



NEWS RELEASE



Take the

#HungerChallenge

September 20-26, 2015



HUNGER CHALLENGE ILLUMINATES STRUGGLE OF FOOD INSECURITY **Participants challenged to live on \$4.21 a day**

RALEIGH, NC (September 16, 2015) –The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is challenging the community to live on a food budget of just \$4.21 per person, per day. Beginning Sunday, September 20, Food Bank staff and other supporters taking the challenge will get a sense of what life is like for thousands of low-income individuals and families living on the average daily FNS (Food Stamp) benefit for the state of North Carolina. The Challenge will compel participants to make food shopping choices on a limited budget, demonstrating how difficult it is to avoid hunger, afford nutritious food, and stay healthy with few resources. Challenge participants are encouraged to share their daily experiences via social media channels and with family and friends.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) is a federal food assistance program (referred to as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at the national level) that helps low-income families purchase the food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet. These benefits are a lifeline for families struggling to pay for basic necessities such as rent and electricity, helping avoid difficult choices such as paying for food or utilities, groceries or medicine.

The Food Bank offers FNS Benefits assistance through our “Three Squares for CENC” program, in which dedicated Outreach Coordinators provide assistance with FNS applications. This program makes applying for benefits easier and less stressful. Staff members bring the application process to the clients, allowing them to complete the forms in a familiar setting. Staff also answer questions and help reduce the anxiety and barriers that many experience when

trying to navigate the FNS program. In 2014-2015, the Three Squares for CENC program generated nearly \$1.5 million in FNS benefits for those in need.

The Food Bank is encouraging the public to take the Hunger Challenge during September's Hunger Action Month – a nationwide campaign mobilizing the public to take action on the issue of hunger.

The Challenge ends Saturday, September 26. A daily summary of participants' social media activity will be available on the Food Bank's Hunger Matters blog - blog.foodbankcenc.org. Follow the hashtag #HungerChallenge on Twitter for more frequent updates and coverage.

For more information about the FNS Challenge visit www.foodbankcenc.org/HungerChallenge.

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About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that has provided food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina for more than 30 years. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 800 partner agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults through warehouses in Durham, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh, the Sandhills (Southern Pines), and Wilmington. In fiscal year 2014-2015, the Food Bank distributed more than 57 million pounds of food and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, nearly 650,000 people struggle to access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for an active and healthy life.

www.foodbankcenc.org.

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