



Effects of the Trump Shutdown In Colorado

By Saharra Griffin

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President Donald Trump's shutdown of the federal government over demands for billions of dollars in new border wall funding is already having profound consequences for hundreds of thousands of working Americans and a wide range of vital services. And each day the impasse continues, as funding dries up and more agencies exhaust emergency measures, these harmful effects will only be exacerbated.

Although the new Democratic House majority passed legislation to reopen the government, the president has continued to stall negotiations.¹ To enable the stalemate, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and other Republican senators reversed their earlier opposition to the shutdown just days after the chamber unanimously passed a similar deal.

Due to Trump's shutdown, an estimated 15,700 federal employees in Colorado are furloughed or working without pay.² Below is a breakdown of affected federal employees and agencies in the state.

"There are a lot of people in my office who live paycheck to paycheck," said Britta Copt, who works in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's safe drinking water enforcement unit in Denver. "It's frustrating to be in this situation constantly. It gets really old." –The Denver Post, December 27, 2018³

U.S. Department of the Interior: 6,500 employees

In Colorado, an estimated 6,500 Interior Department employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.

- **The National Park Service** supports the state's 16 national parks, monuments, and trails. The shutdown is estimated to cost Colorado's outdoor economy \$1.9 million per day.⁴
- **The Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** manages 8.3 million acres of public lands and 27 million acres of federal mineral estate in Colorado. More than 23,500 Colorado jobs are connected to activities on BLM's public lands.⁵

- **The Bureau of Reclamation** is the nation's largest wholesale water supplier and second-largest hydropower producer.
- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** regional office is responsible for federal conservation in eight states.⁶
- **The U.S. Geological Survey** manages the earthquake early warning system based at the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colorado.⁷

U.S. Department of Agriculture: 3,600 employees

In Colorado, an estimated 3,600 Department of Agriculture employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.⁸

- **The Food Safety and Inspection Service** prevents foodborne illness by ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products produced in Colorado are safe and accurately labeled.
- **The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service** defends the state's agricultural resources from pests and diseases.
- **The Office of Rural Development** offers loans and grants to help create jobs and support economic development in rural communities.
- **The Farm Service Agency** office in Denver and 60 local offices across the state facilitate new assistance programs under the farm bill, which is particularly critical due to the recent hemp legalization.
- **The Forest Service** protects and manages the state's forests and grasslands.
- **The Agricultural Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Service's Mountain Regional Field Office** collect detailed agricultural production data in six states.

Additional agencies

The Trump shutdown is also harming the following workers and agencies:

- An estimated 1,100 Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration employees at the state's nine commercial airports
- An estimated 1,000 employees at federal laboratories, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- An estimated 500 Federal Bureau of Prisons employees at Colorado's six federal prisons and correctional institutions

"We can't call our mortgage company and say 'Hey, sorry the government shut down so I'm not paying you either,' [Chris] Janssen said. Their message to lawmakers who are using their livelihood as a bargaining chip is simple. They want an agreement to be reached as soon as possible." –CBS4 Denver, December 27, 2018⁹

If the partial government shutdown continues, tax filing season could be more difficult for Colorado families and small businesses. Because IRS offices are closed and the agency is operating with a skeletal staff, taxpayers and preparers may have trouble accessing needed guidance.¹⁰ Last year, the agency processed 6.1 million refunds within the first week of filing season in January.¹¹

Moreover, Colorado's 600,000 small businesses are unable to receive guaranteed loans and technical assistance from the Small Business Administration state office in Denver.

"Kelly Dodge has a case of shutdown anxiety. She is a project manager at a Colorado tech firm that produces software for the federal government, and none of her coders are getting paid ... 'It's hard to find people who can do this work ... I have a highly motivated and exceptional team that really cares ... But they feel disrespected.'" –The Washington Post, January 3, 2019¹²

Ironically, due to Trump's temper tantrum for the sake of so-called border security, the state's immigration court in Denver is now closed, stalling lawful asylum proceedings in an already backlogged system.¹³

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Endnotes

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- 2 Seth Hanlon and Saharra Griffin, "Effects of the Trump Shutdown on Federal Workers' Paychecks: State-by-State Estimates," Center for American Progress, December 21, 2018, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2018/12/21/464638/effects-trump-shutdown-federal-workers-paychecks-state-state-estimates/>.
- 3 John Aguilar, "We should be at work: Furloughed federal employees in Colorado bemoan uncertainty of government shutdown," *The Denver Post*, December 27, 2018, available at <https://www.denverpost.com/2018/12/27/government-shutdown-border-wall-furlough-federal-workers-trump-democrats/>.
- 4 Sen. Michael Bennet, @SenatorBennet, January 2, 2019, 2:25 p.m. ET, Twitter, available at <https://twitter.com/SenatorBennet/status/1080590934830653440>.
- 5 U.S. Department of the Interior, "Bureau of Land Management," available at <https://www.blm.gov> (last accessed January 2019).
- 6 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Conserving the Nature of America: Fish and Wildlife in Your State," available at <https://www.fws.gov/offices/?ref=topbar> (last accessed January 2019).
- 7 U.S. Geological Survey, "Earthquake Hazards Program: National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC)," available at <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/contactus/golden/neic.php> (last accessed January 2019).
- 8 U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Agencies," available at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies> (last accessed January 2019).
- 9 Michael Abeyta, "Personal Lives in The Balance' For Prison Guards During Federal Shutdown," CBS4 Denver, December 27, 2018, available at <https://denver.cbslocal.com/2018/12/27/colorado-prisons-guards-federal-government-shutdown/>.
- 10 Darla Mercado, "White House promises tax refunds will go out, but there's hardly anyone at the IRS to do the work," CNBC, January 7, 2019, available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/07/white-house-official-says-tax-refunds-will-be-sent-out-despite-government-shutdown.html>; Internal Revenue Service, "Contact Your Local IRS Office," available at <https://www.irs.gov/help/contact-your-local-irs-office> (last accessed January 2019).
- 11 Internal Revenue Service, "Filing Season Statistics for Week Ending February 2, 2018," available at <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/filing-season-statistics-for-week-ending-february-2-2018> (last accessed January 2019).
- 12 Kimberly Kindy, Lisa Rein, and Joel Achenbach, "Consequences of the government shutdown strike the private sector," *The Washington Post*, January 3, 2019, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/consequences-of-the-government-shutdown-strike-the-private-sector/2019/01/03/dcc66f98-0f73-11e9-831f-3aa2c2be4cbd_story.html?utm_term=.0709decd5392.
- 13 Lisa Riordan Seville and Hannah Rappleye, "Shutdown nearly shuts U.S. immigration courts, but deportations continue," NBC News, January 5, 2019, available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/shutdown-nearly-shuts-u-s-immigration-courts-deportations-continue-n54826>.