

Sequester At A Glance:

The Avoidable Impact on Our Most Vulnerable Communities

The reckless, across-the-board spending cuts known as the sequester could have a disproportionate impact on critical programs that serve those in our nation's most vulnerable communities. Instead of asking the wealthiest to pay their fair share by closing tax loopholes, Republicans have threatened many programs that seniors, working mothers, veterans, and many other Americans rely on. Here's a closer look at how the sequester could impact those in our most vulnerable communities over the coming weeks and months:

The Facts:

JOBS AND THE UNEMPLOYED

People receiving Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits could see their benefits cut by [nearly 11 percent](#). Long-term unemployed individuals could lose an average of more than \$450 in benefits.

- Deep cuts to long-term unemployment benefits could disproportionately affect people of color. [10.5 percent](#) of Latinos and [13.8 percent](#) of blacks are unemployed.

Workforce development programs like YouthBuild and Job Corps could face significant cuts by about [8 percent](#) under sequestration.

- In 2010, [54 percent](#) of YouthBuild participants were African American and [20 percent](#) were Latino.
- Job Corps faces about [\\$83 million in cuts in FY 2013](#) under sequestration; about [72 percent](#) of Job Corps participants were people of color.

Critical job-creating programs such as the Build America Bonds program are facing a [7.6 percent](#) cut.

- Infrastructure investments stimulate employment in sectors that employ a disproportionately high rate of workers of color, such as [construction](#) and [public transit](#).

WOMEN AND FAMILIES

Approximately 600,000 women and children could be dropped from the Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) from March through September, and at least 1,600 state and local jobs could be lost as a result.

- This program provides nutritious food subsidies to poor pregnant women, as well as poor women with infants and children under the age of 5. It could be cut by [\\$543 million](#); more than [450,000 people of color](#) benefit from its service.

Housing: The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher program, which provides rental assistance to very low-income families, could see a reduction in funding, placing **about 125,000 families at immediate risk of losing housing**.

- In 2011, Section 8 aided [more than 2 million](#) low-income families. [44 percent](#) and [23 percent](#), respectively, of public housing recipients are African American and Latino.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Early child care funding could be cut by more than \$900 million, impacting the thousands of children of color who benefit from these programs. [70,000 children could be kicked out of Head Start](#) and [sixty percent](#) of program participants are children of color.

Cuts could also affect the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care Development Fund, potentially ending child care subsidies for [30,000 children](#).

Federal education funding cuts could disproportionately hurt students of color. \$3 billion could be cut in education alone which could impact [9.3 million students](#) in the following programs:

- Financial aid for college students: [81 percent](#) of African Americans and [67 percent](#) of Latinos with a bachelor's degree graduated with student debt, compared to [64 percent](#) of their white peers.
- Programs for our most vulnerable youth: English-language learners and those attending high-poverty, struggling schools
- Education for homeless children
- Youth and federal work study

HEALTH CARE

The **National Institutes of Health** could [lose \\$1.5 billion](#) in medical research funding. There could be fewer research projects aimed at finding treatments and cures for diseases such as cancer and diabetes--both of which are among the [leading causes of death](#) for African Americans.

SENIORS

Federally-assisted programs like **Meals on Wheels** could serve [4 million fewer meals](#) to seniors. These meals are especially important to seniors with chronic illnesses that are affected by diet, such as diabetes and heart disease, and frail seniors who are homebound, and can account for 50 percent or more of daily food for the majority of home delivered participants.

OTHER

Native American tribes could lose almost \$130 million in funding from the Department of the Interior, causing reductions across human services, law enforcement, schools, economic development and natural resources.

What the Experts Say:

New York Times Editorial:

“But some Americans will be hurt more than others, and the people who will be hurt the most are those who are already struggling. In the months ahead, an estimated 3.8 million Americans who have been unemployed for more than six months face a cut in federal jobless benefits of nearly 11 percent — or about \$32 a week — all from the recent average weekly benefit of \$292. And an estimated 600,000 low-income women and toddlers will be turned away from the federal nutrition program for women, infants and children, known as WIC.”

“The federal government has yet to issue specific guidance on how states should handle an estimated cut to the WIC program of \$340 million this fiscal year. Little will happen until April, but, after that, priority is likely to be given increasingly to pregnant and breast-feeding women

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 3/6/13

and to infants, while women not breast-feeding are put on an indefinite wait list, along with many children over 1 year old. The cutbacks to mothers would affect African-Americans disproportionately, because their breast-feeding rates are lower than other groups'. The cuts in aid to children will fall disproportionately on Hispanic families, who tend to have more children. Why are the Republicans so happy when they should be ashamed?" [[New York Times, 3/2](#)]

National Education Association (NEA) Vice President Lily Eskelsen:

"Very serious consequences are going to happen, and it's going to hit our most vulnerable populations." [[VOXXI, 3/5](#)]

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Director of Education Policy Luis Torres:

"We argue that it's a disproportionate effect on the Latino community because we have both kids who are benefiting from these programs and likely the first targets of the sequestration process." [[VOXXI, 3/5](#)]

EMILYs List President Stephanie Schriock:

"It's not often in life that choices are this stark. [Senator] McConnell had two options: either prevent the sequestration with reasonable cuts and revenue increases, or let millions of Americans suffer terrible consequences to their health, safety, and livelihood. But McConnell and his Republican colleagues were more focused on the bottom line than the wellbeing of our nation's women and families. And now these drastic cuts have become a reality." [[The Hill, 3/5](#)]

Sharon Parrott, vice president for budget policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

"But low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities will face "very real impacts," said Sharon Parrott, vice president for budget policy at the liberal Center on Budget and Policy Priorities..." [[Washington Post, 3/3](#)]

Sen. Tom Harkin, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies:

"[The sequester] would also have destructive impacts on the whole array of Federal activities that promote and protect the middle class in this country – everything from education to job training, medical research, child care, worker safety, food safety, national parks, border security and safe air travel. These essential government services directly touch every family in America, and they will be subject to deep, arbitrary cuts under sequestration." [[Senate Appropriations Committee, 7/25](#)]