



Catholic  
Charities  
USA®

*Working to Reduce Poverty in America*

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Shelby and Lowey and Ranking Members Leahy and Granger:

**Chair**  
Charles Cornelio

**President & CEO**  
Sr. Donna Markham OP, PhD

**Vice Chair**  
Robert McCann

**Secretary**  
Martina O'Sullivan

**Treasurer**  
Michael Connelly

On behalf of Catholic Charities USA and its 166 member agencies serving in all 50 States and the U.S. Territories, we are requesting, in light of the coronavirus crisis, a substantial funding increase for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) from the existing FY 2020 \$125 million to \$250 million.

This request is based on the proven history of both the national and local EFSP boards and their ability to get important services to people in need in a timely and effective manner. Catholic Charities, along with other major social welfare agencies, have participated in the EFSP since its inception in 1983. This national-local process is the one proven program through which people who are primarily unemployed and experiencing dire poverty can get rental assistance, utilities support and food aid. The EFSP also helps homeless shelters keep their doors open.

The EFSP, though preventative in nature and responsive to economic emergencies, has one of the best-proven track records in getting help to people in need. EFSP prioritizes allocations to the neediest areas, provides quick response to vulnerable populations, extends capacity through public-private sector cooperation, relies on local decision-making and requires accountable reporting. It has the reach of 2,500 counties and cities across the country and partners with as many as 10,000 public and nonprofit service providers.

An increase in funding for EFSP during this time of national crisis will have a long-term impact helping communities and vulnerable people, and our local agencies serving them, to receive the help they need now and in the long term.

Thank you for your consideration. Catholic Charities USA stands ready to work with Congress and the Administration to respond to this national crisis.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, Ph.D.  
President & CEO  
Catholic Charities USA

Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Leader Mitch McConnell

