

[Guidance for Shutdown Furloughs \(opm.gov\)](https://www.opm.gov)

About two days before a potential funding lapse, agencies will send a message to their workforce. OMB will be in touch with agencies again to tell them when to inform employees individually about whether they're being furloughed. When federal government functions are suspended, many, though not all, federal employees are furloughed. Services that the government deems "essential," such as those related to law enforcement and public safety, continue. These essential employees work without pay until the shutdown ends. Defining "essential" is more art than science, however, and individual government departments — and the political appointees who run them — have a say over who comes to work and who stays home.

Specific Agency Operations:

Internal Revenue Service

- In past shutdowns, the IRS has furloughed up to 90% of its. However, that will not happen this time because of funds provided in the Inflation Reduction Act.
- IRS operations will continue during a shutdown, and all employees will be exempt from furlough.

Social Security Administration

- Recipients will continue to receive their Social Security and SSI checks.
- The Social Security Administration (SSA) will provide limited services like issuing Social Security cards and holding appointments for benefit applications.
- Customer service wait times will dramatically increase.
- According to the [Social Security Administration](#), a shutdown would mean the agency would only provide the following services:
 - Help you apply for benefits
 - Assist you in requesting an appeal
 - Change your address or direct deposit information
 - Accept reports of death
 - Verify or change your citizenship status
 - Replace a lost or missing Social Security payment
 - Issue a critical payment
 - Change a representative payee
 - Process a change in your living arrangement or income (SSI recipients only)

US Department of Agriculture

- WIC Program
 - A federal contingency fund would dry up after just a few days, leaving many states with limited WIC funds to operate the program.
- SNAP (Food Stamps)
 - While funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is mandatory, the actual issuance of benefits can be affected by a shutdown, as USDA employees wouldn't be receiving paychecks.
 - According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, the USDA is authorized to send out SNAP benefits for 30 days during a shutdown.

US Postal Service

- The U.S. Postal Service is an independent entity that is funded through the sale of its products and services, and would not be impacted by a government shutdown.

Federal Reserve

- The Federal Reserve has their own funding streams and will be largely unaffected by a government shutdown.

Department of Education – Student Loans

- "Programs with mandatory funding can make obligations and payments during a shutdown. Examples of such programs include Pell Grants and Federal Direct Student Loans," a 2021 department contingency plan said.
- Workers tasked with processing payments and managing systems to give out loans will continue to work as well, the department said then.
- Also, the government uses outside contractors for student aid operations, according to the American Council on Education, which should theoretically lessen any potential disruptions.
- The American Council on Education wrote, "Students applying for funding from [the education department], whether loans or loan forgiveness, could experience delays."
- Also, budget cuts and reports of student loan customer service companies cutting back on their hours could potentially present challenges for borrowers if they need support as they begin their loan repayments.

Department of Defense

- Biden administration officials noted that the shutdown could mean delayed paychecks for 1.3 million active-duty troops, including more than 171,000 stationed overseas.
- Troops would be required to report for duty in the event of a shutdown but would not receive paychecks until after a new budget deal is reached.
- Most civilian personnel working for the Defense Department, such as military technicians, would be furloughed, and military personnel may step in to carry out their work, according to a contingency plan for the continuation of essential operations issued by the Pentagon in August.
- Training exercises "required to achieve and maintain operational readiness and to prepare for and carry out" operations necessary for national security would be exempted from a shutdown, according to the contingency plan.
- Pentagon spokesperson Chris Sherwood said "delivery of defense articles, services and/or military education and training" for Ukraine.
- According to the White House, acute and emergency outpatient care in Defense Department medical and dental facilities will continue. All inpatient care will also continue at Defense Department medical facilities.
- Military and federal retirees will continue to receive their retirement benefits. Processing new applications or other requested changes will be delayed.

TSA

- During a shutdown, TSA will remain operable, with most of its workforce -- nearly 56,000 employees -- required to work without pay.
- Air travelers could see significant delays and longer wait times for travelers at airports across the country like there were during previous shutdowns.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Department of Labor

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Department of Labor Workplace inspections would face cutbacks because of limitations with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Department of Labor, according to the White House.

Food and Drug Administration

- The FDA could be forced to delay food safety inspections for a wide variety of products all across the country.

Environmental Protection Agency

- The EPA would stop most inspections at hazardous waste sites as well as drinking water and chemical facilities.
- Also, the EPA would pause plans and permit reviews that ensure safe water and clean air standards are met.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

- Up to 10,000 children could lose access to Head Start, the federal program for preschool children from low-income families, in a shutdown.

Department of Veterans Affairs

- Veterans Affairs benefits continue as normal under a shutdown.
- Military retirees and bereaved families on the Survivor Benefit Plan can expect to continue to receive their pension checks.
- Disability checks will continue.
- In the case of a shutdown, there would be no impact on Veteran healthcare.
 - The Department of Veterans Affairs said all Veterans Health Administration facilities are expected to remain open in the event of a shutdown. Employees who perform medical and prosthetic research are expected to be furloughed.
 - The Veteran Choice Program will remain open, which means that prescriptions will still be filled and medical providers will still be open for appointments.
- Burials would continue at VA national cemeteries.
- The Board will continue to process appeals.
- However, certain resources would be restricted:
 - The VA wouldn't be able to conduct outreach to veterans.
 - Regional offices would be closed.

National Parks Service

- National parks can either shut entirely or open without certain vital services such as public toilets or attendants.
- Closures will be determined on a location-by-location basis.

CMS

- Current Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries will continue to receive their benefits, assuming a shutdown lasts less than three months.

Department of State

- Consular services, passport services, and visa services are expected to continue in the immediate aftermath of a government shutdown.
- In a prolonged shutdown, passport and visa issuance could be slowed.
- Access to passport agencies located in some government buildings may be limited.

FEMA

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff will still respond to emergencies, but all long-term projects will be delayed due to a lack of funding in the Disaster Relief Fund.

Housing

- The FHA will stop insuring some new mortgages and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will stop processing some new loans.
- The Department of Agriculture (USDA) will stop new loan and loan guarantee activity.
- The VA will continue to guarantee home loans.
- Funding for federal housing assistance programs, such as Housing Choice Vouchers, may be jeopardized in a prolonged shutdown.

Small Business Administration

- The SBA will stop processing new business loans, such as through the 7(a) and 504 programs.
- However, SBA's Disaster Loan Program will continue regular operations.

National Institutes of Health

- NIH will be forced to delay new clinical trials. New patients who are waiting for a chance at new treatment through a clinical trial will be turned away.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services

- USCIS is fee-funded so will be largely unaffected.
- However, the adjudication of applications/petitions dependent on information or decisions from other agencies can be delayed.

State and local services

- The federal government shutdown will not immediately affect any state or local services.
- However, with federal funding cut off, some state or local governments may have to change their operations. Check with state and local agencies for specific questions.