



2025 GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN RESOURCES

The federal government has entered a shutdown as of 12:01 AM ET on Wednesday, October 1, 2025. A government shutdown can have wide-ranging impacts on our community—from delays in federal services to uncertainty for federal workers, small businesses, military families, and Virgin Islanders who depend on critical government programs.

As your representative in Congress, my top priority is ensuring that you and your family have the resources and information you need to navigate this moment. **While many federal operations may pause, my offices will remain open and continue to process federal agency casework, connect you with available resources, and advocate on your behalf for critical services.** Please contact St. Thomas (340-774-4408), St. Croix (340-778-5900), or Washington, D.C. (202-225-1790) for assistance. However, please note that response times from federal agencies may be significantly longer than usual as agencies operate with reduced staff due to furloughs and staffing shortages.

Below, you will find answers to frequently asked questions about the government shutdown and the impact on the Virgin Islands. Please note, this guidance is based upon currently available information, and our office will continue to monitor announcements from the Trump Administration and update this page.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does the government shut down?

The government shuts down when Congress is unable to pass government funding bills, known as appropriations, that finance the operations of federal agencies and programs. These funding bills are designed to fund the government until the end of each fiscal year, on September 30. Currently, Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House. On September 30, 2025, Congressional Republicans failed to pass a government funding deal, causing the federal government to shut down. While some essential services continue during a shutdown, others may be disrupted or delayed.

What effect does this have on the public in the U.S. Virgin Islands?

A government shutdown, whether partial or full, affects a variety of services and programs in the U.S. Virgin Islands. During the 2018-2019 partial shutdown, the Food and Drug Administration suspended routine inspections. The National Park Service halted trash collection and road repairs at federal sites, and some park facilities and historic sites closed. Immigration court hearings in the Virgin Islands were among the more than 86,000 canceled nationwide, adding to existing backlogs. The shutdown also affected the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program in some areas. These disruptions illustrate how shutdowns can detrimentally affect public services and society's most vulnerable members.



What happens to federal employees in the U.S. Virgin Islands during a shutdown?

When the government shuts down, federal agencies are required to classify their employees whose salaries have lapsed as either "excepted" or "not excepted." The employees classified as "excepted" work without pay during the shutdown. The employees classified as "not excepted" are put on unpaid furlough. Under the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019, all federal employees are retroactively paid for the duration of the shutdown upon its conclusion. The more than 400 federal employees stationed in the Virgin Islands face the same furlough or excepted status as their mainland counterparts.

Government contractors who provide services under federal contracts are treated differently than direct federal employees. Contractors typically do not receive retroactive compensation for work periods during shutdowns.

What is the process to end a government shutdown, and can the President unilaterally end it?

A government shutdown ends when Congress passes and the President signs appropriations legislation to fund the affected departments and agencies. The President cannot end a shutdown independently without congressional action. Funding bills must proceed through the standard legislative process, which requires passage by both the House of Representatives and the Senate before being presented to the President for signature. This process applies uniformly to all U.S. territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands.



What government services and programs are impacted during a government shutdown?

During a government shutdown, essential services related to national security and public safety, like inpatient and emergency medical care, air traffic control, law enforcement, border security, disaster aid, and power grid maintenance, continue, though they may face disruptions. Services independent of annual appropriations bills, such as the U.S. Postal Service and programs like Social Security and Medicare, also continue, but may experience interruptions. Federal agencies may suspend certain activities, including regulatory inspections and maintenance of federal properties. Court proceedings, including immigration hearings, may be postponed. Federal assistance programs may experience delays or temporary limitations in service delivery.

Federal facilities in the U.S. Virgin Islands that may experience impacts during a government shutdown include:

- Veterans' Affairs medical facilities
- Federal courthouses
- National Park Service sites
- Ports, airports, and marine terminals with federal customs processing or law enforcement operations
- Federal law enforcement agency offices
- Federal office buildings housing government agencies



Will I continue to receive my Social Security checks?

Recipients will continue to receive their Social Security checks. The Social Security Administration (SSA) will continue providing limited services like issuing Social Security cards and holding appointments for benefit applications. However, SSA will stop some activities like benefit verifications and processing overpayments, and the public will likely experience increased wait times for customer service.

Will Medicare and Medicaid benefits be affected?

Medicare, Medicaid and disability insurance will be largely unaffected by a shutdown lasting less than three months. Current beneficiaries will continue to receive their benefits.

Will I still receive SNAP or WIC benefits?

During a shutdown, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will continue to provide payments to recipients until appropriated resources run out. You should expect to keep receiving your benefits during a shutdown. However, if a shutdown exceeds 30 days, there could be potential disruption to the program. At this time of writing, it is unclear how the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) would address extended funding needs.

Most other domestic nutrition assistance programs, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program can continue to operate at the State and local level with any funding and commodity resources that remain available. Additional Federal funds and commodities will not be provided during the period of the lapse, meaning these programs may eventually run out of resources depending on the length of the shutdown.



What is the impact on Veterans' services?

All Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and clinics will remain fully operational. The VA will continue to process veterans' benefits. This includes compensation, pension, education, housing, suicide prevention programs, homelessness services, and caregiver support.

Will military and federal retiree benefits be suspended?

Military and federal retirees will continue to receive their retirement benefits. Processing new applications or other requested changes will be delayed.

What is the impact on U.S. military personnel and federal law enforcement?

All active-duty and Guard and Reservists on active-duty orders are excepted and therefore are required to work. On-base non-acute health care may cease, but off-base care provided through Tricare is not affected. On-base childcare is open on a case-by-case basis. Federal law enforcement is also required to work. Both military personnel and federal law enforcement will not be paid until after the shutdown is over.

Will commercial air travel be affected?

Air traffic controllers, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers, and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents will remain on the job. However, like all federal employees, they will not be paid until the shutdown is over. Air travelers should anticipate longer wait times, delays, and possible cancellations. We encourage everyone to exercise patience and kindness with these employees who are continuing to serve the public during difficult circumstances.



What is the impact on passport services?

Passport processing and renewal services may experience significant delays during a government shutdown. If you have upcoming travel plans, we recommend applying for or renewing your passport as early as possible. Please contact our offices if you have urgent passport needs.

Will my mail still arrive?

Yes. The U.S. Postal Service is not affected by a shutdown.

What about student loans and financial aid?

Pell Grants and Federal Direct Student Loans should continue to be obligated and disbursed during a federal shutdown, but only as long as carryover and mandatory appropriations last. The department staff needed to carry out these functions are significantly reduced during a shutdown.

Free Applications for Student Aid (FAFSA), Pell Grant, and Federal Direct Student Loans, and servicing of federal student loans should continue for a "very limited time" under a shutdown. If a shutdown continues for an extended period of time, schools may begin to experience funding shortages due to lapsed federal funding.

What is the impact on small businesses?

The Small Business Administration (SBA) will stop processing new business loans. However, SBA's Disaster Loan Program will continue regular operations.



What is the impact on federal housing loans?

The Federal Housing Administration (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 also stop new loan and loan guarantee activity. The VA will continue to guarantee home loans.

What is the impact on disaster relief efforts?

FEMA staff will still respond to emergencies. In prior shutdowns, long-term projects were delayed due to a lack of funding in the Disaster Relief Fund.

What is the impact on food safety activities?

Some Food and Drug Administration (FDA) food safety activities — such as routine inspections of facilities — will be delayed.