



Budget Option – Participation Guidelines

- **Choose a time period** that allows you to focus and reflect on your experience. This could be National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week or any time period that works for you.
- **Track your spending.** Keep track of how much you spend on groceries throughout your challenge. If you eat out, the money spent at the restaurant must also come out of your budget. (Something to think about, SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase hot prepared foods. If you were actually relying on these benefits, money spent to eat out would have to come from somewhere else.)
- **Try not to eat from your pantry.** Avoid eating food that you already have in your pantry or fridge *except* spices and condiments. If you use an item that you bought before the challenge, think about how that would affect your budget if you had to buy it.
- **Taking freebies.** If accepting food given to you, realize the impact on your budget; just think about it. Accepting free food from family, friends, or coworkers isn't always available for everyone.
- **Consider donating** the amount you save during your Challenge, or more, to support local organizations who work to improve food security community wide.

Choose Your Budget Amount

For the challenge, participants will make use of the maximum *SNAP* (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefit amount based on household size. (Amounts as listed on the Oregon Department of Human Services website as of September 2020.

<https://govstatus.egov.com/or-dhs-benefits>) Actual amount benefits received are based on several factors. To learn more visit the website link above.

Monthly

One Person = \$194 per month
 Two People = \$355 per month
 Three People = \$509 per month
 Four People = \$646 per month
 Five People = \$768 per month
 More people?
 -Add \$146 per person

Weekly

One Person = \$44.77 per week
 Two People = \$81.92 per week
 Three People = \$117.46 per wk
 Four People = \$149.08 per week
 Five People = \$177.23 per week
 More people?
 -Add \$33.69 per person

Daily

One Person = \$6.38 per day
 Two People = \$11.67 per day
 Three People = \$16.73 per day
 Four People = \$21.24 per day
 Five People = \$25.25 per day
 More people?
 -Add \$4.80 more per person

Tips to Prepare for the Budget Challenge

- **Plan!** Before going to the store, plan meals for your challenge. Maybe a meal for each evening is not necessary. Cooking enough for more than one meal will not only save time, it could help you stay on budget.
- **Make a list.** Preparing a detailed shopping list saves time and money. Follow your list! If it's not on your list, don't buy it. Don't be tempted by eye-catching displays. If it is not on your list, don't put it in your cart.
- **Look for low-cost, nutrient rich products** found within the store aisles, like dried beans, canned meat, and brown rice.
- **Utilize weekly store advertisements.** Oftentimes stores have weekly ads for grocery items that they have on sale. Planning meals based on these ads could help you keep on budget. Remember though, it needs to be something that you plan to use, not an impulse buy.
- **Beware of coupons.** Using a coupon only saves money if it's an item you need. Most products advertised with coupons are non-essentials. Also, often coupons require that you buy several of the same item which could put you over budget for the week.
- **Buy private-label and buy in bulk.** Most private-label products are similar in nutrients to national brands; they may be even better for you. Check the labels and compare nutrition facts. Also, buying dry foods in bulk allows you to measure and just buy what you need for your challenge or for a single recipe.
- **Cook from scratch when/if you can.** Prepared foods cost much more than meals made from scratch. Yes, this takes time, and the reality is that many limited-income families have neither the time nor facilities and equipment for much cooking, but if you do, think of all the healthy delicious meals you could make.

Reflect and Share Your Experience

Through reflection and sharing your experiences with friends, family, and others, a real connection and desire to end food insecurity could be gained. We would love to hear about your experience, new-found realizations, or how you plan to help end hunger. Send us an email (director@willamettehungerchallenge.org) or share your thoughts on your social media platforms using [#hungerchallenge](#). It will be wonderful to hear all that is discovered!

Pre-Challenge Reflections:

As you prepare for the challenge and do your food shopping, ask yourself some of the following questions.

- What are you hoping to take away from your experience?
- How do you normally buy your food? Do you go food shopping weekly, bi-weekly, or daily? Do you typically budget or plan ahead of time?
- Preparing for the challenge, where did you shop? Did you notice if the places you shopped at accepted supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits? Did you have to travel far to get there?

- How did you choose what to buy while shopping? Did you have to choose between certain items to stay within your budget?

Mid-Challenge Check-In:

Now that you're a few days into your challenge, check-in by asking yourself some of the following questions.

- In what ways, if any, has your daily routine changed so far?
- Has your limited budget affected your food thoughts and habits? If so, how? Have you found that you have had to make changes to the quality, diversity, or types of food you typically eat?
- What kinds of meals have you been preparing and how do they compare to meals you would normally eat?
- Have you chosen to eat out? Why or why not? Have your food choices impacted you socially?
- Have you chosen to skip snacks or a meal? Why or why not?

Post -Challenge Reflection:

Now that you've completed your challenge, take a moment to reflect and share your experiences.

- How was your experience similar or different from others you know who took the challenge? When you spoke to people about taking the challenge, what were their reactions?
- How would your experience change if you had a family to support? What if you were older? Without transportation? Unemployed? Had a medical condition that required a special diet? Or chose a particular diet for moral or ethical purposes?
- Did you learn something new about yourself? Was this something you anticipated or did it surprise you?
- Has your level of gratitude, empathy, or compassion changed due to your participation?
- What is the one thing in particular that you will take away from your challenge?

Various organizations in the Willamette Valley work to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and their root causes in our community. Links to many of these groups can be found on the [Willamette Valley Hunger Challenge](#) website. Take some time and learn what resources are available. Choose one or more that resonate with you, get involved, and give them your financial support.

