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## **Open Letter to Elected Officials in Ocean and Monmouth Counties**

**To:** Federal Elected Officials from Monmouth and Ocean Counties

**From:** Amy Jolin, Executive Director of Fulfill, formerly the Foodbank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties

January 24, 2019

### **RE: Food Insecurity Grows as the Government Shutdown Continues**

On behalf of the foodbank serving Monmouth and Ocean counties, we urge you to work with ceaseless diligence to find a rapid solution to the government shutdown that has shuttered federal offices and services throughout our community.

Food pantries throughout our network are seeing an increase of visits from furloughed federal workers, many of whom have never needed food assistance before. As the government shutdown continues, the resources of the Foodbank will be stretched, and we are taking extreme measures to meet the need.

Many pantries are opening on weekends, and Fulfill foodbank is opening to distribute emergency family food boxes on Monday evenings from 5-7pm. We are reaching out to our feeding partners and other community partners to connect federal workers with emergency food resources and encouraging them to visit local pantries.

Throughout the communities in Monmouth and Ocean counties, furloughed workers are struggling to make ends meet. The loss of a paycheck makes a family unable to meet their financial needs. Too often, the shortfall means skipping meals, eating low-nutrient processed food, and cutting back on meat and produce. This weakens our communities and creates food insecurity for children and families.

We recognize that if the shutdown lasts until mid- or late February, the effect in our communities will be truly overwhelming.

At Fulfill, food security is not a political issue. We urge you to move quickly to avoid the painful impact of the shutdown on our service area.