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The government shutdown is over, but not everything is back to normal



By Rachel Treisman (NPR)

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The federal government is reopening. But after 43 days on pause, things may not return to business as usual right away. For instance, federal workers are still awaiting backpay and air travel disruptions are expected to linger.

And some impacts could continue much longer than six weeks, whether that's national parks trying to make up for lost visitor revenue or taxpayers waiting longer for refunds from a backlogged Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

There's also the looming threat of another potential shutdown in the not-too-distant future, since this bill only funds the government through Jan. 30.

Here's a look at where things stand for now.

This is a live story that will be updated throughout the day as we learn more.

Federal employees return to work, awaiting back pay

Roughly 1.4 million federal workers have gone without pay for six weeks. Roughly half of them were required to keep working without paychecks, while hundreds of thousands of others were furloughed.

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After the government shutdown ending in January 2019 — then the longest in history — Congress [passed a law](#) ensuring back pay for federal workers “at the earliest date possible after the lapse in appropriations ends, regardless of scheduled pay dates.”

But Trump appeared to [suggest otherwise](#) in public comments last month, leaving many feds worried.

The bill that Congress passed to end the shutdown guarantees back pay. It also reverses several agencies’ attempted staffing reductions during the shutdown, which were [paused by a federal judge](#), and prevents additional layoffs of federal employees through January.

Shaun Southworth, a federal employment attorney, said in an [Instagram video](#) that the timing of backpay will vary by agency based on their payroll providers, but most employees should start seeing deposits within days.

“Many employees historically saw deposits within the first business days after reopening,” he says of the last shutdown. “A minority may roll to the next cycle if the system needs extra processing.”

SNAP is back

The bill Congress passed to reopen the government funds the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through September 2026.

The program, which some [42 million Americans rely on](#) for food assistance, has been the subject of much uncertainty — and an escalating legal battle — in recent weeks. The

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program fully for the month. The Supreme Court paused that order (and [extended that pause again](#) on Tuesday, with the end of the shutdown in sight).

At this point, beneficiaries in some states have gotten their full monthly allocations, while others have gotten partial payments or nothing at all. Reopening the government means restarting SNAP, but it's not clear how quickly full payments will resume, since that varies by state. And, as [NPR has reported](#), many who rely on the program are worried that benefits could be cut again.

Smithsonian institutions will reopen on a rolling basis

The Smithsonian, which encompasses 21 museums and the National Zoo, says its reopening will be gradual.

Its [website says](#) the National Museum of American History, as well as the National Air and Space Museum and its Virginia annex, the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, will open their doors on Friday.

All other museums and the zoo — including its beloved [live animal cams](#) — will reopen to the public “on a rolling basis” by Monday.

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