



## Food Assistance—Feeding Michigan’s Economy and Families

Michigan, along with other states, has received federal stimulus money to increase benefits for food assistance (previously called Food Stamps, now called the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 boosted SNAP benefits for all food assistance households by 13.6 percent, beginning in April 2009, and most households received an additional \$20-24 per person per month this year as a result. The current food stamp benefit levels will remain in place until the program’s regular annual inflation adjustments exceed the benefit increase. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the food assistance component is considered to be one of the most effective and fast-acting provisions of the economic recovery package. In addition to being spent locally, 80 percent of food assistance benefits are spent within two weeks of receipt, and 97 percent are spent within a month.

As a result of Michigan’s economic hardship, and of heavy promotion of the food assistance program by the state’s public and non-profit sector, there has been a dramatic increase in the utilization of food assistance during the past nine years. The number of Michigan households receiving food assistance has more than tripled, from 248,564 in July 2000 to 790,220 in October 2009. Because these benefits are paid entirely with federal dollars, this increase has had no effect on Michigan’s budget. Moreover, in addition to providing much-needed assistance to

struggling families and individuals, food assistance boosts local economies because recipients spend the money at grocery stores in their communities. The additional benefit dollars added to family budgets and local economies by the stimulus package brings even more benefit to Michigan.

This is a good time for such a stimulus. Michigan’s unemployment rate (15.1% in October) continues to lead the nation, as it has for most of the past three years. This has been caused primarily by the downturn in the automobile manufacturing industry, which has not only caused layoffs at the plants but has hurt other businesses that rely on the industry and its workers. At the same time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that an increasing number of households in Michigan—12 percent in 2006-2008—have had “low” food security, meaning that at some time during the year, they had difficulty providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources. Slightly more than one-third of these households have had “very low” food security, meaning that at some point during the year, the food intake of some household members was reduced and normal eating patterns were disrupted due to difficulty obtaining food.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that the additional benefits will make a difference for families experiencing this hardship.

On the following pages is a table showing how much each Michigan county has received in stimulus food assistance benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> Nord, Andrews, and Carlson, *Household Food Security in the United States, 2008*, United States Department of Agriculture, November 2009.

## Michigan SNAP Stimulus Benefits

County	Estimated Stimulus Benefits April-September 2009	Estimated Number Receiving Food Assistance		
		Households	Individuals	Children
Wayne	\$50,030,055	204,775	425,438	191,504
Genesee	\$11,068,145	45,302	94,318	41,546
Oakland	\$10,889,891	44,573	91,338	31,201
Macomb	\$10,568,126	43,256	92,660	37,688
Kent	\$9,815,971	40,177	85,255	40,177
Ingham	\$5,735,780	23,477	45,192	18,166
Muskegon	\$4,905,445	20,078	40,940	17,462
Kalamazoo	\$4,896,894	20,043	38,595	16,013
Saginaw	\$4,800,584	19,649	40,612	18,043
Washtenaw	\$4,038,266	16,529	30,646	12,162
Calhoun	\$3,635,730	14,881	30,176	12,691
Saint Clair	\$3,093,590	12,662	26,640	10,847
Berrien	\$3,082,303	12,616	26,495	12,312
Jackson	\$2,834,174	11,600	25,447	11,283
Ottawa	\$2,352,039	9,627	22,565	10,721
Bay	\$2,089,838	8,554	17,283	7,080
Monroe	\$1,861,744	7,620	16,659	7,322
Isabella	\$1,708,215	6,992	11,164	3,136
Van Buren	\$1,515,107	6,201	13,964	6,629
Lenawee	\$1,472,645	6,028	13,568	5,971
Allegan	\$1,439,222	5,891	14,068	6,596
Grand Traverse	\$1,284,765	5,259	10,370	3,973
Eaton	\$1,238,150	5,068	11,247	4,996
Shiawassee	\$1,234,534	5,053	11,148	4,649
Montcalm	\$1,203,505	4,926	11,369	4,781
Saint Joseph	\$1,162,460	4,758	10,940	5,005
Livingston	\$1,143,648	4,681	10,263	4,263
Mecosta	\$1,140,276	4,667	8,822	3,020
Midland	\$1,138,566	4,660	9,642	3,732
Lapeer	\$1,039,862	4,256	10,135	4,504
Marquette	\$1,017,531	4,165	7,848	2,742
Ionia	\$991,194	4,057	9,081	3,844
Newaygo	\$972,088	3,979	9,422	4,096
Cass	\$934,708	3,826	8,869	4,005
Tuscola	\$889,705	3,642	8,605	3,687
Sanilac	\$876,902	3,589	8,067	3,280
Clare	\$850,712	3,482	7,273	2,683
Branch	\$806,979	3,303	7,449	3,248
Wexford	\$801,897	3,282	7,343	2,946
Barry	\$798,672	3,269	7,536	3,243
Hillsdale	\$764,272	3,128	7,419	3,189
Gratiot	\$687,215	2,813	6,571	2,870
Alpena	\$683,306	2,797	5,341	1,888
Delta	\$680,130	2,784	5,525	2,057
Clinton	\$669,966	2,742	5,651	2,292
Roscommon	\$658,825	2,697	5,402	1,898

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

## Michigan SNAP Stimulus Benefits (cont'd.)

County	Estimated Stimulus Benefits April-September 2009	Estimated Number Receiving Food Assistance		
		Households	Individuals	Children
Iosco	\$636,153	2,604	5,309	1,937
Oceana	\$589,488	2,413	5,931	2,926
Ogemaw	\$582,696	2,385	4,846	1,758
Chippewa	\$574,047	2,350	4,842	1,903
Mason	\$567,011	2,321	5,116	2,084
Gladwin	\$529,630	2,168	4,522	1,719
Houghton	\$524,744	2,148	4,257	1,563
Huron	\$520,151	2,129	4,395	1,706
Otsego	\$496,843	2,034	4,352	1,722
Cheboygan	\$492,543	2,016	4,367	1,688
Osceola	\$470,799	1,927	4,337	1,793
Emmet	\$468,356	1,917	4,147	1,650
Manistee	\$457,410	1,872	3,775	1,394
Menominee	\$383,529	1,570	3,229	1,255
Dickinson	\$376,541	1,541	3,082	1,141
Arenac	\$371,753	1,522	3,187	1,222
Kalkaska	\$351,768	1,440	3,298	1,331
Lake	\$349,422	1,430	2,876	1,037
Gogebic	\$345,904	1,416	2,717	955
Antrim	\$330,268	1,352	3,175	1,356
Charlevoix	\$306,471	1,254	2,885	1,228
Crawford	\$284,874	1,166	2,438	924
Benzie	\$249,203	1,020	2,273	935
Missaukee	\$235,912	966	2,295	967
Montmorency	\$225,553	923	1,841	648
Oscoda	\$225,456	923	1,846	645
Presque	\$200,144	819	1,574	529
Iron	\$196,529	804	1,666	606
Alcona	\$166,820	683	1,459	525
Schoolcraft	\$156,607	641	1,352	484
Mackinac	\$138,332	566	1,159	408
Leelanau	\$136,671	559	1,293	590
Baraga	\$136,329	558	1,200	512
Luce	\$124,895	511	1,065	390
Ontonagon	\$122,207	500	886	259
Alger	\$119,324	488	981	363
Keweenaw	\$28,145	115	224	73
x-Unassigned	\$101,440	415	949	461
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b>\$178,077,601</b>	<b>728,879</b>	<b>1,523,503</b>	<b>654,638</b>

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities