



arkansas
Hunger Relief
alliance

1400 W. Markham, Suite 304 | Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
501.399.9999 | fax: 501.399.9996

www.ARhungeralliance.org

For Immediate Release

For more information contact:

Ellen Ingram, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance
501.399.9999 or 501.837.2475
eingram@arhungeralliance.org

Hope Coulter, Arkansas Hunger Coalition
501.374.6675
arhunger@comcast.net

Arkansas lawmakers accept Arkansas Hunger Challenge to live on \$3 worth of food per day

Little Rock, Ark. (August 8, 2007) – Feeding yourself on \$3 per day is no easy task, yet thousands of Arkansas food stamp recipients face that challenge every day. Now, some Arkansas lawmakers dedicated to fighting hunger are ready to experience it for themselves.

For three straight days – August 13 – 15 – more than 20 Arkansas legislators will accept the challenge of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and Arkansas Hunger Coalition to live on food stamp amounts equal to the typical state recipient. The average monthly benefit in Arkansas is \$89.72 per person --- less than \$3 per day.

A media conference planned for Friday, August 17 at 11 a.m. at the Capitol Rotunda will give Arkansas Hunger Challenge participants a chance to report on their experiences --- and the many challenges of eating on only \$3 a day.

State Representative Kathy Webb (District 27) of Little Rock spearheads the challenge based on her concern about the prevalence of hunger in our state.

“With the third highest incidence of hunger in the nation, we as a state need to be more focused on the plight of low-income Arkansans. People in our state, many of them children and the elderly, simply cannot afford the nutritious foods their bodies need. Food stamps help, but the current allotment is far less than many people think, and certainly not enough to sustain a person for very long,” Webb said.

Other Arkansas legislators who have accepted the Challenge:

Rep. Pam Adcock	Rep. David Johnson	Rep. Johnnie Roebuck
Rep. Fred Allen	Rep. Janet Johnson	Sen. Mary Anne Salmon
Rep. Linda Chesterfield	Rep. Buddy Lovell	Rep. Lindsley Smith
Rep. David Cook	Rep. Bruce Maloch and daughter	Rep. Charolette Wagner
Rep. Monty Davenport	Rep. Tracy Pennartz	Rep. Kathy Webb
Rep. David Dunn	Rep. Benny Petrus and wife	Sen. Hank Wilkins
Rep. Stephanie Flowers		
Rep. Rick Green		
Rep. Steve Harrelson	Rep. Sandra Prater	

The Food Stamp Program helps more than 380,000 low-income Arkansans purchase food for themselves and their families and brings in \$420 million in federal money that benefits not only recipients, their families and their employers but also grocers and small-business owners. The program is designed as a safety net to help ensure people have access to food during difficult times and to respond quickly to sudden downturns in the economy, layoffs, and natural disasters like ice storms, tornadoes, and hurricanes. The majority of people participate in the program for only nine months, and about 80% of recipients are households with children, according to national statistics.

Hope Coulter, executive director of the Arkansas Hunger Coalition, is also taking the Challenge. Coulter said the Coalition is sponsoring the activity because it will allow members of the Arkansas Legislature to better understand how the program works on a personal level.

“The Food Stamp Program is up for reauthorization by Congress right now, and needs an infusion of new funding in order to serve people as it was meant to. We’re hoping that this activity helps state officials to understand the importance of the program so they can urge their federal counterparts to strengthen it. It’s heartening that these legislators have accepted our challenge and are truly trying to walk in the shoes of many of their constituents.”

Debra Alich, executive director of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, will also take part in the Challenge. Alich said the Alliance network of six food banks and 900-plus local feeding programs sees the face of hunger every day.

“Hunger is all around us, in every community--it impacts the lives of almost 500,000 Arkansans. The federal Food Stamp Program is a start, but it alone can’t end hunger in our state. By experiencing hunger firsthand, these officials demonstrate their concern for the quality of life of our most vulnerable neighbors. This can only result in more compassionate public policies.”

Members of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance are Arkansas Foodbank Network (Little Rock), Foodbank of North Central Arkansas (Norfolk), Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas (Jonesboro), Harvest Texarkana, Ozark Food Bank (Springdale) and River Valley Regional Food Bank (Fort Smith).