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May 27, 2026

Robert J. Fenton
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
P.O. Box 10055
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

Dear Mr. Fenton:

This letter is regarding the unsatisfactory and disappointing response to the letter I sent on December 18, 2025 regarding the status of Emergency Food and Shelter Program (ESFP) funding for First Step Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, specifically the claim that this funding is being reviewed in the interest of rooting out “fraud, waste, and abuse” to “deliver accountability for the American taxpayers”.

The funding authorized through EFSP is essential. It not only provides financial support for basic necessities but allows victim service providers who serve survivors of domestic violence, such as First Step, to continue funding lifesaving services for survivors across Southeast Michigan. The EFSP program funds are not waste, fraud, or abuse; these funds create the foundation for services rooted in comfort, stability, and nourishment during a survivor’s healing journey.

Despite the importance of these funds, organizations are still unable to access them. Since August of 2025, my staff has worked to obtain information on the status of ESFP funds and other critical funding that supports survivors without resolution. The continued lapse in funding has created a precarious financial situation for victim service providers resulting in a reduction of services, program instability, and shelter closures.

Additional administrative burden in the name of addressing “fraud, waste and abuse” has severely exacerbated the financial challenges facing organizations who provide critical resources and whose budgets and capacity are already strained.

Instead of supporting survivors of domestic violence, actions that delay funding they depend on and lack clarity will only make it more difficult for them to seek safety and justice. I urge you to take measures to ensure EFSP grant funding is released with a clear timeline for disbursement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress