

Food Stamp Challenge 2007

Live on a Food Stamp Budget for a Day

Hunger. Food insecurity. These are abstract terms for most of us. We imagine. We theorize. But we haven't experienced not knowing where our next meal will come from or if we'll have enough food in the cupboard to make it through the week. For more than 35 million Americans, this situation is all too real – and 775,000 of them are New Yorkers.

What is it *really* like to be hungry? Most of us have never known. But now you may have a small experience of what it's like. Join New York advocates in taking the food stamp challenge. Experience the challenge of eating nutritious meals on \$3.50 per person a day. Learn the difficulty of poverty by living on a food stamp budget for a day.

For 30 years, the Food Stamp Program has been America's first line of defense against hunger and food insecurity. Each month, more than 1.8 million New Yorkers rely on food stamps to help meet their food needs. Through the use of food stamps, low-income individuals and families are able to obtain food at grocery stores for meals at home. In New York, more than 80 percent of food stamp benefits go to families with children.

The Food Stamp Program helps strengthen families and the communities where those families reside – rural, urban, and suburban – by generating almost \$2.2 billion in economic activity in New York. The *National Journal* recently identified the Food Stamp Program as one of government's top successes.

During the week of May 15 - May 21, participate in the food stamp challenge to see if you can make ends meet on a food stamp budget. Imagine your cupboards are bare, and buy your groceries using the average food stamp benefit in New York of \$3.50 per person per day.

For details, contact Trudi Renwick at the Fiscal Policy Institute, Renwick@fiscalspolicy.org or (518) 786-3156.

Let us know you're participating in the food stamp challenge at Renwick@fiscalspolicy.org.

The food stamp challenge will include government, religious, business and civic leaders in the educational and awareness-building experience of living on a food stamp budget for one day during the week. Participants are asked to share their experiences during the challenge through speeches, sermons, letters to the editor, and calls to their Congressional representatives.

Food Stamp Challenge: Living on a Food Stamp Budget for a Day

As Congress prepares to reauthorize the Farm Bill that includes the Food Stamp program, America's first line of defense against hunger and food insecurity, it is important to raise awareness about the need to strengthen the program. The average food stamp benefit is only about \$1 per person per meal, and each year benefits decline in value. It is critical that Congress understand the importance of stopping the erosion of food stamp benefits.

In that spirit, New Yorkers have been asked to accept the following food stamp challenge.

I hereby certify that I have accepted the Food Stamp Challenge.

- I will attempt to live for at least one day during the week of May 15 to May 21 spending on food no more than the Food Stamp Budget amount (\$1.16 per person per meal).*
- I will send a letter to the editor of my local paper describing my experience- whether or not I was successful.*
- I will share my experience with my Congressional representatives*
- I cannot accept the Food Stamp Challenge this week but I will contact my Congressional representatives to express my support for stopping the erosion of food stamp benefits*
- Please send me more information*

Challenge Day(s) *Please circle one or more days*

May 15 May 16 May 17 May 18 May 19 May 20 May 21

Name _____

Organizational Affiliation (optional) _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Congressional District _____

Please mail this pledge form to Trudi Renwick, Fiscal Policy Institute, 1 Lear Jet Lane, Latham, NY, 12110 or fax to 518-786-3146 or email to Renwick@fiscalpolicy.org.