

Food Bank
of Yolo County

A TOOLKIT FOR A VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT
FOR THE FOOD BANK OF YOLO COUNTY

Take the Challenge: Living on a Food Stamp Budget

1244 Fortna Ave
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Foodbankyc.org

For Details go to: www.foodbankyc.org

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- The Food Stamp Program is the nation's single most important government program in the fight against hunger.
- The program is designed to improve the nutrition level and food purchasing power of low-income people.

Be part of the solution!

Why take the Challenge?

The Food Stamp Program makes a difference in the lives of millions of Americans across the country, but in many cases, the benefits received are too low to allow families to purchase nutritious food and to feed their families healthy meals on a consistent basis. In Yolo County there are estimates that there are almost 20,000 people in poverty (out of a population of approximately 188,000), with a food stamp enrollment of 11,829 up 25% from 2007 count, with over half being children.

The "Food Stamp Challenge" seeks to do three things: highlight what it is like to eat on the average food stamp benefit - approximately \$1.33 per meal; help the Food Bank raise money to assist in its efforts to feed the hungry and alleviate malnutrition in Yolo County; and offer an easy do-it-yourself opportunity for anyone to get involved in doing a virtual fund raiser for the Food Bank.

In the past, members of Congress, governors, state officials, journalists and other community leaders have taken the Challenge and have learned firsthand what it is like to try to make ends meet on the average food stamp benefit. Last year, for example, Yolo County Board of Supervisors Mariko Yamada (now a member of the California Assembly), and Board of Supervisor Matt Rexroad, among others, participated in the challenge..

While the average food stamp benefit (including recent increases and stimulus money) is approximately \$4 per day (depending on income and family situation) some households qualify for the maximum benefit, while others get as little as \$10 a month.

After paying for housing, energy and health care 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, soup kitchens, and the Food Bank of Yolo County. 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 hopefully a greater understanding. [Link to Registration Form](#)

Why Virtual?

To be launched on April 20, 2009, the Food Stamp Challenge (FSC) has some exciting benefits:

1. You Are In Total Control:

- You are in control of choosing when you will undertake the fundraising event (you choose the time that works best for you);
- You control how small or how large you want the event to be (contact us if you want more details on how to grow this event);
- You choose the length of time you want to hold the event for (although we recommend that you do it for 5-day periods);
- You determine how many times a year you want to hold the event (it could become an annual event or do it whenever you are feeling energetic and excited about helping the Food Bank);
- You determine how much you want to charge for the event (although we recommend \$25 for a 5-day period, contact us if you want ideas on how to raise this event fee);
- If you and/or some or all of your participants register as official Food Bank fundraisers you will be able to take an active part in the Food Bank's blog to share your experience with other event goers;
- You don't have to leave your home to participate as an event organizer or event attendee;
- You don't have to rent space, beg for donations of materials, equipment, food, or supplies to put on your event; and
- You can choose to create a virtual event site and decorate it as you wish, choosing your own party themes, and fixings limited only by your creative abilities and ambitions.

2. Tap into the web's social networks to grow your FSC event (remember, you are in Total Control) you could use:

- Facebook;
- MySpace;
- Blogs;
- Podcasts;

Food Stamp Program FACTS AND FIGURES

- The current program benefits average \$1.33 per meal per person, just \$4 a day.
- Consider this in the context of typical spending for a dozen eggs, bread, a gallon of milk, a box of cereal, a vegetable, and a piece of fruit.
- These numbers add up quickly
- Food stamp recipients receive assistance in once monthly allotments.
- Food "stamps" are no longer used, having been replaced by an electronic benefit transfer system, known as EBT.
- EBT is a benefits card that operates similarly to a bank credit or debit card.

Be part of the solution!

[Link to Registration Form](#)

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- Videocasts; and
- Others (you decide).

3. The easiest way to get involved, make a contribution, help your community, or to just accept the challenge:

- Determine what you want to do;
- How many people can you get to network with you;
- How much money can you raise in a fundraiser for which you are in total control and can feel great afterwards for taking on and seeing it to its conclusion; and
- No commitment to do the event more than once, or you do it annually, or as frequently as you like (your choice, you are in Total Control).

4. Recognition for your efforts (if you want it, your choice, you are in Total Control):

- Your choice, you can choose to be anonymous or accept full or limited recognition: you tell us what you are comfortable with; and
- As the organizer we'll post on the Food Bank's Wall of Fame at the Food Bank office, your name, picture, and how much money your raised with your event (with your permission, of course).

5. The environmentally friendly way to raise money, this **Green FSC** event has:

- No traffic pollution;
- No waste or leftovers;
- No drunk drivers are added by the event;
- No impact on forests by use of paper, and other print advertising; and
- No physical presence required

Food Stamp Program

FACTS AND FIGURES

The Food Stamp Program is targeted toward those most in need households:

- More than half of food stamp recipients are children, and eight percent are over 60 years old;
- Three out of ten food stamp recipients had earnings;
- Over two thirds of food stamp households had no countable resources;
- Approximately 40 percent of food stamp households have gross incomes at or below half of the poverty line.
- The 2008 poverty line for an individual is approximately \$866 a month or \$10,400 a year for one person; for a family of four: \$1,766 a month or \$21,200.

Challenge Participants

As these virtual events grow, we will post a list of participants as they register. On our website, click on [Participants](#) for the list.

[Be part of the solution!](#)

Media Coverage

As these virtual events grow, we will post a list of media coverage as they appear. On our website, click on [Media List](#) for the list. Currently, a sampling of previous media coverage is posted because some of the articles detail some experiences and relevant facts.

