



**For Immediate Release**

# **NUTRITION ASSISTANCE ENROLLMENT UP 26% FROM 2009; 1 MILLION INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING BENEFITS IN STRUGGLING ECONOMY**

## ***Record Number of People Sought Help Through Arizona Self Help.org in May***

PHOENIX, Ariz. (June 15, 2010): The current economy continues taking its toll on families and individuals struggling to make ends meet and put food on their tables.

One measure of the increasing need is the number of hits to the Arizona Community Action Association's ArizonaSelfHelp.org website (<http://www.ArizonaSelfHelp.org>), which prescreens individuals for 31 social service programs.

In May, a record 11,226 individuals accessed the website for assistance, nearly 5,000 more than in April of this year. From April 2008 to April 2010, the number of people seeking assistance nearly tripled from 2,625 to 6,419.

"While available services are cutback or eliminated, the number of individuals and families needing help continues to grow," said [Arizona Community Action Association](#) Executive Director Cynthia Zwick. "There is a lot of desperation in our communities putting increasing pressure on the social service agencies who are there for them. The fact that we're seeing so many more people on the Arizona Self Help website certainly shows how severe the problem is."

At the same time, enrollment in the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, crossed the 1 million barrier (1,020,648 individuals) in April, a 25.64% increase from 812,359 individuals in April 2009. The average amount for nutrition assistance is \$1.43 per meal, or 75% of monthly food costs.

Individuals and families qualifying for SNAP assistance (\$1,174 gross monthly income for single individuals; \$2,389 for a family of four) can only use the pre-loaded SNAP EBT cards for food and food products. Alcohol and tobacco products are not allowed. Each card is protected by a PIN number and there is no cash option on the cards.

**Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty.**

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Emergency SNAP assistance also is available as is help for seniors, persons with disabilities and homeless individuals and families.

[ArizonaSelfHelp.org](http://ArizonaSelfHelp.org) offers free and confidential prescreening for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Childcare Assistance; Head Start; SNAP (formerly food stamps); Women, Infants and Children (WIC); School Lunch; Emergency Food; Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); Federal Housing Assistance; Utility Discounts; Social Security Retirement; Senior Adult Independent Living (SAIL); Social Security Disability Programs; Arizona LongTerm Care System; Federal Earned Income Tax Credit; Federal Child Tax Credit; Individual Development Accounts; Federal HOPE Tax Credit; Federal Lifetime Learning Tax Credit; Medicare Part D; CoppeRx Car; AHCCCS; Medicare and Medicare Savings; and One-Stop Career Center Services.

For information, visit [www.arizonaselfhelp.org](http://www.arizonaselfhelp.org) or [www.azcaa.org](http://www.azcaa.org). For information about SNAP retailers, visit [www.fns.usda.gov/snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap).

For Arizona Self Help and SNAP training, call Katie Kahle at (602) 604-0640, Ext. 19 or by email at [kkahle@azcaa.org](mailto:kkahle@azcaa.org).

### **POVERTY NUMBERS**

- More than 881,000 people in Arizona lived in poverty between 2005 and 2007
- Arizona's child-poverty rate for 2005-07 was 20.2%
- From April 2009 to April 2010, the number of individuals in Maricopa County on SNAP rose 31% and statewide by 25.6% to 1.02 million.
- More than 283,000 Arizona households are considered food insecure
- The average Arizona household receives \$294.44 in monthly SNAP benefits, or \$1.43 per meal, 75% of monthly food costs
- Arizona is in the top 5 states nationally in food-insecure households

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