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Oregon Food Stamp Benefits to Remain Unchanged

Salem -- The Oregon Department of Human Services announced today that food stamp benefit amounts will not be adjusted on October 1, as they have been in the past, because the federal stimulus package already increased food stamp benefit amounts last spring.

On October 1, the federal government revises the food stamp standards to reflect changes in food, housing and other costs. Usually, these standards go up; however, benefit amounts will not increase this fall, and the benefit standard will not increase again until the national cost-of-living index indicates that costs require a raise.

Oregon's Food Stamp program currently serves approximately 331,000 households (635,000 individuals). Households with incomes below \$3,400 gross per month for a family of four may qualify for benefits, which are based on household income, size and expenses.

Because of a cut in the standard income deduction, some households may see their benefits decrease by \$1 on October 1. The federal Food and Nutrition Service has cut the standard income deduction – given to all 1, 2 and 3-person food stamp households – from \$144 to \$141. This is one of several income deductions used to figure monthly food stamp benefits.

Food stamps is federally financed and administered in Oregon by the state Department of Human Services. The federal government finances benefits and shares administrative expenses with the states. Since 1998, Oregon food benefits have been delivered electronically via a debit card called the Oregon Trail.

The Food Stamp Program has been renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Congress made this change to the name due to the program's

focus on the importance of good nutrition and the intent of the benefits to supplement a household's food budget. Oregon chose to follow the federal direction and adopt the same name.