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For Immediate Release

Food Stamp Grant Focuses on Outreach in Socorro and Española (Bernalillo County Also Part of Outreach Effort)

Santa Fe, November 3, 2004 – The Human Services Department (HSD) and the Association of Food Banks are holding information meetings in Socorro and Española to update food stamp eligibility workers on how a recently-earned \$835,000 federal grant will be used to get more families in these counties to participate in the Food Stamp Program.

In Socorro County, 1,121 families are receiving food stamps, up 6.2 percent from last year, while in Rio Arriba County, 2,592 families are receiving food stamps, up 20.1 percent from last year. “In these two mostly rural counties, however, much more can be done, as many other eligible families are not participating in the program,” said Katie Falls, Human Services Department Income Support Division Director.

Food stamps are an income-based program, where a family of three earning less than \$20,371 can qualify for some benefits. Most able-bodied adults can qualify if they work a minimum number of hours each week. The average family receives \$211 per month in food stamps that can be used in grocery stores to purchase food items only. Last year, the Food Stamp Program brought a total of \$215 million federal dollars into the state’s economy.

There are several other food security programs that target specific groups of people, like the Women, Infants and Children’s Program and the School Lunch Program, but the Food Stamp Program is the most universal because it doesn’t require children in the home for eligibility, making it very popular for the elderly.

In Socorro, HSD’s food stamp eligibility workers will be updated tomorrow (Thursday, November 4, 2004) at 1:30 p.m., at the department’s Income Support Division office on 1014 N. California Street.

In Española, HSD’s food stamp eligibility workers will be updated on Monday, Nov. 8 at 1:30 p.m., at the department’s Income Support Division office on 228 Paseo de Oñate Street.

News media are invited to attend these meetings.

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