

Support FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program in FY2013 Appropriations

Help stave off budget cuts in this time of economic hardship

Dear Colleague:

I am deeply concerned about the FY 2013 cuts in funding for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The President's budget includes \$100 million this year, \$20 million below last year's level and half of the amount enacted in FY2010. With the lingering economic crisis and millions of individual and families still struggling, we need to bring this program back to its \$200 million level.

The EFSP was established in 1983 to supplement the work of local social service non-profit and faith-based organizations, both private and governmental, to help people in need of emergency assistance. This collaborative effort between the private and public sectors has disbursed more than \$2.3 billion in federal grant funds during its 21-year history, supporting the work of over 12,000 agencies.

The unemployment and poverty facts that led Congress to increase the EFSP program allocation in 2009 remain the same today. The ongoing economic crisis and high unemployment is straining local organizations tasked with assisting the hardest-hit Americans, often forcing them into a frenetic search for funding to support critical efforts to keep people fed, clothed, and housed. EFSP funds are used for mass shelter, mass feeding, food distribution through food pantries and food banks, one-month utility payments to prevent service cut-offs, and one-month rent/mortgage assistance to prevent evictions or assist people leaving shelters to establish stable living conditions. In short, what amounts to a small amount of money for the federal government translates into life-saving funds for struggling individuals and families.

Many communities have lost EFSP funding and many others have experienced significant cuts to their supplement. The burden of deficit reduction should not rest on the backs of individuals and families who are still reeling from the recession. Please join me in signing the below letter.

If you have questions or would like to sign the letter, **please contact Jason Harris in Rep. Hastings' office (5-1313)**. With warm regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

/s/
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Homeland
Security
1016 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Dicks, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member Price:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2013 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to provide at least \$200 million for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). This total represents the overall amount included for this program in Fiscal Year 2010 and the Fiscal Year 2009 Continuing Resolution.

The EFSP was established in 1983 to supplement the work of local social service non-profit and faith-based organizations, both private and governmental, to help people in need of emergency assistance due to economic crises. This collaborative effort between the private and public sectors has disbursed more than \$2.3 billion in federal grant funds during its 21-year history, supporting the work of over 12,000 agencies.

This program's National Board consists of representatives from the American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Salvation Army; The Jewish Federations of North America; and United Way of America. Together these organizations and thousands of others provide the necessary support for all Americans to live positive and productive lives, without fear of immediate food insecurity or homelessness, as a consequence of the recent recession and lingering recovery period.

The unemployment and poverty facts that led Congress to increase the EFSP program allocation in 2009 remain the same today. The ongoing economic crisis and high unemployment is straining local organizations tasked with assisting the hardest-hit Americans, often forcing them into a frenetic search for funding to support critical efforts to keep people fed, clothed, and housed. EFSP funds are used for mass shelter, mass feeding, food distribution through food pantries and food banks, one-month utility payments to prevent service cut-offs, and one-month rent/mortgage assistance to prevent evictions or assist people leaving shelters to establish stable living conditions. In short, what amounts to a small amount of money for the federal government translates into life-saving funds for struggling individuals and families.

The burden of deficit reduction should not rest on the backs of individuals and families who are still reeling from the recession. With a 40 percent cut in the EFSP allocation in both FY2011 and FY2012, many communities have lost EFSP funding and many others have experienced significant cuts to their supplement. The President's budget request for FY2013 would further reduce the EFSP allocation by an additional \$20 million for next year.

We urge you to help Congress meet the obligations to our citizens by funding the Emergency Food and Shelter Program at \$200 million in the FY2013 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,