

# The Salt Lake Tribune

<http://www.sltrib.com>

## Number of households on food stamps drops

Hunger » Officials say they need a few more months to find out if it's a trend or a fluke.

By Julia Lyon

The Salt Lake Tribune

Salt Lake Tribune

Updated:05/18/2010 10:58:46 PM MDT

# The Salt Lake Tribune

<http://www.sltrib.com>

For the first time since September 2007, the number of Utah households relying on food stamps to help feed their families has stopped growing. In April, the total dipped by 182 households compared to the month before, according to data released by the Utah Department of Workforce Services.

But whether this indicates an easing of the recession remains unclear. Until now, numbers have grown steadily by at least 1 or 2 percent each month. Food stamps provide financial assistance to low-income households to buy food.

"If we see that next month there's been another dip, then I think we're seeing the beginning of a trend," said Gina Cornia, executive director of Utahns Against Hunger. "I think we need a few months behind us with lower numbers [to know]."

At the food pantry, run by the Salt Lake Community Action Program, the number of people who arrive seeking free food continues to grow. Every day the line of clients waiting for help snakes outside the door. Approximately 15 or more new people a day request food.

Many of the people in need report having zero income.

"Especially with a lot of the Hispanic families," said Diana Petersen, who helps run the pantry. "Because jobs have gotten stricter [about immigration status], they're not working anymore."

Officials say next month's food stamp numbers will give them a sense whether more Utahns may be regaining self-sufficiency and relying on their own income.

Warmer weather may affect the high demand at pantries.

"I wonder as landscaping and some sort of summer jobs pick up whether that will remain the case," Cornia said.

[jlyon@sltrib.com](mailto:jlyon@sltrib.com)

Are you hungry?

To find a food pantry in your neighborhood or to sign up for food stamps, call 211 for more information.

[Close Window](#)

[Send To Printer](#)