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Federal cuts hit close to home in the Valley; impacts housing for low-income families

FRESNO, CA – With \$85 billion in across-the-board federal sequester cuts to most federal programs, the Fresno Housing Authority is facing a significant budget shortfall during the 2013 fiscal year. The agency will see a total funding reduction of more than \$8 million in funding received by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These cuts will have an impact on the low-income residents served by the housing authority, as well as other stakeholders and staff.

More than \$4 million of the reduction is funding that directly supports the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, which puts already extremely-low-income families with children, seniors, veterans and the disabled at risk of losing their housing assistance funded by the programs affected by sequestration. The agency anticipates it will have to serve over 600 fewer families in the coming year due to these specific cuts. The housing authority does have reserves available, so it does not expect to terminate current families from the voucher program at this time, like many housing authorities are doing across the country. Funding reductions will instead be managed through attrition.

The agency has been operating underfunded for years and now with sequestration in place since March 1, the agency is looking to tighten its belt even more. The agency will see total funding reductions of over \$4 million that support the operations of the agency and the public housing program, including funds for repairs and maintenance.

These funding cuts will also impact services as there will be fewer staff positions across the agency. Impacts to services may include potential delays in inspections of properties and repairs to public housing units, among other items.

“The Fresno Housing Authority Boards of Commissioners have been proactive in taking various measures to reduce program costs in order to maximize assistance to the most vulnerable members of our community. Some of these measures include not filling vacant positions, providing retirement incentives, and reducing overall agency costs and expenses across the board,” said Preston Prince, Executive Director and CEO of the Fresno Housing Authority.