



Effects of the Trump Shutdown In Utah

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 10,100 federal employees in Utah are furloughed or working without pay.² Below is a breakdown of affected federal employees and agencies in the state.

"With an extended shutdown comes the prospect of federal funds drying up for the Utah Women, Infants and Children [WIC] Program and for the National School Lunch Program, which feeds children at nearly 1,000 Utah schools ... The WIC program, which provides food assistance to lower-income mothers and their babies, currently serves more than 45,700 Utahns at a cost of about \$2.3 million each month, according to a spokesman for the Utah Department of Health." –The Salt Lake Tribune, January 4, 2019³

U.S. Department of the Interior: 2,100 employees

In Utah, an estimated 2,100 Interior Department employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.

- **The National Park Service** supports the state's eight national parks.
- **The Bureau of Indian Affairs** funds critical services for 33,000 American Indians based in Utah, including health care, law enforcement, housing, and infrastructure maintenance.⁴

- **The U.S. Geological Survey** conducts research on natural resource issues, including the quality of the state’s lakes and waterways.
- **The Bureau of Land Management** manages 22.9 million acres of public lands in Utah, roughly 42 percent of the state’s land area.
- **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 Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, and Ouray National Wildlife Refuge.

“Springdale Mayor Stan Smith, whose family operates the Bumbleberry Inn just outside Zion National Park ... said he’s concerned about the effect of an ongoing shut-down on the sales and resort taxes Springdale depends on to fund the town’s more than \$5 million annual budget ... He said the impact of the shutdown needs to be seen as far-reaching. ‘I don’t think the federal government understands, the Congress understands, these national parks provide a huge economy for surrounding communities, not just in Utah, but everywhere.’” –Deseret News, December 28, 2019⁵

U.S. Department of Agriculture: 2,000 employees

In Utah, an estimated 2,000 Department of Agriculture employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.⁶

- **The Farm Service Agency** office in Salt Lake and 29 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 Utah 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** office in Logan collect detailed agricultural production data.
- **The Forest Service** protects and manages the state’s six national forests.

Additional agencies

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

- An estimated 630 Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration employees at the state’s five commercial airports
- U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in Salt Lake City and St. George
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration offices responsible for monitoring avalanche activity and weather forecasting

“Federal workers ‘do not ask to be pawns and we do not deserve it,’ [Shelly Carver] said. ‘We don’t want to be a bargaining chip for Congress or the administration’ ... Some three-quarters of the 5,000 employees at the Ogden IRS campus that handles taxpayer questions, process returns and deal with compliance issues have been furloughed and are expected to miss their first paychecks on Monday.”
–Deseret News, January 10, 2019⁷

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

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

Moreover, Utah’s 277,000 small businesses are unable to receive guaranteed loans and technical assistance from the Small Business Administration state office in Salt Lake City.

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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 Bethany Rodgers, “If the government shutdown lasts much longer, food programs intended to help women and children could run out of funding,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, January 4, 2019, available at <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2019/01/04/utahs-child-nutrition-wic/>.
- 4 Bureau of Indian Affairs, “What We Do,” available at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/what-we-do> (last accessed January 2019).
- 5 Lisa Riley Roche, “Government shutdown ‘devastating’ for federal workers, businesses near parks in Utah,” *Deseret News*, December 28, 2018, available at <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900048332/government-shutdown-devastating-for-federal-workers-businesses-near-parks-in-utah-ryce-zion-arches.html>.
- 6 U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Agencies,” available at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies> (last accessed January 2019).
- 7 Lisa Riley Roche, “IRS workers furloughed by government shutdown rally in Utah,” *Deseret News*, January 10, 2019, available at <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900049977/irs-workers-furloughed-by-government-shutdown-rally-in-ogden.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.cnn.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).