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## Government Shutdown Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



The government is partially shut down because an agreement on how federal funds should be spent could not be reached before the fiscal year ended on September 30th. This means that some government agencies did not get the money they needed to operate fully. Other agencies and programs receive funding through separate legislative mechanisms. That is why for example, Social Security benefits are not affected during a shutdown.

The Office of Management and Budget has created a [comprehensive list](#) of how each agency has been affected by the lack of funding. Below you will find answers to some questions you may have about the government shutdown. I also encourage you to read [this USA Today article](#) that also answers some questions. Please be aware that this situation is fluid.

### **When will the shutdown end?**

The shutdown will continue until a continuing resolution (CR) is passed to fund the government. The Senate has crafted a “clean” CR, a continuing resolution without policy changes, which funds the federal government until November 15, 2013. This resolution could be voted on and passed by the House of Representatives, then sent to the President to sign and end the shutdown.

### **What is a continuing resolution (CR)?**

A CR is a bill that temporarily funds the federal government at rates previously agreed to in the current budget.

**What is in the clean Senate CR?**

The Democrat-controlled Senate agreed to temporary funding levels that are very close to the Republican-controlled House budget plan. The Senate-passed CR protects funding for the Affordable Care Act, which is sometimes referred to as Obamacare, and keeps the government running longer than the bill House Republicans have passed.

**Why do Democrats want a clean CR?**

A clean CR allows the government to continue running with no strings attached. Some House Republicans want to delay and defund the Affordable Care Act and have used the CR as a political ploy to do so.

**What's the difference between a shutdown and a debt crisis?**

In a shutdown, the government lacks the legal authority to spend money on non-essential services. In a debt crisis, the government is mandated to spend money, but lacks the legal authority to borrow money to meet its obligations.

**Why do some federal employees continue to work during the shutdown?**

Some employees' salaries are not included in the budget and can continue to work and get paid. Others are deemed necessary to carry out certain constitutional responsibilities, or to protect public safety

**How is the shutdown affecting the economy?**

Each day of the shutdown costs the country \$300 million.

**Will I receive my Social Security payments?**

Yes. Social Security checks will continue to be processed and mailed, but new claims may not be processed, and questions and inquiries may not be answered due to furloughed staff.

**I'm on Medicare. Will I still be able to see my doctor?**

Yes, Medicare patients can still see their health care providers and those providers will continue to submit bills and get paid for their services. Unfortunately, new Medicare beneficiaries might not be accepted into the program.

**Will my mail delivery continue?**

Yes. The U.S. Postal Service is self-funded and will continue to deliver mail.

**Will Veterans' hospitals continue to operate?**

Yes. VA hospitals should remain open, but there may be service or benefit cuts. Please note, however, that VA call centers and hotlines will cease to function.

**I am a veteran or military retiree. Will I receive my pension?**

Payments for the month of October were scheduled to be delivered on October 1, 2013. If the shutdown is prolonged, there may be delays in processing future benefits and new claims since VA staff may be furloughed.

Additionally, the approaching October 17th debt ceiling deadline will also affect the availability of funds to pay retirees.

**I am a disabled veteran. Will I receive my benefits on time?**

Claims processing and payments in the compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation programs are expected to continue through late October. However, in the event of a prolonged shutdown, claims processing and payments in these programs would be suspended when available funding is exhausted. There may also be delays in the processing of any new claims for disability compensation, and VA staff may be furloughed.

**I am a veteran student who receives benefits under the GI Bill or the Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP). Will I continue to receive payments on time?**

That depends on the length of the federal government shutdown. You should receive your monthly stipend for the month of October but the length of the federal government shutdown may delay future stipends. Any educational benefits for veterans based on reimbursement may experience delays in processing and payment.

**As a federal employee, am I eligible for unemployment benefits?**

Yes, furloughed federal employees are eligible for unemployment benefits. You must be out of work for a pay period to prove loss of benefits. Also, you cannot receive both unemployment benefits and a federal salary. Visit the Ohio Unemployment Compensation website for more information.

**What should I expect as a government contractor?**

If you are furloughed, discuss with your management how their government contract is structured.

**I am a federal government retiree. Will I receive my pension?**

If you already receive pension benefits, you should continue to receive payments. The Retirement Fund is not impacted by the lapses in Federal appropriations.

**I am a small business owner who is currently waiting on a loan from the Small Business Administration. Will I still receive the money from my loan on time?**

You should contact your lender immediately. If the SBA has already processed your loan guaranty then your lender should be able to disburse your loan funds to you in a timely manner. Businesses are likely to face delays if the SBA has not yet processed their loan guaranty approval. Other SBA support services, like processing new loan applications, are suspended during the shutdown.

**What happens to my student loan aid?**

Pell Grants and Federal Direct Loans will continue to be processed; however, payments may be slow with fewer federal employees on the job to process them.

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