



Virginia Poverty Law Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2013

Contact: LaTonya Reed

804-782-9430 x 17

latonya@vplc.org

Working with Food Research and Action Center, Virginia Poverty Law Center Launches New Initiative to Fight Hunger in the Commonwealth

RICHMOND— With funding from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), the Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC) has launched a new initiative to fight hunger in the Commonwealth – Virginia Hunger Solutions. VPLC’s work in this area will be led by LaTonya Reed, public benefits staff attorney at the Center. She will focus primarily on advocacy, research, public education, and outreach related to nutrition and hunger throughout the Commonwealth.

Working with FRAC, one of VPLC’s priorities is to raise awareness of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as the Food Stamp Program. To offer a glimpse of the challenges faced by many who rely on SNAP, VPLC issued The Food Stamp Challenge in October. During the designated time frame, November 4-8, participants will live on the average weekly food stamp benefit, which is \$32 per person in Virginia.

The Food Stamp Challenge gives participants a view of what life can be like for millions of low-income Americans. Challenge participants typically find they are forced to make difficult food shopping choices, and often realize how difficult it is to avoid hunger, afford nutritious foods, and stay healthy.

“While The Food Stamp Challenge falls far short of presenting the full range of struggles that low-income families encounter week after week and month after month, it does provide a solid platform for education, empathy, and action,” said Reed.

SNAP is a critical resource for individuals and families in Virginia who continue to face economic struggles. According to data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the program reached 1 in 9 Virginians, or 12 percent of the state’s population, in January 2013. On November 1, however, SNAP benefits will be reduced for all participating households. A family

of three will lose \$29 a month – the equivalent of 16 meals. With this cut alone, nearly one million Virginians will face additional hardship to feed their families.

As VPLC begins its partnership with FRAC, the Center hopes that initiatives such as The Food Stamp Challenge will shed light on what it means to grapple with hunger and foster greater understanding of how SNAP works.

###

The Virginia Poverty Law Center is a nonprofit corporation that provides advocacy, education and litigation support for civil justice issues that affect low-income Virginians. www.vplc.org