



Effects of the Trump Shutdown In Maine

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 1,000 federal employees in Maine are furloughed or working without pay.² Below is a breakdown of affected federal employees and agencies in the state.

"Many large Maine banks, like Androscoggin Bank say they are still giving out loans, but are risking that many may fall apart when the shutdown ends ... 'Heaven help us if that's the case, right?' Scott Sarapas of Androscoggin Bank said. 'It would really start to affect the market ... there would be less and less players who are willing to accept the risk on behalf of the government basically.'" –WGME, January 3, 2019³

U.S. Department of the Interior: 350 employees

In Maine, an estimated 350 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 parks, including Acadia National Park and the Appalachian Trail.
- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** manages the Craig Brook⁴ and Green Lake⁵ National Fish Hatcheries produce 75 percent of the Atlantic salmon that reach U.S. waters.

U.S. Department of Agriculture: 200 employees

In Maine, an estimated 200 Department of Agriculture employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.⁶

- **The Farm Service Agency** office in Bangor and 16 local offices across the state facilitate new assistance programs under the farm bill, which is particularly critical for Maine's organic agriculture industry.⁷
- **The Food Safety and Inspection Service** prevents foodborne illness by ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products produced in Maine 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.

Additional agencies

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

- Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration employees at the state's four commercial airports
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and Enforcement Field Offices in Portland and Ellsworth
- U.S. Attorneys' Offices in Portland and Bangor

"Now with their shutdown and the uncertainty of how much time this is going to be, we're sitting in limbo," [Leslie] Harlow says. 'And I have employees that don't have work, and I have fish suppliers that are sitting on the side and wondering when I can be back in business and work with them.'" –Maine Public Radio, January 4, 2019⁸

If the partial government shutdown continues, tax filing season could be more difficult for Maine 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.⁹ Last year, the agency processed 6.1 million refunds within the first week of filing season in January.¹⁰

Moreover, Maine's 140,000 small businesses are unable to receive guaranteed loans and technical assistance from the Small Business Administration state office in Augusta.

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Endnotes

- 1 Erica Werner, Seung Min Kim, and Jeff Stein, "Congressional Democrats turn up the heat on GOP over shutdown," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2019, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/democrats-pledge-to-paralyze-senate-as-shutdown-negotiation-tactic/2019/01/07/ed5e355e-12aa-11e9-a896-f104373c7ffd_story.html?utm_term=.31fbb6bdd0af.
- 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 WGME, "Maine banks say loan process slowed down by government shutdown," January 3, 2019, available at <https://wgme.com/news/local/maine-banks-say-loan-process-slowed-by-government-shutdown>.
- 4 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery," available at <https://www.fws.gov/northeast/craigbrook/> (last accessed January 2019).
- 5 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Green Lake National Fish Hatchery," available at <https://www.fws.gov/northeast/greenlake/> (last accessed January 2019).
- 6 U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Agencies," available at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies> (last accessed January 2019).
- 7 Kevin Miller, "From agriculture to technology, \$867 billion farm bill yields benefits for Maine," *Portland Press Herald*, December 13, 2018, available at <https://www.pressherald.com/2018/12/13/farm-bill-includes-benefits-for-maine/>.
- 8 Fred Bever, "How The Government Shutdown Is Affecting Mainers So Far," Maine Public Radio, January 4, 2019, available at <http://www.mainepublic.org/post/how-government-shutdown-affecting-mainers-so-far>.
- 9 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>.
- 10 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).