

# **Who is affected by a government shutdown: What you need to know**

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With a looming government shutdown, hundreds of thousands of federal employees could soon be temporarily out of a job, which could lead to impacts in government services.

If Congressional legislators can't agree on a spending bill by Sept. 30, the Office of Budget Management will alert agencies how many employees to furlough. The last time Congress failed to pass a government spending bill, nearly a million Americans were furloughed or went without pay, USA Today reported earlier this week.

But how might a potential government shutdown disrupt Ohioans?

## **Will I still be able to fly out of John Glenn, Covington, Akron-Canton, Cleveland-Hopkins airports?**

A shutdown wouldn't necessarily be detrimental to your travel plans, but air traffic controllers and TSA agents would have to work without pay because of their essential status. During the 2019 government shutdown, many of those federally supported workers called in sick about two weeks in — causing air travel woes across the nation.

A spokesperson for John Glenn International Airport said the airport "is working closely with Transportation Security Administration and Federal Aviation Administration officials to minimize possible impacts of a federal government shutdown."

## **What about the Wright-Patt Air Force Base and museum?**

At Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Greene County, civilian employees will be furloughed unless they are deemed mission critical, a Wright-Patterson spokesperson said. More than 30,000 military, civilian and contractor employees work at the Air Force base.

Wright-Patterson is the largest single site employer in the state of Ohio with an economic impact of \$4.2 billion per year.

In previous government shutdowns, the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force has been shuttered alongside civilian furloughs. A museum spokesperson could not be reached for comment.

## **What about my SNAP/WIC benefits?**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which provides food benefits to millions of low-income families, would continue throughout the month of October, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said. But if the shutdown drags on longer than October, SNAP funding would be put at risk.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, which serves 7 million mothers a year, would expend all of its funding within days.

During the last government shutdown, the government nearly ran out of SNAP funding that would've affected some 40 million Americans, USA Today reported.

## **What could happen to Ohio farmers?**

As harvest season descends on farmers across the country, the impact of a shutdown might be felt in rural Ohio too.

Similar to previous shutdowns, marketing loans for many farmers would enter into a state of limbo as Farm Service Agency offices in most U.S. counties shutter. More broadly, USDA-backed housing loans for rural families would cease as well.

## **What about my Social Security and Medicare?**

About 8,500 of the Social Security administration's nearly 62,000 employees would be furloughed in the event of a shutdown, according to its 2024 fiscal year contingency plan.

Under the plan, agency services that would continue without interruption include processing of benefit applications, appeal requests and hearings, post-entitlement actions such as address changes and the issuing of new and replacement Social Security cards. A few services – such as verification of benefits, or corrections and updates to earnings records – would be temporarily suspended.

## Can I still send mail?

The U.S. Postal Service “does not cease operations during any Federal lapse in appropriations as it is funded through a permanent no-year appropriation,” according to its 2024 fiscal year shutdown plan.

That means you can still send mail.

However, the Office of the Inspector General, which investigates mail-related crimes, receives an annual appropriation from the Postal Service Fund rather than the U.S. Treasury. In the event of a shutdown, the office would continue operations using previously appropriate funds until they were depleted.

*USA Today reporting contributed to this story.*