



# Effects of the Trump Shutdown In Montana

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 6,000 federal employees in Montana are furloughed or working without pay.<sup>2</sup> Below is a breakdown of affected federal employees and agencies in the state.

*"Roughly 114,000 Montanans are considered food insecure, many relying on government programs like SNAP to help buy groceries. [Although] the Department of Agriculture is releasing a plan to ensure low-income Americans have access to SNAP benefits ... [t]he plan only funds the program through February ... [W]ith uncertainty surrounding how long the shutdown will last, the people in charge of feeding the hungry have growing concerns." –KPAX, January 9, 2019<sup>3</sup>*

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## U.S. Department of Agriculture: 3,680 employees

In Montana, an estimated 3,680 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 Bozeman and 56 local offices across the state facilitate new assistance programs under the farm bill.
- **The Food Safety and Inspection Service** prevents foodborne illness by ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products produced in Montana 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** collects detailed agricultural production data at laboratories in Sidney and Miles City.
- **The Forest Service** protects and manages the state’s 10 national forests.

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## U.S. Department of the Interior: 2,300 employees

In Montana, an estimated 2,300 Interior Department employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.

- **The National Park Service** supports Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, encompassing more than 3 million acres.
- **The Bureau of Indian Affairs** funds critical services for 42,000 American Indians based in Montana, including health care, law enforcement, housing, disaster relief, and infrastructure maintenance.<sup>5</sup>
- **The U.S. Geological Survey** conducts research on natural resource issues, including earthquakes, which have been a concern in the state since a magnitude 5.8 earthquake occurred in 2017.<sup>6</sup>
- **The Bureau of Land Management** Montana/Dakotas State Office manages 8.3 million acres of federal lands and about 47.2 million acres of federal mineral estate.
- **The Bureau of Reclamation** is the nation’s largest wholesale water supplier and second-largest hydropower producer.
- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** operates 23 national wildlife refuges in the state, including the National Bison Range.

*“As the sun rose over the Lamar Valley in Yellowstone National Park, Linda Carney bent over a toilet, windshield scraper in hand. ‘It’s the plumber’s daughter in me,’ she joked, having used the scraper to remove frozen human waste from the side of the toilet. Carney was one of about 10 Gardiner community members who decided to take matters into their own hands and clean up rest stops and remove garbage from Yellowstone Saturday morning ... ‘We’re locals and we love this park, so we don’t want it to look like trash,’ Gardiner resident Paula Rainbolt said” –Bozeman Daily Chronicle, January 6, 2019<sup>7</sup>*

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## Additional agencies

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

- An estimated 170 Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration employees at the state’s eight commercial airports
- U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula

If the partial government shutdown continues, tax filing season could be more difficult for Montana 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>8</sup> Last year, the agency processed 6.1 million refunds within the first week of filing season in January.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Montana's 118,000 small businesses are unable to receive guaranteed loans and technical assistance from the Small Business Administration state office in Anchorage.

*"Montana state agencies are largely able to navigate the short-term shutdown of the federal government, but some delays have already cropped up and the state could face challenges if the shutdown continues for an extended period of time." –Helena Independent Record, January 8, 2019<sup>10</sup>*

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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](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 Kent Luetzen, "Montana's most vulnerable in the cross hairs of government shutdown," KPAX, January 9, 2019, available at <https://kpax.com/news/montana-news/2019/01/09/montanas-most-vulnerable-in-the-cross-hairs-of-government-shutdown/>.
- 4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Agencies," available at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies> (last accessed January 2019).
- 5 Bureau of Indian Affairs, "What We Do," available at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/what-we-do> (last accessed January 2019).
- 6 Jayda McClendon, "Alaska earthquake similar to past quakes in Montana," NBC Montana, November 30, 2018, available at <https://nbcmontana.com/news/local/alaska-earthquake-similar-to-past-quakes-in-montana>.
- 7 Abby Lynes, "Volunteers clean restrooms, take out trash in Yellowstone amid government shutdown," *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, January 6, 2019, available at [https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/yellowstone\\_national\\_park/volunteers-clean-restrooms-take-out-trash-in-yellowstone-amid-government/article\\_dcb57c5f-a5e7-537a-88ed-a6340b380f4c.html](https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/yellowstone_national_park/volunteers-clean-restrooms-take-out-trash-in-yellowstone-amid-government/article_dcb57c5f-a5e7-537a-88ed-a6340b380f4c.html).
- 8 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>.
- 9 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).
- 10 Tom Kuglin, "Shutdown hasn't had much impact on Montana government yet, but could hurt if it lasts," *Helena Independent Record*, January 8, 2019, available at [https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/shutdown-hasn-t-had-much-impact-on-montana-government-yet/article\\_c53b5586-8442-58f9-9706-7299f2f6ca2b.html](https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/shutdown-hasn-t-had-much-impact-on-montana-government-yet/article_c53b5586-8442-58f9-9706-7299f2f6ca2b.html).