

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-6051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

August 1, 2025

Mr. David Richardson
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Richardson and Secretary Noem,

We write to express our grave concern regarding thousands of contracts under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), for which disbursements have not been made as required by law. In January 2025, nearly \$117 million in federal EFSP funding was frozen without explanation and with no indication of when the funds might be released.¹ Although a federal judge ordered FEMA to disburse the funding on March 6, 2025, FEMA has still not released the funds.² FEMA has provided no explanation for this refusal other than saying that it is conducting a "manual review," nor has it provided a timeline for when the funds might be released.³

EFSP is a vital federal program that supports local governments and nonprofit organizations across the country in their efforts to "provide shelter, food and supportive services to individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, hunger and/or homelessness."⁴ Local organizations like United Way use EFSP funds to serve meals, provide groceries, offer communal lodging, and keep people in their homes by providing rental or mortgage assistance and preventing utility service cut-offs.⁵ These funds are overseen and distributed by the a National Board, which is chaired by FEMA and consists of individuals

¹ See United Way Bay Area, *Open Letter to Congress to Save EFSP* (Mar. 11, 2025) (online at <https://uwba.org/blog/open-letter-to-congress-to-save-efsp/>).

² *Judge Finds FEMA Withholding Grants in Violation of Court Order*, The Hill (Apr. 4, 2025) (online at <https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/5232494-judge-fema-grants-trump-blue-states/>). See also *United Way of Central Oregon Distributes Nearly \$59,000 in Food and Shelter Grants to 10 Organizations*, KTVZ21 (July 15, 2025) (online at <https://ktvz.com/news/central-oregon/2025/07/15/united-way-of-central-oregon-distributes-nearly-59000-in-food-and-shelter-grants-to-10-organizations/>).

³ See *Judge Finds FEMA Withholding Grants in Violation of Court Order*, The Hill (Apr. 4, 2025) (online at <https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/5232494-judge-fema-grants-trump-blue-states/>).

⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Emergency Food and Shelter Program* (Mar. 20, 2025) (online at www.fema.gov/grants/emergency-food-and-shelter-program).

⁵ *Id.*

affiliated with large relief organizations such as the American Red Cross, United Way Worldwide, Catholic Charities USA, the Salvation Army, the Jewish Federation of North America, and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.⁶

During its 40 years of operation, EFSP has disbursed more than \$6.5 billion to more than 14,000 service providers in more than 2,500 counties and cities.⁷ In 2024 in Illinois alone, more than 70 counties received more than \$5 million in EFSP funding, with dollars going directly to the communities and organizations most in need. In California, more than \$18 million in EFSP funding was distributed to communities and organizations in more than 50 counties. In Maryland, communities and organizations in 8 counties received more than \$1 million.⁸ These funds are lifelines that enable local organizations to deliver crucial, direct services that fill gaps in federal programs.

For every dollar inappropriately withheld by the Trump Administration, a local organization loses the ability to provide shelter, food, and emergency services to people. As ranking members of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and its Subcommittees on Health Care and Financial Services and Government Operations, we require a complete and unredacted update on the status of these EFSP funds, as well as a definitive timeline for processing payments to the organizations with which FMA has contracted to disburse these funds.

To ensure that EFSP can continue to provide life-saving support to individuals, children, families, and communities nationwide, EFSP must resume disbursement of funds immediately. In addition, we request answers to the following inquiries by August 15, 2025:

1. A detailed description of FEMA’s “manual review” of FY20–FY24 EFSP funds, including but not limited to:
 - a. the legal authority under which FEMA is reviewing FY24 EFSP funds;
 - b. the legal authority supporting FEMA’s refusal to disburse congressionally appropriated FY24 EFSP funds;

⁶ See United Way, *Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program: Phase 30 Responsibilities and Requirements Manual* (online at https://efsp.unitedway.org/efsp/website/websiteContents/PDFs/EFSPManual/Phase_30_Manual.pdf) (accessed July 25, 2025). EFSP is distinct from EFSP-H, which is a separate program that provides funding to local government, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations that provide food, shelter, and supportive services to migrants encountered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Congressional Research Service, *FEMA’s Emergency Food and Shelter Program-Humanitarian Relief (EFSP-H) and the New Shelter and Services Program (SSP)* (Aug. 30, 2023) (online at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IN12132>).

⁷ Congressional Research Service, *FEMA’s Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)* (Apr. 4, 2024) (online at www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12026).

⁸ Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program, *Phase 42 Fiscal Year 2024 Allocations* (online at <https://www.efsp.unitedway.org/efsp/website/websiteContents/pdfs/Phase%2042%20FY2024%29%20Allocations.pdf>) (accessed July 21, 2025).

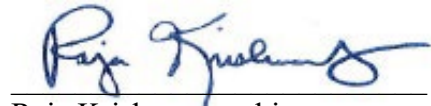
- c. the reason that FEMA has not completed this review in a timely fashion;
- d. the date of completion for FEMA's review; and
- e. how FEMA is currently supporting, and intends to support in the future, individuals and families experiencing homelessness and food insecurity who rely on EFSP funds.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

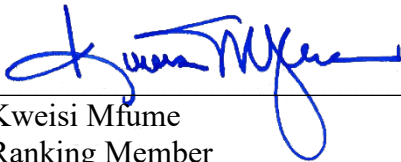
Sincerely,



Robert Garcia
Ranking Member



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health Care and
Financial Services



Kweisi Mfume
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

The Honorable Glenn Grothman, Chairman
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

The Honorable Pete Sessions, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations