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State Ranks 38th in Food Stamp Utilization*Easier Applications and Continued Outreach Can Increase Future Rankings***Executive Summary**

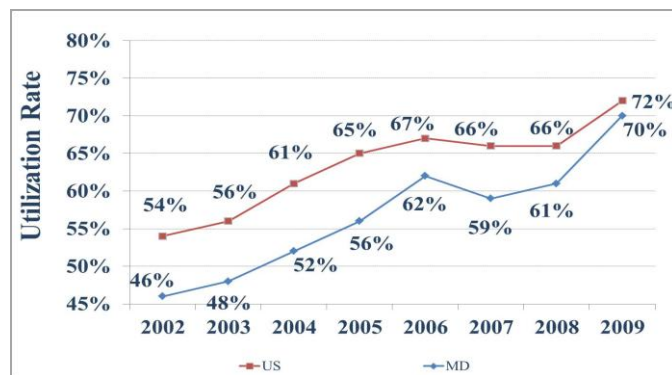
Maryland has increased its effort to connect hungry families to services, improving from 42nd to 38th nationally in food stamp utilization. This increased utilization is mirrored in the rise in enrollments since 2008. Frustration with enrollment processes for food stamps and other social service programs led to the convening of a “No Wrong Door” working group during the 2010 legislative session and a [final report being submitted to the General Assembly in June of 2011](#). The report contains recommendations for the provision of public benefits and social services through a fully integrated system which would allow families to apply for multiple benefits through a single entry portal.

Background

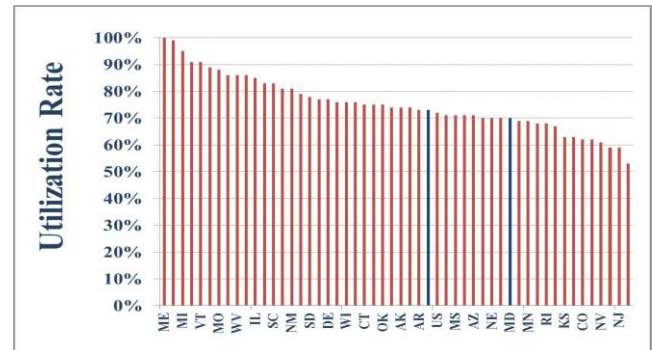
With the lingering effects of the recession and more Maryland families facing issues of food insecurity, food stamp utilization has increased in Maryland. This report looks at the latest data on food stamp utilization.

Findings

Recent data indicates that 70 percent of eligible Marylanders (590,000) received food stamp benefits. This compares to a national utilization rate of 72 percent and is an increase from the previous year, when only 61 percent received food stamp benefits. Maryland's food stamp utilization rate ranks 38th in the country; a rise from the previous year.¹



¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture: *Reaching Those in Need* (2011). The report reflects data from 2009.

**Discussion and Recommendations**

Despite increased enrollment in food stamps, children are going hungry, though those numbers have decreased slightly from the height of the recession². The State has also taken steps, as part of the Governor's goal to end Childhood Hunger by 2015, to increase the food stamp utilization rate among eligible families³. Since 2008, the number of potential food stamp recipients has increased by over 280,000 applications⁴.

Advocates for Children and Youth worked as part of the No Wrong Door Committee, which submitted its final report on June 30, 2011 with recommendations on how to deliver benefits and services more efficiently including:

1. Adopting a single uniform application for all benefits
2. Exploring other means of service delivery such as Smart Phone applications
3. Exploring ways to standardize eligibility criteria across programs
4. Streamlining the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) administration and make it easier for clients to apply
5. Coordinating with applications for Free-and Reduced-priced Meals in schools
6. Connecting systems to enable data sharing

² U.S.D.A. Economic Research Service, *Household Food Security in the United States, 2010* (Sept. 2011).

³ Maryland Statestat. End Childhood Hunger by 2015

⁴ Maryland Statestat. Maryland Department of Human Resources

