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The Iowa Food Bank Association Receives \$150,000 Grant from Wellmark Foundation for SNAP Mobile Access Points Project

Waterloo, Iowa, December 15, 2010– The Iowa Food Bank Association was awarded a two-year \$150,000 grant from The Wellmark Foundation to implement the SNAP Mobile Access Points project.

SNAP Mobile Access Points will assist Iowans in applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) and other state benefits by taking the internet to them, says Jordan Vernoy, state director of the Iowa Food Bank Association. “The project will provide trained staff equipped with internet accessible netbooks at food pantries, emergency meal sites and shelters throughout the state to help eligible clients apply for state programs via the OASIS website,” explains Vernoy.

The Online Application for State of Iowa Services (OASIS) web site, which is operated by the Department of Human Services (DHS), provides an online joint application for assistance through numerous state programs, including SNAP, Cash Assistance, Medical Assistance, Child Care Assistance, Well Child and Prenatal Care, and Family Planning.

SNAP is available to many individuals in Iowa, but is not fully utilized due to lack of knowledge and access. “SNAP Mobile Access Points will allow us to help many clients in need of assistance apply for direct benefits to support their food budget, and will also provide them with access to additional benefits to support the overall health and wellness of their families,” states Vernoy.

Partners will include dozens of emergency feeding sites such as food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters throughout the state, DHS, Iowa State University Extension and the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC).

The Wellmark Foundation has provided approximately \$18.76 million to fund 445 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$1,334,817 in the current funding cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation works to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans,” says Matthew McGarvey, director of The Wellmark Foundation. “This project provides an innovative solution to an ongoing challenge facing many Iowans, access to resources. We are pleased to support this project, which will connect countless individuals to greatly needed health and wellness resources,” says McGarvey.

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The Iowa Food Bank Association is a collaborative effort of the eight food banks in Iowa that serve all of its 99 counties. Association members include: Food Bank of Iowa, HACAP Food Reservoir, Northeast Iowa Food Bank, River Bend Food Bank, Food Bank of the Heartland, Food Bank of Southern Iowa, Food Bank of Siouxland and St. Stephen’s Food Bank