

## TAKING THE SNAP CHALLENGE

Could you feed yourself three nutritious meals a day with only \$4.56? That's the average amount 500,000 Coloradans are receiving from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Thousands of our neighbors subsist on such a budget for themselves and their families through their SNAP benefits.

The federal nutrition program, previously known as food stamps, provides households with the financial resources to purchase groceries—literally putting food on tables for millions of American children, adults and seniors.

Many families survive entirely on the food acquired through their SNAP benefits, which affords \$31.92 per week to the average recipient in Colorado. What if that's all you had to spend on groceries?

**We challenge YOU to try living on such a food budget for at least one week.**

### What is the SNAP Challenge?

This challenge involves living on what would be the weekly SNAP (food stamps) allowance in Colorado for an entire week, so you can get a sense of what it would be like to subsist on SNAP. This means spending only \$4.56 per day, per person, on *everything* that you eat, including breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, seasonings and drinks.

How the challenge works:

- Determine the length of your challenge. Can you do it for seven straight days? Even if you do it for one or three days, you will gain valuable insight into the challenges faced by millions of Americans.
- Spend no more than \$4.56 per day, including beverages.
- Only buy and eat/drink items that are allowed to be purchased with SNAP.
- Don't use food already on hand unless you deduct the value from your daily amount. Salt and pepper do not count against the daily cost allowance, but all other seasoning, cooking oils, condiments, snacks and drinks do.
- Try to include fresh produce and a healthy protein each day.
- Don't accept food from family, friends, co-workers and others. Avoid free food anywhere.
- No outside food or dining out is permitted since you cannot use SNAP benefits on hot meals.
- You may need to cut coupons or search grocery paper ads on days that items are discounted.
- Keep a daily journal of the experience. Did you feel deprived or restricted? Did you eat differently than usual? Were you hungry?

*What you can purchase with SNAP benefits:*

- Produce and canned goods
- Meat and dairy products
- Dried goods, beans and rice
- Breads and cereals
- Baby food and infant formula
- Soda, chips and candy
- Coffee and tea
- Seeds (whether for eating or planting)

*What is not allowed through SNAP:*

- Alcoholic beverages
- Cigarettes
- Hot food or any food that you eat in-store
- Medicine and vitamins
- Non-edible household items like paper towels, toilet paper and soap

Plan to share your experience during LD Poverty Day on Friday, November 4, 2016.