



The Good News in Bad Times is designed to equip faith and civic leaders to educate and advocate for struggling communities.



by Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner

Vital Resources for Those Impacted By the Government Shutdown

Sadly, the U. S. House of Representatives has been out of session for nearly 50 days. This stalemate now stands as the most extended shutdown in U.S. history, a sobering marker of political dysfunction and moral decay in our nation's leadership.

Turning away from the suffering of others is not only poor leadership—it is a moral failure. Using hunger and hardship as political weapons is unconscionable and violates the divine command to “do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). It also violates God's greatest command to, “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of churches, nonprofits, community organizations, and corporations that are stepping up to feed the hungry and offer hope in the face of uncertainty. Yet, charity cannot replace responsibility. Government exists to protect and serve, not to neglect. We urge leaders to act immediately to reopen the government and restore stability for millions of Americans.

The church is doing its part. Now it is time for the government to do its part. Leadership is stewardship, not self-interest. Let us restore both the function and faith of this nation by recommitting to justice, compassion, and the common good.

Visit **[SkinnerLeaders.org](https://www.SkinnerLeaders.org)** for free food, financial, and other vital resources for furloughed federal employees.

Visit **[Findhelp.org](https://www.Findhelp.org)** for additional information and resources.

SHUTDOWN RESOURCES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Unemployment Insurance (UI):

- Some employees impacted by furlough may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits. Note, waiting periods by state vary, and most states require that the UI benefits be repaid after retroactive pay is received.

Information for Federal Workers

- [Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees Fact Sheet](#) (PDF). This document outlines responses to some frequently asked questions.
- [Federal Employee Checklist](#) (PDF). This document outlines the materials a federal employee would likely need in order to apply for UI benefits.
- [Map of State Unemployment Insurance Websites](#). Every state operates its own UI program. This website can help you find where to apply for UI in your state.
- [OPM Guidance to Federal Workers for Shutdown Furloughs](#) (PDF). This is the same OPM guidance linked above. Note: it includes some specific guidance on UI.
- [SF-8 Agency Information](#) (PDF). This information is for DOL employees only. The information can be used in lieu of the SF-8 and will be accepted by UI offices.

General Resources:

- myfedbenefitshelp.com/shutdown-assistance-map. The Shutdown Assistance Map (SAM) was created to help federal employees affected by the government shutdown find the support they need; both locally and at the national level. Search the map to see offers of assistance and resources available to you: Bank of America, Capital One, Chase, Regions Bank, TD Banks, and Wells Fargo.
 - For a list of additional credit union programs [click here](#).
 - For a list of assistance programs from banks [click here](#).
- Check with your utility, telephone, and internet providers for payment options. For example, [Verizon](#) offers flexible payment arrangements for Federal workers, military, first responders.

Food Resources:

- Feeding America: "Find Free Food and Groceries". Your local food bank can help you find food today, even if you need temporary help. They partner with food pantries, soup kitchens, and meal programs in your local community to give away free food. Enter your zip code to find the food bank partnering with Feeding America. They'll share the locations and hours of nearby food distributions.
- Food Pantries of America - Welcome to FoodFinder! - You can call or text your ZIP code and get referrals to local food assistance providers (pantries, soup kitchens, etc.)
- WhyHunger "Find Food" / Hotline (1-800-5-HUNGRY / text zip to 1-800-548-6479).
- United Way / 211- Dial 211 (in most parts of the U.S.) to reach a community resource line. They maintain up-to-date local listings for food pantries, emergency food assistance, etc.
- USDA National Hunger Hotline-1-866-348-6479 (and 1-877-842-6273 for Spanish) — offers information about food assistance programs and can help direct you to local resources.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- Wellfed offers three recurring weekly virtual programs designed to provide structure, support and momentum for professionals navigating career transitions.
- Technologists for the Public Good has partnered with Empower Work to provide free, confidential counseling.

Financial Assistance Resources:

- FEEA.org: Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund. Offers Emergency Hardship Loans and Shutdown grants federal civilian employees in need
- The Navy Federal Credit Union is offering zero interest loans of up to \$6,000 to its members and other federal government employees during the shutdown. Call 888-842-6328 for assistance.
- The United States Senate Federal Credit Union is offering zero interest loans for 90-days of up to \$5,000 during the shutdown. This credit union is not just for Senate employees. Federal employees can become a member of this credit union by becoming a member of the American Consumer Council, the US Capitol Historical Association, or the Senate Federal Credit Union Foundation and are eligible for interest free loans during the shutdown. Call 800-374-2758 for assistance.

- [FEEA.org: Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund](http://FEEA.org). Offers Emergency Hardship Loans and Shutdown grants federal civilian employees in need.
- The [Navy Federal Credit Union](#) is offering zero interest loans of up to \$6,000 to its members and other federal government employees during the shutdown. Call 888-842-6328 for assistance.
- The [United States Senate Federal Credit Union](#) is offering zero interest loans for 90-days of up to \$5,000 during the shutdown. This credit union is not just for Senate employees. Federal employees can become a member of this credit union by becoming a member of the American Consumer Council, the US Capitol Historical Association, or the Senate Federal Credit Union Foundation and are eligible for interest free loans during the shutdown. Call 800-374-2758 for assistance.
- The [Congressional Federal Credit Union](#) is offering zero interest Furlough Relief loans of up to \$10,000 during the shutdown. You do not have to be a Congressional employee to join this credit union. Federal workers can become a member of this credit union by joining the "[Friends of the National Arboretum](#)". Call 800-491-2328 for assistance.
- The [Commerce Department Credit Union](#) is offering 30-day zero interest loans for federal workers during the shutdown for up to \$10,000. You do not have to be a Commerce Department employee to become a member. Anyone who joins the American Consumer Council can join this credit union. Call 888-626-9845 for assistance.
- [Army Emergency Relief](#) provides interest-free loans equal to the amount of one paycheck, up to a maximum amount of \$6,000, for soldiers and families who experience financial hardship due to a lack of pay. Call 866-878-63788 for assistance.
- The [U.S. Employees Credit Union](#) is offering interest-free shutdown loans to eligible members. Call 312-922-5310 for assistance.
- [USAA's Government Shutdown Program](#) is offering no-interest loans and other payment relief options from \$500 to \$6,000. Call 210-531-8722 for assistance.
- [PenFed](#) is offering zero-interest loans equal to the amount of missed paychecks for furloughed federal workers who are existing members and have their pay directly deposited to their PenFed account. Call 1-800-247-5626 for assistance.
- Several large national banks have offered government shutdown assistance, including Bank of America, capital One, Chase, Regions Bank, TD Banks, and Wells Fargo
 - For a list of additional credit union programs [click here](#).
 - For a list of assistance programs from banks [click here](#).