

Emergency Response Protocol – Congressional Outreach for State Partners



This protocol provides clear, actionable guidance for state and local partners when a federally funded program faces an emergency, such as a funding pause, delay, restriction or termination. It is designed to help partners quickly and effectively notify Congressional officials and communicate the impacts on communities, programs and constituents.

Who does this benefit

- Local and state-level advocates
- State agencies and community-based organizations
- Grantees and subgrantees of federally funded programs
- Program staff, leadership, and communications or government affairs teams responding to funding disruptions

What will this help me do

This document supports timely and coordinated Congressional outreach during funding emergencies by:

- Helping partners assess whether a situation warrants Congressional notification
- Providing a step-by-step process for outreach
- Ensuring messaging is clear, factual, and focused on district/state-level impact

When should I use this

Use this protocol when you experience or become aware of any of the following:

- Receipt of a notice indicating federal funding has been paused, frozen, delayed, restricted, or terminated
- Verbal or written guidance from a federal agency that limits program operations due to funding uncertainty
- Imminent risk to services, staffing, contracts, or program continuity tied to federal funding

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Follow the steps below to guide your response.



Step 1: Confirm and Document the Emergency

Review the funding notice or communication carefully

- **Identify:**
 - Funding source and grant number (if available)
 - Date the issue began
 - Nature of the emergency (pause, delay, termination, etc.)
- **Save all relevant documentation (letters, emails, portal screenshots)**



Step 2: Assess the Impact

- **Prepare a summary (1-2 paragraphs or bullet points) addressing:**
 - Programs or services affected
 - Number of people served who may lose or experience reduced services
 - Geographic impact (districts, counties, statewide)
 - Workforce impact (staff furloughs, layoffs, reduced capacity)
 - Timeline of harm (immediate vs. within weeks/months)
- **Tip: Focus on constituent impact, not organizational inconvenience**



Step 3: Notify GHAI of the Situation

- **Notify your GHAI point of contact**
- **Use subject line “ATTN: Time Sensitive Federal Issue”**
- **Mark the email as “Important”**



Step 4: Identify Congressional Offices

Use the resources below to identify U.S. Representative(s) for impacted districts and both U.S. Senators from the state

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Step 5: Prepare your Outreach

Use clear, concise messaging that includes:

- Who you are (organization, role, location)
- What happened (federal funding action)
- Why it matters locally (specific district/state impacts)
- What is at risk if the issue is not resolved
- What you are asking for (e.g., inquiry with the agency, public oversight, support for restoration of funds)

See script template included



Step 6: Outreach!

Outreach can take the form of email, phone call, and/or meeting request



How to Identify and Contact Your Congressional Members

1. Identify Your U.S. Representative

- a. Visit the official House of Representatives website - house.gov
- b. Select “Find Your Representative”
- c. Enter your ZIP code
- d. If your ZIP code spans multiple districts, you may be asked for your full address
- e. You will be directed to your U.S. Representative’s official website

3. Find Phone Numbers

- a. On Member’s websites, look for “Contact” and “Office Locations”
- b. DC: urgent federal funding issues
- c. District/state office: issues with strong local impact
- d. Staff will answer your call or you will be directed to leave a voicemail

2. Identify Your U.S. Senators

- a. Visit the official Senate website - senate.gov
- b. Select “Senators” and then choose your state from the dropdown menu
- c. You will be directed to your Senators official websites

4. Find Contact Forms

- a. Most Congressional offices use an online “Contact Form” that can be found under “Contact” or “Services” on the Member’s website
- b. Contact form will be sent to staff responsible for managing constituent requests



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Call Template

Hi, my name is [NAME], I live in [CITY], and I am [TITLE] with [ORG].
[SAMHSA/Agency/Department] terminated our grant [NAME] effective [DATE]. That decision cuts off care in our community, your community.

This grant funded [INSERT LENGTH OF PROGRAM] [WHAT YOU DO in 6 to 10 WORDS, ex. Crisis response, housing navigation, MOUD linkage, outreach, recovery, peer support] for [POPULATION ex. rural, families, people currently in or leaving jail, youth, unhoused neighbors, seniors]. We support [X#] people each month, and without this funding, we will [IMMEDIATE IMPACT, ex: close groups/doors, cut off treatment, lose outreach routes].

I am asking Rep/Sen. [NAME] to call SAMHSA today and demand immediate reinstatement and a continuity plan so patients do not lose care.

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Email Template

Subject line: Immediate action needed, federal grant termination harms patients in [CITY]

Dear Rep./Senator [insert name],

My name is [insert name] and I am your constituent from [insert district/city] and [insert title i.e. Executive Director of X program].

I am one of the thousands of public servants who received termination notices from SAMHSA, immediately halting our lifesaving mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

An early estimate of \$2 billion in terminated funds – including my program – leaves a devastating gap in communities across the country. This abrupt termination undermines stability, disrupts care for people currently receiving services, and jeopardizes the progress communities have fought to achieve.

The termination of our grant, effective [DATE], immediately halted services in our community. This grant supports [PROGRAM NAME], which provides [Insert description of services program provides] to [population served]. We service [X#] people per [MONTH/YEAR], and this termination forces us to [close, layoff, reduce outreach/services etc.].

This decision does not just reduce funding. It interrupts care for people already in treatment and already at risk of overdose. When support disappears overnight, crises rise, overdose rise, and families pay the price first.

I am asking Rep./Senator [insert name] to take urgent action: [INSERT ASK]

Thank you for acting quickly,

[NAME]

[TITLE], [ORG]

[PHONE]

[EMAIL]

[CITY,STATE]