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Media Release

For Immediate Release:
December 7, 2009

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FOR SENIORS LIVING ON THE EDGE - SNAP CAN HELP!

Trenton--Many Americans are feeling the effects of the economy, some are applying for public benefits they never thought they would need. One such benefit, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp program, helps to feed 1 in 8 Americans. An article in the New York Times on November 29th, stated that SNAP reaches two thirds of those eligible and that another 15 to 16 million people could benefit nationwide. All across America the use of the program has increased due to job loss, reduced hours and increased expenses.

Last year, approximately 64,000 seniors in New Jersey benefited from SNAP. The NJ Foundation for Aging estimates that another 45,000 eligible seniors never apply. We know that 1 out of 4 NJ elders is living solely on Social Security (\$14,285 per year) and that even a median retirement income of \$19,565 for a elder man in NJ still leaves a gap between income and expenses. The New Jersey Elder Index tells us that a single elder renter needs \$25,941 to cover their basic expenses. Applying for SNAP could ease the worry of trying to make ends meet.

SNAP eligibility is based on income, most guidelines apply to all age groups, however, seniors do have a few separate guidelines. SNAP defines a senior or elderly person as anyone age 60 years or older. In New Jersey, the gross income eligibility is 130% of FPL (Federal Poverty Level) and the net income eligibility is 100% of FPL. The 2009 Federal Poverty Level for one individual is \$10,830. Most households are limited to \$2,000 in countable resources, such as a bank account, or \$3,000 for those 60 years of age or older. Certain resources are not counted, such as a home and lot. Those 60 years of age or older can also deduct medical and shelter expenses, hence the net income level. To see if you are eligible you can answer a few questions at <http://www.mynjhelps.com/> or call your local Board of Social Services, for a list of phone numbers call 1-800-792-9773 or visit the link below for an online directory.

Visit the link below for information on how to obtain an application, where to go to apply and what you need to submit with your application. In some counties you may apply online, the link below will instruct you on this as well. <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/foodstamps/>

SNAP is an important resource, which may give seniors nutritional support while allowing them to cover their other basic expenses. Find out if you are eligible today. SNAP to it!

To learn more about the work of the Foundation visit www.njfoundationforaging.org or call 609-421-0206.

The New Jersey Foundation for Aging (NJFA) was established in 1998 with a mission is to expand innovative approaches in the delivery of services and to promote policies that enable older adults to live in the community with independence and dignity.

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