

Furlough Aid Requests Rise Dramatically

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Lakewood, CO (July 9, 2013) – Federal employee furloughs have doubled the amount of the Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund's emergency assistance loans just in the month of June. The program distributed just under \$42,000 in May, only four of them furlough-related, and nearly \$90,000 in June, including 82 loans totaling over \$49,000 due to hardships created by unpaid furlough days. In the first week of July, FEEA has already processed another \$10,000 in furlough-related loans.

FEEA has assisted employees from the IRS, EPA, EEOC, HUD, Department of Labor, and several FAA employees who lost pay before Congress halted that agency's furloughs. With the Department of Defense set to begin furloughing 700,000 civilian workers this week, FEEA expects an avalanche of loan applications before the end of July.

Christina Rivas's story is unfortunately typical of those FEEA is hearing. Ms. Rivas, an IRS employee in Fresno, CA, was already experiencing two or three unpaid days of leave per month in order to make the round trip with her 13-year-old son to the Children's Hospital that monitors his blood counts. He was diagnosed with leukemia in 2008 and must be monitored regularly. As the sole breadwinner in a family of 6, Rivas's budget was already extremely tight. With furlough days taking an additional bite from her paycheck, it was inevitable she would fall behind somewhere. FEEA was able to help with a small loan, but additional furlough days ahead mean Rivas will be pinching pennies for some time to come.

Others have similar stories of illnesses, family job loss, or personal disasters like a car breaking down or the need for expensive dental work that exhausted any savings and put the family in a precarious financial position. The loss of pay due to furloughs is tipping many federal employees into the unwelcome position of not being able to pay for their most basic needs. FEEA's Executive Director, Steve Bauer, recognizes an important truth in this pattern, "The dramatic rise in cries for help reaffirms what we already knew at FEEA: federal employees are a cross-section of our country. Some are living the American dream but most struggle every day just to make ends meet trying to provide for themselves and their families. It is therefore not surprising that many federal employees are finding it impossible to pay for their basic living expenses when their pay is suddenly cut 20% in one week, and in many cases cut 20% week after week."

In order to apply for a furlough loan, employees need to meet FEEA's general guidelines for financial need. They must be having trouble paying for basic living needs like rent/mortgage or utilities and the maximum no-interest loan amount is \$1,000. Furlough loans are only made after an employee actually receives a "short" paycheck and meets the other loan criteria. Those seeking FEEA loans need to complete the regular Emergency Assistance application available at www.feea.org/GetHelp.

Although FEEA had a successful fundraising campaign during the month of May, all of the \$103,000 raised via more than 600 individual donations, as well as matching grants from the BlueCross/BlueShield Association, GEICO and Long Term Care Partners, has already gone back out the door to feds in need. With nearly half of the civilian federal workforce set to be furloughed for multiple days over the next three months, FEEA's budget will be stretched to the maximum, forcing prioritization of the most serious situations, like eviction/foreclosure or utility shut-off. It is far beyond FEEA's means to replace billions of dollars in lost wages, but we will continue to do our best to help as many federal employees as we can.

To aid in that effort, FEEA is pleased to welcome its newest corporate sponsor, Engility Corporation. Engility, which spun off from L-3 Communications last year, is a government services contractor headquartered in Chantilly, VA. In preparation for the company's one-year anniversary, top leadership came together and made a decision to celebrate a year of successful service by highlighting one of Engility's founding values: servant leadership. The team chose to exemplify this idea of service for success at all levels by giving back to the federal community.

Says President and CEO, Tony Smeraglinolo, "At Engility, we have done everything we can over the past year to reduce our costs so that our US government customers can still accomplish their missions within their tightly constrained budgets. We work shoulder to shoulder with our customers and know that the furloughs caused by sequestration may cause financial hardship for some federal employees. This contribution to FEEA's Emergency Assistance Program is one way for us to live our corporate values of customer focus and servant leadership, and to further support our US government customers in this challenging budget environment."

Engility's \$25,000 contribution will help many civilian federal employees in the days and weeks to come.

Donations to FEEA's General Fund are still urgently needed to ensure all who qualify for assistance will receive it. Donations may be made via credit card on FEEA's web site at www.feea.org/Give. Donations via check made out to "FEEA" may be sent to: FEEA Headquarters, 3333 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Suite 300, Lakewood, CO 80227.

*FEEA is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency, primarily funded through federal employee contributions to FEEA CFC Pledge #11185 and donations to special relief funds. Since 1986, FEEA has provided more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to civilian federal employees and their dependents. The FEEA Emergency Assistance Program has provided more than \$9 million in financial assistance to federal families experiencing natural disasters such as floods, fires and hurricanes, and to those experiencing unforeseen personal emergencies such as illness or death in the family. For more information about FEEA, visit www.feea.org or call **303-933-7580**.*

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