



Media Release

Contact:

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For Immediate Release

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Low-Income Arkansans Can Boost Grocery Budgets at Local Food Distributions *DHS schedules SNAP visits for northeast Arkansas*

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is partnering with the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas to assist seniors and families applying for SNAP, a program that helps recipients afford healthy foods.

Over the next eight months, DHS staff will make 28 visits to food pantries, food banks and soup kitchens in northeast Arkansas with mobile enrollment units to assist households applying for the federally-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicare Savings and other programs.

Staff also will spend time educating people about the benefits of SNAP. For instance, families with young children may not know they can use SNAP assistance to purchase infant formula or that seniors can purchase nutrition shakes.

“We know that getting to a DHS county office can be a challenge for seniors and working families. By bringing our staff out into the community, we can make sure that our services are being used by those most in need,” said Joni Jones, director of the DHS Division of County Operations. “And by targeting places like food pantries, we know DHS will be reaching households most at risk of hunger.”

Jones said similar outreach efforts have proven successful in Arkansas, noting that in some places up to 20 percent of the food distribution site visitors spoke with DHS staff about assistance programs. Visitors who were already participating in SNAP received assistance reporting changes and referrals to cooking education classes.

Christie Jordan, executive director of the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, said “While the Food Bank’s primary mission is to distribute food to families in need, we also try to provide opportunities to connect low-income families with other resources for which they might qualify. Although we don’t administer the SNAP program, we receive a lot of calls from people with questions about the program. Our food distributions provide an opportunity for the mobile enrollment units to provide valuable information to our clients.”

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Low-income Arkansans also may apply for SNAP and other assistance programs online at www.access.arkansas.gov.

To learn more about hosting SNAP outreach activities, contact Lindsey Barnett, program manager for SNAP outreach at (501) 682-8288.

DHS has scheduled the following visits:

<u>County</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
Craighead	Parker Park Community Center, 1522 N. Church Street, Jonesboro 72401	05/08/2013
Poinsett	Sports Complex, 16179 Pecan Grove, Trumann 72472	05/15/2013
Crittenden	National Guard Armory, 1700 N. Avalon Street West Memphis 72301	05/22/2013
Lawrence	National Guard Armory, 1122 SE Front St. Walnut Ridge 72456	05/29/2013
Jackson	Iron Mountain Depot, Front Street, Newport 72112	07/10/2013
Randolph	Community Center, 206 Geneva, Pocahontas 72455	07/17/2013
Clay	AGAPE Mission, 501 South West 2nd Street, Corning 72422	07/24/2013
Greene	Mission Outreach, 902 East Lake, Paragould 72450	07/24/2013
St. Francis	Forrest City Civic Center, 1136 N. Washington, Forrest City 72335	07/31/2013
Cross	National Guard Armory, 306 East Helen Street, Wynne 72396	08/07/2013
Woodruff	Tri County Fairgrounds, Hwy 64 B, McCrory 72101	08/14/2013
Craighead	Parker Park Community Center, 1522 N. Church Street, Jonesboro 72401	08/21/2013
Poinsett	Sports Complex, 16179 Pecan Grove, Trumann 72472	08/28/2013
Crittenden	National Guard Armory, 1700 N. Avalon Street, West Memphis 72301	09/04/2013
Lawrence	National Guard Armory, 1122 SE Front St., Walnut Ridge 72456	09/11/2013
Clay	AGAPE Mission, 501 South West 2nd Street, Corning 72422	09/18/2013
Jackson	Iron Mountain Depot, Front Street, Newport 72112	09/25/2013
Randolph	Community Center, 206 Geneva, Pocahontas 72455	10/02/2013
Greene	Mission Outreach, 902 East Lake, Paragould 72450	10/09/2013
St. Francis	Forrest City Civic Center, 1136 N. Washington, Forrest City 72335	10/16/2013
Cross	National Guard Armory, 306 East Helen Street, Wynne 72396	10/23/2013
Woodruff	Tri County Fairgrounds, Hwy 64 B, McCrory 72101	10/30/2013
Craighead	Parker Park Community Center, 1522 N. Church Street, Jonesboro 72401	11/06/2013
Crittenden	National Guard Armory, 1700 N. Avalon Street, West Memphis 72301	11/20/2013
Lawrence	National Guard Armory, 1122 SE Front St., Walnut Ridge 72456	11/27/2013
Jackson	Iron Mountain Depot, Front Street, Newport 72112	12/04/2013
Randolph	Community Center, 206 Geneva, Pocahontas 72455	12/11/2013
Clay	AGAPE Mission, 501 South West 2nd Street, Corning 72422	12/18/2013

*All events take place from approximately 9:00 a.m. to noon.
All events are subject to change.*