



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

Bill Richardson
Governor

Kathryn Falls
Secretary

Media contact: Betina Gonzales McCracken (505) 476-6205

October 20, 2010
For Immediate Release

NM Human Services Department Receives 2010 SNAP Hunger Champion Award San Juan County Income Support Office Recognized for its SNAP Outreach Activities

Santa Fe – The New Mexico Human Services Department’s San Juan County Income Support Division (ISD) office has been awarded the USDA 2010 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Hunger Champion Award. The San Juan County ISD office received the Bronze Hunger Champion award for its outreach activities that resulted in more eligible families participating in SNAP.

“The San Juan County ISD staff did a tremendous job reaching out to the rural and tribal areas of the county to encourage eligible families to participate in SNAP, and get them the benefits they need to serve nutritious meals,” said Katie Falls, HSD Secretary. “They became very creative in their outreach efforts, including using a mobile van to reach parts of the community that had a difficult time making it into Farmington to apply for services.”

Other outreach activities included outreach sites set up in two major Navajo communities, Shiprock and Crownpoint, collaborating with the Navajo Radio Station to air Public Service Announcements in Navajo to reach even further into the remote areas of the Navajo Reservation and constant reminders to applicants that they could access services via fax, mail, or phone.

The outreach and education efforts were part of a statewide effort to increase SNAP participation, which is currently at more than 82 percent, or more than 165,000 New Mexico families. In San Juan County, the outreach efforts resulted in a 42 percent increase in eligible households participating in SNAP between January 2008 and January 2010. There are currently 22,757 people in 7,031 households participating in SNAP in San Juan County. Statewide, nearly \$50 million dollars is brought into the state monthly through SNAP. It is estimated that every five dollars in supplemental nutrition benefits turns into \$9.00 of economic activity.

“Putting healthy food within reach for low income Americans has never been more important, said Kevin Concannon, USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services. “These local offices have gone the extra mile to reach out to and educate needy members of their communities about the nutrition benefits of SNAP and how to apply. Through innovative strategies and creative partnership, these honorees serve as models for local offices across the country.”

New Mexico families with incomes up to 165% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) qualify for SNAP. For example, a family of four with a monthly income below \$3,032 would likely qualify.

To find out if your family qualifies for the SNAP program, visit www.hsd.state.nm.us and click on the “Do I Qualify” icon or call 1-888-473-3676.

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