



HUNGER TASK FORCE

## **Food Challenge Fact Sheet**

### **What is the Food Stamp Challenge?**

The Food Stamp Challenge is an attempt to live one week on the average food stamp benefit—approximately \$1 per meal.

### **Why take the Food Stamp Challenge?**

To experience firsthand the impact of poverty on your food intake and to educate the people around you on the challenges of avoiding hunger, staying healthy and finding affordable nutritious foods with such a modest benefit. While living on a food stamp budget for just a week cannot come close to the struggles encountered by low-income families week after week and month after month, it does provide those who take the Challenge with a new perspective and greater understanding.

### **Why just \$1 per meal—that's really low!**

It is, but working poor families, people with disabilities and seniors on fixed incomes are forced to do it every day. After paying for housing, energy and healthcare expenses, many low-income households have little or no money remaining to spend on food without food stamp benefits. In addition, most food stamp households report that their food stamp benefits do not last the entire month, and many are forced to turn to food pantries and soup kitchens.

### **How can I participate?**

First, fill out the Food Stamp Challenge pledge form at [www.hungertaskforce.org](http://www.hungertaskforce.org). Then shop for food, spending no more than \$21 per household member for the week and saving your receipts. You must avoid accepting free food from family and friends or at work or events. Simply put, you live on the \$21 allotted. Make sure you keep a daily log of your eating experiences—after the challenge ends on Sept. 20, tell us about your experience by sending us your daily log or filling out a daily log online. Both can be found at [www.hungertaskforce.org](http://www.hungertaskforce.org).

### **What's the Farm Bill and what does it have to do with food stamps?**

The Farm Bill is a piece of \$180 billion legislation renewed every five years that authorizes funding for programs vital to feeding the poor, including food stamps, commodity foods, senior farmers' market programs and the Emergency Food Assistance Program. Simply put, ensuring that the nation's poor have access to sufficient, nutritious food is impossible without well-run and well-funded federal nutrition programs as authorized by the Farm Bill.

### **How many people receive food stamps in Wisconsin?**

A record 386,000 people now receive monthly food stamp benefits in Wisconsin, including residents from every county in the state. Each month, food stamp recipients pump more than \$31 million back into the state economy through consumer spending, supporting the grocery stores, farmers' markets and supermarkets vital to the state's economic health.

### **I want more information—where do I go?**

Visit Hunger Task Force's Web site, [www.hungertaskforce.org](http://www.hungertaskforce.org), or call Aron Corbett, Hunger Task Force educator, at (414) 238-6470.