



# ADVOCACY ALERT



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Oregon Food Bank  
Oregon Hunger Task Force

## Food stamps go SNAP

Over the last few months, the federal Food Stamp Program has undergone important changes. As a result of the farm bill, the name of the program was changed at the national level in 2008 to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP. States were given the option of changing their program's name. After considerable deliberation, the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) decided to stay aligned with the federal program and drafted House Bill 2124 to officially change the name of the Oregon Food Stamp Program to

the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). At press time, HB 2124 has passed the Oregon House and has been referred to the Senate Human Services and Rural Health Policy committee.

SNAP also has been enhanced as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), or the federal stimulus package. The federal legislation invested \$20 billion over five years in increased SNAP benefits to address the needs of the record 31.7 million

Americans who are receiving SNAP benefits during this economic

downturn. Legislators also recognized the economic stimulative effect of food stamps, with each dollar of SNAP benefits creating \$1.73 in economic activity. Starting on April 1, most households will receive an increase of about \$20-24 per person per month. ARRA also included SNAP administration funds to help states avoid cuts to their SNAP programs at a time of record enrollment. Oregon DHS will receive \$2.8 million.



## Federal food stimulus for Oregon

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. Most of the time this act is simply referred to as the federal stimulus package. By designating additional funding

for vital nutrition programs, ARRA provides significant assistance to those who struggle against hunger in Oregon.

First, ARRA enhances the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly

known as the Food Stamp Program. The legislation invests \$20 billion over five years in increased SNAP benefits to address the needs of the record 31.7 million Americans who are enrolled in the program during this economic downturn.

**take five**  
(actions that take five minutes or less)

**Message:**  
This month, Oregon legislators will vote on House Bill 2009, a critical health care package to expand health care coverage to about 80,000 children and 100,000 low-income adults. Expanding coverage will contribute to the long-term health of children and help provide economic stability for families. The bill will likely be voted on in both the House and Senate this month.

**Action:**  
Call your representative and senator to let them know that you support expanding health care coverage to all eligible children and low-income adults. To find out who your legislator is, go to <http://capwiz.com/oregonfoodbank/state/main/?state=OR> or call the capitol switchboard at 1-800-332-2313.

In Oregon, more than 550,000 people participate. Oregon SNAP participants will receive an estimated \$307 million in additional benefits between April 1, 2009, and September 30, 2010.

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# Federal Food Stimulus for Oregon

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With each dollar of SNAP benefits creating \$1.73 in economic activity, additional benefits in Oregon will create more than \$530 million of economic activity in the state's economy. SNAP benefits will increase by an average of \$46 per person. ARRA also included SNAP administration funds to help states avoid cuts to their SNAP programs at a time of record enrollment. Oregon Department of Human Services will receive \$5.7 million.

ARRA also increases funding for The Emergency Food

Assistance Program (TEFAP,) which provides nutritious, shelf-stable USDA commodities to the Oregon Food Bank Network. The legislation includes \$100 million for commodity purchases and \$25 million in each of the next two years to help pay for administration, storage, and distribution of commodities. OFB estimates that ARRA will provide an additional 60 truckloads of commodities, critical support for the network as demand for emergency food assistance continues to increase.

In addition to these investments in SNAP and TEFAP, ARRA also designates additional funds to programs that assist emergency food distribution in Oregon: the senior nutrition programs, the Community Services Block Grant, and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program.



Advocacy Alert is published jointly by Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Task Force (OHTF).

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## Legislative Yellow Pages

### State Legislative Information

1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem) 503-986-1000 (in Salem)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide/>

### Federal Legislative Contacts

Senator Merkley (503)326-3386  
Senator Wyden (503) 326-7525  
Rep. Wu (District 1) (503) 326-2901  
Rep. Walden (District 2) (541) 776-4646  
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## Health Reform: Kids & Vulnerable Adults Can't Wait

Every day, thousands of Oregonians are forced to make tough choices between seeing the doctor or putting food on the table, buying medicine or purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. Hunger is intimately connected with adequate and affordable health care; but, our health care system is currently broken.

This month, Oregon's House Health Care Committee is holding the final work sessions on House Bill 2009, an omnibus bill to reform health care in Oregon and, most importantly, expand coverage to children and low income adults.

HB 2009 would expand health care coverage to about 80,000 uninsured children and would open the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) to all eligible adult Ore-

gonians with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). This expansion would add about 100,000 new enrollees.

Oregon Food Bank supports expanding health care to these vulnerable Oregonians because of the stories we hear from our clients. Oregon Food Bank's most recent *Hunger Factors Survey*, revealed that 41 percent of adults and 24 percent of children in surveyed households had no health insurance, 56 percent reported medical or hospital debts and 58 percent of households had delayed medical care, up from 53 percent in 2006 and 47 percent in 2002.

Expanding coverage is critical to the long-term health of these

children and to economic stability for families. See this month's Take Five to learn how you can take action to urge your legislators to support this bill.



## Governor's Hunger Week

Governor's Hunger Week begins April 27th and will

continue until May 1st. Stay tuned for further details...

