



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federal Funding Frozen for Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)

Tri-Cities, WA - March 13, 2025 - In a critical development for vulnerable communities in Benton & Franklin Counties, federal funding for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) has been frozen, effective immediately, cutting off essential services like food and housing assistance, for people experiencing or at risk of hunger and homelessness.

Our current, frozen bi-county allocation is \$143,706 for which we've received 28 grant requests, totaling \$216,433. The impact of this funding freeze will ripple through our communities, affecting food banks, after-school meal programs, housing assistance efforts, and other basic needs.

This freeze comes at a time when many local organizations are struggling to meet the growing demands for food, shelter, and emergency assistance due to the ongoing economic challenges and increased need following natural disasters.

EFSP funds are appropriated to FEMA by Congress and allocated to each county's EFSP Board (typically administered by local United Ways) to support the impact of local nonprofits to address urgent, basic needs. Since 1983, EFSP has distributed \$6.6 billion to more than 14,000 human service agencies in over 2,500 counties.

Since 2020 United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties has distributed nearly \$1.4 million in EFSP grants to local nonprofits, these funds make a significant impact. Not having these funds available will be detrimental to our community.

We need the community's help! We are asking them to join us in urging members of Congress to RESTORE funding for EFSP and protect critical services for our community members in need. Please take a moment to contact your Congress members using this link. Every message makes a difference. <https://actionbutton.nationbuilder.com/share/SPK-QEJDQUM=>

About United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties:

Since 1958 our community-based organization continues to support the health, safety, and success of local kids and families. We envision a community where all children have an opportunity to learn and thrive.

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