



take a week

Action:

The food stamp challenge will take place during Hunger Awareness Week, April 22-28, 2007.

Take the challenge yourself, living on \$21.00 per person for the week. For a short time, feel what it's like to live with hunger and food insecurity.

Challenge your family, friends, religious leaders and community organizations to participate with you.

Message:

Let us know you have accepted the challenge at advacay@oregonfoodbank.org.

For more information, please contact Jeff Kleen at Oregon Food Bank, jkleen@oregonfoodbank.org or (503)282-0555, Ext. 204.



Legislative Yellow Pages

State Legislative Information
1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem)
(503) 986-1000 (in Salem)
www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide

Members of Congress

Senator Smith
(503) 326-3386
Senator Wyden
(503) 326-7525
Rep. Wu (District 1)
(503) 326-2901
Rep. Walden (District 2)
(541) 776-4646
Rep. Blumenauer (District 3)
(503) 231-2300
Rep. DeFazio (District 4)
(541) 465-6732
Rep. Hooley (District 5)
(503) 588-9100

Farm bill programs are important in fight against hunger in Oregon

Every Oregonian deserves to have enough to eat.

The 2007 federal farm bill will reauthorize two programs that are critically important in the fight against hunger in Oregon: food stamps and The

Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) — the commodity program that bolsters the efforts of the Oregon Food Bank Network.

Both of these programs are included in the nutrition title of the farm bill. While we recognize that budget constraints are tight in the current political climate, strong funding for the nutrition title is extremely important so these vital programs may continue to benefit hungry Oregonians. Funds for the

nutrition title must at the very least be protected, and if possible, increased in order to maximize the benefits of these programs.

Food stamps remain an integral piece of the fight against hunger. Every month in Oregon, more than 425,000 utilize food stamps to supplement their grocery budgets, generating \$855 million of economic activity. This economic activity supports grocers, farmers' markets, and communities across the state—contributing toward increased job security, strong wages, business profits and economic vitality.

In his proposed budget,

President Bush has recommended eliminating the federal policy on expanded categorical eligibility for food stamp recipients. Expanded categorical eligibility allows Oregon the flexibility to coordinate eligibility for the Food Stamp Program with rules used for other state initiatives. Applicants who have already qualified for certain other public services are automatically qualified for food stamps without having to be re-verified. Categorical eligibility also allows most households earning incomes up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level to access food stamps. It particularly supports hard-working

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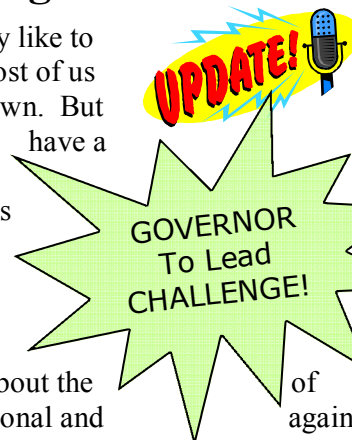
Take the food stamp challenge

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 almost 500,000 of them are Oregonians.

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.

Take the food stamp challenge. Learn about the physical, emotional and social difficulties of poverty and food insecurity by living on a food stamp budget for just one week.



For 30 years, the food stamp program has been

America's first line of defense against hunger and food insecurity.

Each month, more than 425,000 Oregonians rely on food stamps to avoid

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Farm bill programs *(continued from page 1)*

families by not counting the values of vehicles, retirement savings, and other resources. This allows families to keep a vehicle and access important elements of their lives—work, school, health care, and grocery stores where their food budgets can go further. Families who are saving for retirement or further education do not have to liquidate these funds to qualify for food stamps, enhancing their potential for future economic security.

Expanded categorical eligibility for food stamps must be maintained. If federal policy changes and states are not allowed to utilize categorical eligibility, the Oregon Department of Human Services estimates

that more than 50,000 Oregonians would lose their food stamp eligibility. Thousands more could potentially lose their eligibility. The impact of the cuts would be borne primarily by low-income, working families with children. Oregon's economy would lose out on \$1 million of federal funds per month.

Along with food stamps, TEFAP also plays an important role in the fight against hunger. TEFAP commodities historically have been vital to the food supply in emergency food boxes provided by Oregon Food Bank and food banks around the country. TEFAP commodities are especially beneficial to the

Oregon Food Bank Network because most are shelf-stable and ready to distribute. They don't require the labor of additional repackaging or the high cost of refrigeration.

Unfortunately, TEFAP commodities received by Oregon Food Bank have declined by 25 percent in each of the past two years. While the supply of these commodities has been cut, the demand for emergency food assistance in Oregon continues to grow. Last year, almost 200,000 Oregonians ate from emergency food boxes each month.

Full funding of TEFAP must be maintained so the Oregon Food Bank Net-

work can continue to meet the needs of the almost 170,000 households in Oregon that live with hunger or the threat of hunger.

Food stamps and TEFAP are crucial to the health and well-being of some of Oregon's most vulnerable people—seniors, people with disabilities and children. Regular readers of Advocacy Alert will see that this month we are featuring a different version of "take five," our monthly call to action. See our special "take a week" to find out how you can help support these important nutrition programs.

**Mark your calendar.
Hunger Awareness
Week - April 22-28, 2007**

The Advocacy Alert is published jointly by Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF).

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Take the challenge with our governor *(continued from page 1)*

going hungry. Through the use of the Oregon Trail Card and an electronic balance transfer (EBT) system, low-income individuals and families are able to obtain food at grocery stores for meals at home. Nationally, 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 \$855 million in economic activity in Oregon. The National Journal recently identified the food stamp

program as one of government's top successes.

During Hunger Awareness Week, April 22 - 28, 2007, participants in the food stamp challenge will see if they can make ends meet on a food stamp budget. They will buy their groceries using the average food stamp benefit in Oregon of \$21.00 per person for the week.

For details, contact Jeff Kleen at Oregon Food Bank, jkleen@oregonfoodbank.org or (503)282-0555, Ext. 204.

Let us know you're participating in the food

stamp challenge by emailing advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org.

The food stamp challenge will include government, religious, business and civic leaders in the experience of living on a food stamp budget for one week. Participants are asked to publicize their experiences during the challenge through speeches, sermons, writings, and op-ed pieces.

Late breaking news – we are very pleased to announce that Governor Kulongoski will take the lead on the food stamp challenge.