



NEWS RELEASE

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INDIANA RANKS 3RD IN THE NATION FOR INCREASES IN FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN. The number of Hoosiers enrolled in the Food Stamp Program increased by 75.8 percent from January 2000 to January 2004, earning Indiana a rank of 3rd in the nation, according to the 2004 “State of the States” report released today from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) in Washington, DC. Indiana has followed a nationwide trend of participation increases primarily due to the downside of the state’s economy that has resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs and multiple high profile plant closings. This has led to an increase in the numbers of families falling behind economically in Indiana and becoming eligible for the Food Stamp Program. In January 2004, a total of 521,174 Hoosiers were enrolled in the Program.

Percent Change in Number of Food Stamp Participants January 2000-2004 Top 10 States	
State	Percent Change
Arizona	108.0%
Nevada	105.5%
Indiana	75.8%
Oregon	72.8%
Delaware	70.7%
Wisconsin	70.4%
South Carolina	66.3%
Texas	63.9%
Missouri	63.8%
Oklahoma	60.0%

In response to the economic woes, the State of Indiana and several local areas have ramped up their outreach efforts which has assisted in enrolling more eligible families in the Food Stamp Program. The Community Harvest Food Bank in Fort Wayne, for example, received a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to place outreach workers at public sites across the community, such as grocery stores, to enroll new eligible families. In addition, changes in legislation and administrative rules over the past several years have streamlined the Program, making enrolling and participating easier.

There is still work to be done in terms of enrolling eligible families, however. The Indiana Institute for Working Families, a project of the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues, released a report in fall 2003 entitled “*Is Indiana Getting Its Fair Share? Federal Programs Available to Assist Working Hoosiers*”, which

estimates county-by-county, the amount of Food Stamp dollars left in Washington in 2002 due to lack of participation of eligible families. Over \$10 million each month in federal dollars failed to come into the state due to not enrolling eligible families in the Food Stamp Program. The county-by-county chart can be found in Appendix E of the report which can be viewed at <http://www.ichhi.org/fairshare.htm>.

The Food Stamp Program is an effective short-term response to hunger and can be particularly helpful for dislocated workers who have been unable to find a job that replaces wages lost from a high paying manufacturing job and are struggling to make ends meet. In addition, the Program contributes significantly to the state's economy, adding over \$483 million in federal dollars to Indiana's economy in FY 2003. USDA research estimates that for every \$1 in Food Stamps spent, another \$2 of economic activity is generated for state economies.

For FRAC's State of the States report see www.frac.org

The Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues (ICHHI) seeks to share information, enhance the impacts of efforts through organized advocacy, and increase public education regarding the provision of safe, decent, and affordable housing and necessary support services. The Indiana Institute for Working Families, a project of ICHHI, works to develop and advocate for public policies and programs that create opportunities for Hoosiers to advance in the workforce and to create better living conditions for those earning low-wages.

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