



Effects of the Trump Shutdown In West Virginia

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 6,000 federal employees in West Virginia are furloughed or working without pay.² Below is a breakdown of affected federal employees and agencies in the state.

"This level of uncertainty is incredibly frightening ... If I were furloughed and had to go even more than one pay period without a paycheck, we would get severely behind on a lot of things ... We rely on civil servants for aspects of our lives that we don't even think about, that we just take for granted and, when the government shuts down—even partially ... those services stop and people's livelihoods are lost' ... [Eric] Engle said." –West Virginia MetroNews, January 9, 2019³

U.S. Department of Agriculture: 670 employees

In West Virginia, an estimated 670 Department of Agriculture employees, including those working for the following agencies, are furloughed or working without pay.⁴

- **The Farm Service Agency** office in Morgantown and 55 local offices across the state facilitate new assistance programs under the farm bill.
- **The Forest Service** protects and manages the Monongahela National Forest—nearly 1 million acres in the Allegheny Mountains.

- **The Food Safety and Inspection Service** prevents foodborne illness by ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products produced in West Virginia 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.

U.S. Department of the Interior: 500 employees

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

- **The Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement** Appalachian Field Office protects the environment and public health from the adverse effects of coal mining operations.
- **The National Park Service** supports the state's six national park units, including Harpers Ferry and the Appalachian Trail.
- **The U.S. Geological Survey** conducts research on natural resource issues at the Leetown Science Center in Kearneysville and the Virginia and West Virginia Water Science Center in Charleston.
- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** operates two national wildlife refuges in the state and the White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery, which raises 9.2 million rainbow trout annually for release in 16 states.⁵

"The FBI's largest division is located in Clarksburg and employs more than 2,500 federal workers, making it a substantial employer in central West Virginia. As a result of the shutdown, around two-thirds of these employees will be forced to work without pay, while the rest will be furloughed, or temporarily laid off, for the duration of the shutdown." –The Register-Herald, January 2, 2019⁶

Additional agencies

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

- An estimated 150 Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration employees at the state's four commercial airports
- An estimated 980 Federal Bureau of Prisons employees at West Virginia's seven federal prisons and correctional institutions
- An estimated 260 members of the U.S. Coast Guard at the Operations System Center in Martinsburg
- U.S. Attorneys' Offices in Wheeling, Charleston, Beckley, and Huntington.

If the partial government shutdown continues, tax filing season could be more difficult for West Virginia 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.⁷ Last year, the agency processed 6.1 million refunds within the first week of filing season in January.⁸

Moreover, West Virginia's 114,000 small businesses are unable to receive guaranteed loans and technical assistance from the Small Business Administration state office in Clarksburg.

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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 Shauna Johnson, "Rally to fully reopen government planned for Thursday in Parkersburg on the shutdown's 20th day," *West Virginia MetroNews*, January 9, 2019, available at <http://wvmetronews.com/2019/01/09/rally-to-fully-reopen-government-planned-for-thursday-in-parkersburg-on-the-shutdowns-20th-day/>.
- 4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Agencies," available at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies> (last accessed January 2019).
- 5 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery," available at <https://www.fws.gov/north-east/wssnfh/> (last accessed January 2019).
- 6 Wendy Holdren, "Manchin shares how government shutdown is impacting West Virginia," *The Register-Herald*, January 2, 2019, available at https://www.register-herald.com/news/money/manchin-shares-how-government-shutdown-is-impacting-west-virginia/article_1c889628-3c93-54cb-9c7e-af002eb657ec.html.
- 7 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>.
- 8 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).