[Link to Registration Form](#)

Challenge Template

To participate in the Food Stamp virtual fundraising event, fill out the Food Bank's registration form online at: www.foodbankyc.org

The form lays out the details of how the virtual fundraising event works, such as what you need, how long it will last, and how to set goals on how many people you want to involve and how much money you want to raise.

For additional information or ideas, contact the Food Bank, and/or take a look at the Food Bank's virtual fundraising event blog at: <http://yolofoodbank.blogspot.com>

According to one study, reported on by the Sacramento Bee in April 2009, the average U.S. shopper spends:

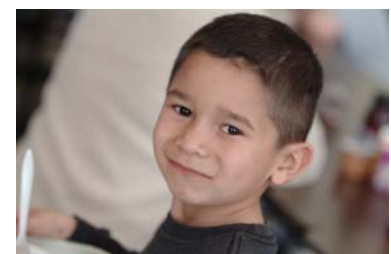
- 50.10% on perishables (fresh produce, meat, dairy, eggs)
- 18.14% on nonperishables (flour, coffee, pasta, canned produce)
- 8.26% on bottled beverages
- 7.94% on non-food (household cleaners, toilet paper, pet food)
- 4.42% on snack foods
- 4.38% on general merchandise (housewares, electronics, automotive items)
- 3.58% on health and beauty care, and
- 3.18% on pharmacy

The average annual 4-person household food cost is \$11,364 (USDA)

The average annual 4-person food stamp allocation is \$6,128 (this includes recent increases including 13% beginning in April 2009)

Food Stamp Program FACTS AND FIGURES

- To be eligible for food stamps, households, except those with elderly or disabled members, must have gross incomes below 130 percent of the Federal poverty line (less than \$13,520 for an individual).
- All households must have net incomes below 100 percent of the poverty line to be eligible.
- Time limits for receiving food stamps also apply for many able bodied, childless, unemployed adults.
- Eligibility in the Food Stamp Program includes work requirements.
- All non-elderly adults receiving benefits who are able to work are required to be employed or to register for employment.
- Many must participate in work training and job search programs.



Be part of the solution!

Virtual Event Registration

Nationally, the Food Stamp Program helps more than 26 million low-income people purchase food for themselves and their families. In Yolo County the Food Stamp Program helps about 10 thousand low-income people purchase food. More than half of the people receiving the benefits of the Food Stamp Program are children.

The program is designed as a safety net to help ensure people have access to food during difficult times, with the majority of people leaving the program within nine months. With the economy in the doldrums as it is now, food stamp assistance couldn't be more timely. Your participation will provide you with an opportunity to help the less fortunate in our community, and will give you an understanding of how the recipients are impacted by this allotment and the challenges you might face if you were dependent on food stamps. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is responsible for administering the Food Stamp Program, the nationwide average monthly benefit is approximately \$4 a day or \$1.33 a meal.

Participation Guidelines

1. Each person should only spend a total of \$4 per day on food and beverages during the period you wish to participate.
2. All food purchased and eaten during the Virtual Event, including fast food and dining out, must be included in the total spending.
3. During the Virtual Event, only eat food that you purchase for the project. Do not eat food that you already own (this does not include spices and condiments).
4. Avoid accepting free food from friends, family, or at work, including at receptions or briefings.
5. Please keep track of receipts on food spending and take note of your experiences throughout the Virtual Event.
6. Please be sure to enter the group name you are participating with so that we can give the group full credit for organizing the Virtual Event. This is not applicable if you are doing it as an individual.
7. Please go to the [Food Bank's online blog](#) and post your progress and especially your experience during the Virtual Event.
8. You may print this form, fill it out, and give it to your group leader/organizer. Please ask your group leader/organizer to enter the information online so that we can track the group's progress.
9. Your donation is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. [Link to Registration Form](#)

Note: You may find it difficult to complete the Challenge due to schedule or the limited budget, however, it will still be important and worthwhile to track and share your experiences.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this Virtual Event. ***You are now part of the solution!***

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REGISTRATION FORM

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Virtual Event Group Name (if any): _____
[For example: Jane Doe's Food Budget Misers; or Doe's \$4-a-day Team]

Email address: _____

Number of people to attend the Virtual Event [Goal]? _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ Amount to raise [Goal] \$ _____

Do you wish to be listed as a participant? (check one) Yes _____ No _____

After you fill out this form, you may want to print it for your tax records (your donation is tax deductible) before you click the Submit button at the bottom of this page. You may use PayPal or Donate Now to electronically send your donation, or you can mail a copy of this form with your check payable to the Food Bank of Yolo County for the amount (\$25 per participant x number of participants) to:

Food Bank of Yolo County
1244 Fortna Avenue
Woodland, CA 95776

However, you may also do all of this online at www.foodbankyc.org

Virtual Event Challenge Quick Overview

- \$25 admission (you can pay it yourself, or have someone sponsor you)
- Include cost of all food consumed in your \$4 daily allowance
- Eat only food purchased during event
- No free food allowed
- Keep track of your expenses
- Identify group if joining event with a group
- Register at Google's Blogger.com site to get blogging privileges
- Share your experience on the blog, daily, if you are able to

Contacts and Resources

Food Bank of Yolo County

www.foodbankyc.org

Food Stamp Virtual Event Challenge Blog: <http://yolofoodbank.blogspot.com>

Primary Contact: Jose Martinez, josem@foodbankyc.org 530-668-0690

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California Association of Food Banks

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Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)

<http://www.frac.org>

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

<http://www.cbpp.org>

Feeding America (formerly, America's Second Harvest)

<http://feedingamerica.org>

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