



# Effects of the Trump Shutdown In Georgia

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 14,400 federal employees in Georgia are furloughed or working without pay.<sup>2</sup> Below is a breakdown of affected federal employees and agencies in the state.

*"[The shutdown has] left many Georgians, as well as dozens of universities, state agencies and localities that rely on Washington dollars for paychecks, grants and other activities, in a state of limbo—or panic. Some federal employees have scrambled for second jobs or no-interest loans to help them cover rent or grocery bills ... And farmers who need to settle their outstanding bills with lenders have had to maneuver without the guidance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's farm service centers ahead of the planting season." –The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, January 9, 2019<sup>3</sup>*

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## U.S. Department of Agriculture: 2,300 employees

In Georgia, an estimated 2,300 Department of Agriculture employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.<sup>4</sup>

- **The Farm Service Agency** office in Athens and 159 local offices facilitate new assistance programs under the farm bill and provide disaster relief for the state's farmers who suffered \$2 billion in losses due to recent hurricanes.<sup>5</sup>

- **The Food Safety and Inspection Service** prevents foodborne illness by ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products produced in Georgia 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 Agricultural Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Service’s Georgia Field Office** in Athens collect detailed agricultural production data.
- **The Forest Service** protects and manages the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, a state resource representing 850 miles of recreation trails, thousands of miles of waterways, and dozens of campgrounds.

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## U.S. Department of the Interior: 770 employees

In Georgia, an estimated 770 Interior Department employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.

- **The National Park Service** supports the state’s national historic sites, monuments, and parks, including the start of the Appalachian Trail in northern Georgia.
- **The U.S. Geological Survey** conducts research on natural resource issues, including the pattern and effects of flooding due to recent hurricanes.<sup>6</sup>
- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** operates nine national wildlife refuges in the state.

*“On Saturday, visitors to the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park in Atlanta found much of it closed. Though they could wander around the grounds, they could not view many exhibits or tour the Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church.”*

*–The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, December 22, 2018<sup>7</sup>*

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## Additional agencies

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

An estimated 2,600 Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration employees at the state’s seven commercial airports, including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport—the world’s busiest airport<sup>8</sup>

- An estimated 470 Federal Bureau of Prisons employees at Georgia’s federal penitentiary and correctional institution
- Federal Emergency Management Agency employees facilitating recovery efforts after October’s Hurricane Michael
- An estimated 900 Environmental Protection Agency employees
- U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in Atlanta, Savannah, Macon, Albany, and Columbus.

“[B]rewers in Georgia and across the country are on pause while their regulator remains shut down, leading to the inability to release new beers. The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, or TTB, approves all applications from people wanting to start a business making beer, wine or spirits ... [and] also approves applications from existing businesses who want to start distributing new labels of booze.”  
–*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 7, 2019<sup>9</sup>

If the partial government shutdown continues, tax filing season could be more difficult for Georgia 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.<sup>10</sup> Last year, the agency processed 6.1 million refunds within the first week of filing season in January.<sup>11</sup>

Ironically, due to Trump’s temper tantrum for the sake of so-called border security, the state’s immigration courts in Atlanta and Stewart are now closed, stalling lawful asylum proceedings in an already backlogged system.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, Georgia’s 1 million small businesses are unable to receive guaranteed loans and technical assistance from the Small Business Administration state office in Anchorage.

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## Endnotes

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- 3 Tamar Hallerman, “Georgia feels impact from partial federal shutdown,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 9, 2019, available at <https://www.ajc.com/news/state-regional-govt-politics/georgia-feels-impact-from-partial-federal-shutdown/mWCeuaJEtl72IN1f2EnMpo/>.
- 4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Agencies,” available at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies> (last accessed January 2019).
- 5 Mark Puleo, “Hurricane Michael ruined the ‘best crop in years’ for many Georgia farmers at worst time possible,” AccuWeather, October 24, 2018, available at <https://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/hurricane-michael-devastated-farmers-for-third-straight-year/70006436>.
- 6 U.S. Geological Survey, “South Atlantic Water Science Center (SAWSC): Flood-Inundation mapping in Georgia, North and South Carolina,” available at [https://www.usgs.gov/centers/sa-water/science/flood-inundation-mapping-georgia-north-and-south-carolina?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/sa-water/science/flood-inundation-mapping-georgia-north-and-south-carolina?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects) (last accessed January 2019).
- 7 David Wickert and Jennifer Brett, “Federal shutdown shutter parks, idles workers across Georgia,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 22, 2018, available at <https://www.ajc.com/news/local/federal-shutdown-shutters-parks-idles-workers-across-georgia/kgXM5b5NeE-4FUnPdmglDaK/>.
- 8 Airports Council International, “The Annual World Airport Traffic Report: Airport Statistics and Data Centre,” available at <https://aci.aero/Data-Centre/> (last accessed January 2019).
- 9 Ben Brasch, “The government shutdown is disrupting the flow of Georgia beer,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 7, 2019, available at <https://www.ajc.com/news/local/this-government-shutdown-disrupting-the-flow-georgia-beer/5cvsnSqOfyelF90Douiv8N/>.
- 10 Internal Revenue Service, “Contact Your Local IRS Office,” available at <https://www.irs.gov/help/contact-your-local-irs-office>; 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>.
- 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).
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