



**Op Ed**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April Mays**

714-897-6670 ext. 3500

[amays@capoc.org](mailto:amays@capoc.org)

### **Consequences of the Shutdown**

by Gregory C. Scott, President & CEO, Community Action Partnership of Orange County

**Garden Grove, CA, 1/18/19** – The partial government shutdown continues into its fourth week, and the impact is falling hardest on the most vulnerable members of our community. The fear, dismay, and effects will grow even more punishing if our government and the organizations that depend on its financial solvency continue to remain paralyzed and handcuffed. Food insecurity, housing, and rental assistance, and many safety net programs are at significant risk.

The shutdown began with a critical impact, dismissing payment to 800,000 federal workers, limiting federal services, and closing parks, and museums. As the days and weeks mount up, these workers are starting to feel the consequences more sharply as they are required to show up to work, but without pay. The bureaucracy of the government shutdown is having a deep and wide negative impact.

This impact is also felt among other members of our community. The blatant disregard for our fellow Americans by our current Administration, which threatens to keep the government closed for months or even years if the impasse over "the wall" continues. One of the most critical safety net programs, the food stamp program, funding is due to run out by the end of January. Hopefully, there are budget provisions that will allow the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to continue through February in order to circumvent its potential expiration. This also includes other programs such as WIC, meals for seniors, and school meals that are all in jeopardy.

These cuts would impact millions of seniors, women, and children who are receiving SNAP benefits. We are hoping that further analysis by such entities as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities does not negatively impact those in need. To date, the USDA does not have a plan if the shutdown goes on for an extended period. The food assistance program is in jeopardy of being closed altogether. Congress will need to take emergency action to fund these programs if the government does not reopen soon. We will see food insecurity and hunger in America go to all-time highs. At that point, if the shutdown goes any longer, the government reopening will not solve an exasperated problem that was created due to this war on immigration and the battle with the wall.

The Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF) is another program that is in grave jeopardy, as it supports more than 3 million children and the poorest people in our country. This is a significant problem for many states across America.

There is a profound disconnection between the Trump Administration, the leaders running federal and state agencies, local communities, and more importantly, the people being impacted. The strategies to combat the shutdown are not sustainable even on a short-term basis. States, counties, cities, and communities have a significant challenge on their hands, while families, women, and children will struggle to survive. One of the premier agencies fighting poverty, the Community Action Partnership of Orange County, is significantly impacted by this shutdown as it affects thousands of community residents in Orange County and throughout the Southland. Our war on poverty is intensified by the deep concern about the federal nutrition program and has caused

significant anxiety and worry. Funding such as SNAP, WIC, senior meals, and school meals have a short runway before funding runs out.

The soup kitchens, food pantries and other partner agencies that depend on our OC Food Bank to provide meals are also dealing with the stress of serving those in the greatest need. This level of fear for families causes major disruptions to households who lack any other safety net and depend on these programs to live at a minimum level. Our approach must be rooted in our love for our country and a heart for every member of our community.

There is no doubt the issue of immigration, poverty, food insecurity, housing, health and nutrition, and a myriad of other issues are at the forefront of major concern for those we serve. These issues highlight our most significant challenge of social justice and equity in our country. Our current policies only provide a Band-Aid for the bigger issue of economic disparity and injustice for millions of Americans.

We need leaders in and out of the Administration who are willing to prevent families, women, children, and Veterans from becoming vulnerable to inept government. We need to create new resources to assist with more acute job training, fair housing and health care, and education that will change our system of poverty to create pathways to prosperity for every family.

We have had years of neglect, economic injustice, gender, and racial bias, scandal, and lack of leadership that is showing up as our greatest debauchery. We need the government, private sector, and nonprofits to work TOGETHER to solve this significant problem in our country today or we will have to deal with the consequences that will deepen poverty in our country. As a country, we are not as far along as we think, and if we are not careful, the safety net that has held up the deep disparities of poverty in our country will not be able to withstand the weight of such decisions to shut down.

This is a time to STAND UP; not shut down

#### **ABOUT COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF ORANGE COUNTY**

*With leadership and results dating back to 1965, Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAPOC) has evolved into one of Orange County's most comprehensive anti-hunger and poverty relief organization. CAPOC's aim is to make a positive impact in people's lives by helping them meet basic needs and strengthen their support system. Our position within Orange County allows us to identify neighborhood concerns and find unique solutions. We have a stake in the health of our community and have the ability to create real change in the lives of low-income children, families, senior, and veterans. By acting as a resource for ending hunger and poverty, our organization improves the health of our community. We mobilize and direct resources to programs that assist, educate and promote self-sufficiency.*

***An Orange County Where All Community Members Attain Self-Sufficiency***

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