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Despite record enrollment, Oregon continues to be one of the best in the nation for proper administration of SNAP

This summer, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the 2009 error rates for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp program. The national payment error rate for 2009 was the lowest in the program's history, but Oregon's rate was even lower. This means Oregon is among the best in the nation for accuracy in administering SNAP benefits.

Oregon also scored well on timeliness. By processing more than 98 percent of the SNAP applications within 30 days, Oregon is in the top five states for this measure of success.

"Your timely application processing rate is another indicator of the effort and commitment put forth by staff that serves SNAP applicants in Oregon," Dennis Stewart, USDA regional director, wrote in a letter to the state.

These accomplishments are even more significant considering the record enrollment for SNAP and other programs that Oregonians count on for help dealing with the state's economic downturn.

In July, the number of people accessing SNAP grew by 4,581. Demand for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) also increased last month with enrollment expanding by 255 people.

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

- 717,936 Oregonians received SNAP benefits, an increase of 17 percent from one year ago and 49 percent since July 2008, when Oregon's unemployment rate was just above 6 percent.
- 27,493 families received TANF — up 12 percent from a year ago and 39 percent from July 2008.

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.

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
July 2010**

	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps)		Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	
	Individuals receiving SNAP benefits July 2010	Percentage change from July 2009	Families receiving TANF benefits July 2010	Percentage change from July 2009
District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook)	19,957	17%	433	5%
District 2 (Multnomah)	142,114	16%	7,739	10%
District 3 (Polk, Marion, Yamhill)	104,784	16%	4,825	13%
District 4 (Benton, Lincoln, Linn)	45,781	14%	1,328	-2%
District 5 (Lane)	74,531	14%	2,078	6%
District 6 (Douglas)	24,697	10%	830	-1%
District 7 (Coos, Curry)	19,717	12%	780	17%
District 8 (Jackson, Josephine)	68,848	18%	2,355	17%
District 9 (Hood River, Gilliam, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler)	9,167	15%	204	10%
District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson)	41,789	18%	1,107	11%
District 11 (Klamath, Lake)	17,688	14%	545	49%
District 12 (Morrow, Umatilla)	17,984	15%	580	22%
District 13 (Baker, Union, Wallowa)	9,364	17%	325	41%
District 14 (Grant, Harney, Malheur)	10,576	15%	197	14%
District 15 (Clackamas)	45,022	25%	1,455	13%
District 16 (Washington)	65,917	22%	2,712	16%
STATE TOTAL	717,936	17%	27,493	12%