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January food and cash assistance program caseload reports available

Caseload reports for January 2014 have been released for Oregon's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. SNAP, formerly food stamps, and TANF help pay for basic necessities.

Here are the total figures for SNAP and TANF for January 2014:

- A total of 796,164 Oregonians received SNAP benefits. The percentage of people receiving SNAP dropped about two percent over January 2013.
- A total of 34,137 families received TANF. The number of families receiving TANF was five percent less than in January 2013.
- The number of people receiving food benefits is approximately 65 percent higher than it was in July 2008, prior to the recession. TANF caseloads are approximately 72 percent higher than they were in July 2008.

SNAP benefits help bridge the gap for people who are unemployed or underemployed and earn too little to meet their basic nutrition needs. TANF helps pay for shelter, utilities and other necessities that parents could not otherwise afford. TANF is only available to extremely low-income families with children.

Background
SNAP benefits are intended to act as a supplement to an overall food budget, not to cover it entirely. In many households with little or no income, it can be the primary means for meeting nutritional needs.

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 $3,667 per month. The maximum benefit for a household of four totals $632 per month.
- For an individual, the income limit is less than $1,800 per month. The maximum benefit for an individual totals $189 per month.
- The overall average SNAP benefit per household is approximately $218 per month.
- The overall average SNAP benefit for an individual is approximately $121 per month.

Approximately three-fourths of all SNAP households have some form of income, which results in the amount of benefits received being less than 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, such as breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry, and dairy products. Customers cannot use SNAP benefits to buy non-food items like alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, vitamins or medicines, pet foods, soap, cosmetics, laundry products, paper goods, or other household products.

TANF provides temporary cash assistance 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 Insurance, and help to flee or stay free from domestic violence.

To be eligible for TANF, parents with children must earn less than the total monthly countable income limit.

- For a single-parent family with two children, the monthly income limit is $616, which is 38 percent of the federal poverty level. The family also has a $2,500 resource limit (not including the family home, or the first $10,000 in equity value of family vehicles). The current maximum benefit for a family of three, with no other income, is a total of $506 per month.
- For a two-parent family with two children, the monthly income limit is $795, which is 40 percent of the federal poverty level. The family also must be below the resource limit to qualify. The current maximum benefit for a family of four, with no other income, is a total of $621 per month.

To learn more about eligibility requirements for SNAP, TANF or other DHS services, visit your local DHS office. You may also visit OregonHelps online at www.oregonhelps.org/ to see if you may be eligible for these and other programs.

To download applications for TANF and SNAP, go to: www.oregon.gov/DHS/assistance/.

DHS partners with 211Info to connect people with other resources within their own communities. Contact 211Info by dialing 2-1-1 on your phone or searching for resources online at 211info.org. You also can connect with a community resource expert by texting your zip code to 898211 or emailing to help@211info.org.

See attached chart for local information

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Oregon Department of Human Services Monthly Caseloads: SNAP and TANF
January 2014

	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program		Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	
	Individuals receiving SNAP benefits January 2014	**Percentage change from January 2013**	**Families receiving TANF benefits January 2014**	**Percentage change from January 2013**
District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook)	**23,214**	-2%	**580**	-3%
District 2 (Multnomah)	**161,404**	-1%	**8,400**	-7%
District 3 (Polk, Marion, Yamhill)	**116,287**	-2%	**5,664**	-6%
District 4 (Benton, Lincoln, Linn)	**51,384**	-1%	**1,959**	0%
District 5 (Lane)	**81,309**	-2%	**2,974**	-1%
District 6 (Douglas)	**26,496**	-1%	**1,347**	3%
District 7 (Coos, Curry)	**22,211**	-1%	**866**	-5%
District 8 (Jackson, Josephine)	**77,101**	-2%	**3,658**	-2%
District 9 (Hood River, Gilliam, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler)	**10,022**	-2%	**230**	-19%
District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson)	**45,038**	-4%	**1,994**	-1%
District 11 (Klamath, Lake)	**19,469**	-2%	**668**	-17%
District 12 (Morrow, Umatilla)	**19,917**	-2%	**902**	-4%
District 13 (Baker, Union, Wallowa)	**10,309**	-2%	**519**	-2%
District 14 (Grant, Harney, Malheur)	**11,436**	-1%	**477**	23%
District 15 (Clackamas)	**50,139**	-1%	**1,697**	-11%
District 16 (Washington)	**70,428**	-2%	**2,767**	-6%
STATE TOTAL	**796,164**	-2%	**34,702**	-5%