

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 9, 2023

The Honorable Deanne Criswell  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Administrator Criswell:

We are writing to urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that additional entities are eligible to receive future funding through the Shelter and Services Program (SSP). We appreciate FEMA's efforts to disburse Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 funding as quickly as feasible to jurisdictions most significantly impacted by high numbers of arriving asylum seekers and other immigrants, especially areas near the southern border and several cities around the country. However, by limiting eligibility to entities that have previously applied for funds through Emergency Food and Shelter Program – Humanitarian (EFSP-H), this process precluded many jurisdictions that have also been impacted by a high number of arriving asylum seekers.

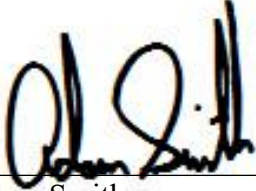
Starting in January 2023, a local church in King County opened its doors to provide shelter and support to asylum seekers and other immigrants arriving to the community. Since then, an encampment was created near the church and the number of asylum seekers at this site alone has grown to more than 300 people, including around 100 children. The church has worked to mobilize an array of other faith-based groups, non-profit organizations, and local government entities to meet the needs of those in the encampment. According to local communities, this site represents only a fraction of the number of asylum seekers and other immigrants who are arriving in Washington and in need of shelter.

FEMA distributed \$363.8 million through SSP in FY 23 through a non-competitive invitation process. In FY 23, only previous applicants were eligible for funding. As a result, no entities from Washington were invited to apply. In future funding opportunities, we urge FEMA to structure the process for SSP funding so that communities beyond those that applied in FY 23 would be eligible to apply. We recognize certain jurisdictions who have seen a higher number of asylum seekers arriving in their communities will also have great needs. Given the number of jurisdictions that are welcoming an increase in immigrant arrivals, we believe it's important that future funding not be limited to those jurisdictions that have previously applied for EFSP-H and/or SSP funding.

Washington state is proud to offer generous support to all immigrants, including asylum seekers, and strives to be a welcoming place for new arrivals into the United States. Federal support through SSP will be critical to our state and local governments, non-profits, and other

community organizations working to ensure that asylum seekers have the shelter and care they deserve.

Sincerely,



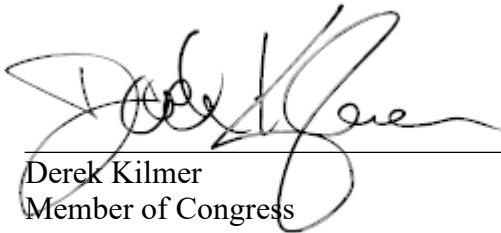
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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



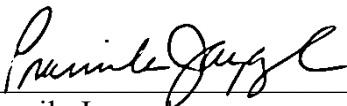
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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



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Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress