

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**  
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**N.D. Food Stamp program earns almost \$.5 million federal bonus**

BISMARCK, N.D. – For the second year in a row, federal officials have rewarded North Dakota with a performance bonus for operating an accurate Food Stamp Program. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials notified Gov. John Hoeven and North Dakota Department of Human Services Executive Director Carol K. Olson that the state will receive a \$460,933 bonus for having the sixth highest accuracy rate in the country. Last year, North Dakota ranked eighth and received a \$213,251 bonus.

“This bonus is possible because the department and the county social service offices have hard working, high quality employees. They make sure that eligible individuals in North Dakota receive accurate Food Stamp benefits,” Olson said.

The state’s performance ranking is based on an analysis of 2005 federal fiscal year overpayments and underpayments. North Dakota achieved a 96.41 percent accuracy rate. The national average was 94.16 percent.

USDA distributed \$24 million total in bonus funding to 10 states. Bonuses are distributed based on caseloads in the top performing states. Authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, the bonus program supports USDA’s program integrity goal.

North Dakota distributes food stamp benefits using electronic benefit card technology. County social service office employees determine eligibility and benefit amounts, and issue cards; state employees provide direction, training, technical assistance, and quality control services. A contractor issues benefits through the cards.

Food stamp benefits are funded entirely with federal dollars. Each month, North Dakota’s program assists about 42,500 low-income individuals including children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and others in need of temporary help to meet their nutrition needs. It provides for just under \$4 million in benefits per month, which are used to purchase food at about 424 participating grocers. The N.D. Department of Human Services’ 2005-2007 food stamp budget totals \$105.8 million.

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