



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
P.O. Box 2348  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348

Bill Richardson  
Governor

Pamela S. Hyde, J.D.  
Secretary

Contact Betina Gonzales McCracken 505 827-6245 or 505 690-2675  
For Immediate Release

## Human Services Department Celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Modern Day Food Stamp Program

Program helps New Mexico's families as well as New Mexico's economy

*Santa Fe, New Mexico, May 24, 2007* – The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) is celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the modern day Food Stamp Program, as it helps thousands of New Mexico working families make ends meet each month. It also brings an infusion of millions of federal funds into the state's economy each year.

“Today's food stamp program offers more than 230,000 New Mexicans in nearly 91,000 families the opportunity to purchase nutritious food to put on their tables each-and-every-day,” said Katie Falls, HSD Deputy Secretary. “The program also provides a significant economic boost to local economies in every county, ranging from \$5.5 million each month in Bernalillo County to \$3,000 in Harding County.”

Last state fiscal year \$256 million in federal funding was brought into the state through the Food Stamp Program, and a projected \$280 million is expected for the current year. The food stamp program has an economic ripple effect, called the “*economic multiplier effect*”. “It is estimated that for every five dollars of food stamps spent in the state an additional nine dollars and twenty cents in economic activity is brought into local communities,” said Falls.

The Food Stamp Program, which is the first line of defense in fighting hunger and food insecurity in New Mexico, has been around in various forms since the Great Depression. In 1977 the federal government changed the way benefits were calculated so families no longer had to purchase them to use them. Currently families with household incomes below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level, or family of four making less than \$2,167 per month qualifies for the program and will receive a maximum of \$518 in food stamp benefits through the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.

Thanks to state and federal outreach efforts, since January, 2003 there has been a significant growth in the number of families signing up for food stamps: In January 2003, 73,450 families participated in the program. In just over four years, the number of families using food stamps has grown by nearly 20,000 families, or 27 percent. There are thousands more families that qualify, but are not enrolled.

During the 2007 State Legislature, Governor Bill Richardson requested for a third straight year a state supplemental to the food stamp program for seniors, who in some instances are receiving \$10 per month in food stamp benefits. This year the legislature approved the requested funding and beginning later this year an additional \$10 will be available to eligible seniors. “We are hoping the doubling of food stamp funds will encourage more seniors to participate in the program,” said Fred Sandoval, Income Support Division Director. “We are even considering creating a food club for those who would like to save up their benefits for a big family or holiday dinner.”

(more)

Families interested in learning more about the Food Stamp program and how to apply are encouraged to call 1-800-283-4465, visit their local ISD office or visit [www.hsd.state.nm.us](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us).

Food Stamp participation varies for each county. Below is the April 2007 report of the number of individuals and family participants, as well as the total dollars brought into each New Mexico County.

**Food Stamp Participation in New Mexico by County**

**(April 2007 Data)**

<b>County</b>	<b>Food Stamp Dollars</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
Bernalillo	\$5,572,000	25,861	60,134
Catron	\$26,000	136	313
Chaves	\$814,000	3,807	9,662
Cibola	\$400,000	1,650	4,758
Colfax	\$108,000	556	1,355
Curry	\$539,000	2,386	6,422
DeBaca	\$12,000	92	193
Doña Ana	\$2,921,000	12,720	33,242
Eddy	\$609,000	2,824	6,986
Grant	\$365,000	1,659	3,940
Guadalupe	\$44,000	237	553
Harding	\$3,000	21	40
Hidalgo	\$53,000	260	600
Lea	\$552,000	2,402	6,412
Lincoln	\$167,000	815	1,912
Los Alamos	\$9,000	44	100
Luna	\$372,000	1,578	4,309
McKinley	\$1,623,000	5,060	18,170
Mora	\$53,000	304	638
Otero	\$370,000	1,807	4,687
Quay	\$128,000	641	1,454
Rio Arriba	\$654,000	3,035	6,798
Roosevelt	\$204,000	938	2,467
Sandoval	\$770,000	3,183	9,499
San Juan	\$784,000	3,026	9,719
San Miguel	\$462,000	2,486	5,099
Santa Fe	\$920,000	4,036	8,693
Sierra	\$130,000	824	1,605
Socorro	\$304,000	1,435	3,483
Taos	\$300,000	1,523	3,304
Torrance	\$324,000	1,546	3,838
Union	\$28,000	149	380
Valencia	\$867,000	3,939	9,928
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$20,487,000</b>	<b>90,980</b>	<b>230,693</b>