 6,702. Demand for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) also increased last month.

Here are the total figures for SNAP and TANF for June:

- 713,355 Oregonians received SNAP benefits, an increase of 18 percent from one year ago and 48 percent since July 2008, when Oregon's unemployment rate was just above 6 percent.
- 27,238 families received TANF — up 9 percent from a year ago and 37 percent from July 2008.

"The recession has resulted in a great number of people who have lost their jobs or had their hours reduced and need help paying for basic household necessities," said Vic Todd, administrator for the Office of Self-Sufficiency Programs. "As high levels of unemployment continue, and more people now face the expiration of unemployment benefits, we anticipate greater need for SNAP and TANF into the foreseeable future."

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SNAP benefits provide an important bridge for people who are unemployed or underemployed and earn too little to meet their basic nutrition needs. TANF, which is only available for very low income families, helps pay for shelter and other necessities that parents would not be able to otherwise afford. It also provides case management services for families struggling due to unemployment, underemployment or incapacitation of a primary wage earner.

“In the most recent federal report on error rates, Oregon is still one of the best in the nation in the proper administration of SNAP, ” said Erinn Kelley-Siel, director of DHS Children, Adults and Families Division. “It is an incredible testament to our staff that even with the increased number of clients we are seeing, DHS employees continue to get it right. ”

There are 160 DHS locations across the state where Oregonians can apply for SNAP, TANF and other benefits for which they may be eligible. For more information, go to www.oregon.gov/DHS/assistance.

Local information is shown in the attached chart.

Background

To be eligible for SNAP benefits, families must earn less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level, along with other factors. For a family of four, the income limit is less than \$3,400 per month. The maximum benefit for a household of four totals \$668 per month. The overall average SNAP benefit per household is approximately \$250 per month. Approximately three-fourths of all SNAP households have some form of income, which results in the actual benefit level received being reduced from the maximum.

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. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase foods for the household to eat, such as breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry; and dairy products. SNAP benefits are intended to act as a supplement to a family's overall food budget, not to cover it entirely. In many households with little or no income, it can be the primary means to meet the family's nutritional needs.

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To be eligible for TANF, parents with children must earn less than the total monthly income limit. For a two-parent family with two children, that maximum is \$795, along with an asset limit of \$2,500 (not including the family home, or the first \$10,000 value of family vehicles). The maximum benefit for the family of four, with no other income, is a total \$647 per month. TANF provides temporary assistance and case management services for families struggling due to unemployment,

underemployment or incapacitation of a primary wage earner. TANF and TANF-related programs also provide employment and training services, child care while looking for work or other alternatives, assistance seeking Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Income, and help to flee or stay free from domestic violence.

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**Oregon Department of Human Services Monthly Caseloads: SNAP and TANF
June 2010**

	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps)		Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	
	Individuals receiving SNAP benefits June 2010	Percentage change from June 2009	Families receiving TANF benefits June 2010	Percentage change from June 2009
District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook)	19,982	19%	447	4%
District 2 (Multnomah)	140,773	17%	7,614	8%
District 3 (Polk, Marion, Yamhill)	104,078	17%	4,766	11%
District 4 (Benton, Lincoln, Linn)	45,579	15%	1,348	-2%
District 5 (Lane)	74,073	15%	2,069	4%
District 6 (Douglas)	24,643	11%	821	-7%
District 7 (Coos, Curry)	19,729	14%	776	8%
District 8 (Jackson, Josephine)	68,178	19%	2,311	15%
District 9 (Hood River, Gilliam, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler)	9,212	16%	213	5%
District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson)	41,618	19%	1,095	4%
District 11 (Klamath, Lake)	17,597	16%	526	35%
District 12 (Morrow, Umatilla)	18,032	15%	597	16%
District 13 (Baker, Union, Wallowa)	9,386	18%	317	33%
District 14 (Grant, Harney, Malheur)	10,612	16%	196	11%
District 15 (Clackamas)	44,530	26%	1,440	8%
District 16 (Washington)	65,333	24%	2,702	15%
STATE TOTAL	713,355	18%	27,238	9%