

Would Social Security checks still go out? If the checks are stopped, would all monies due be paid eventually?

Because Social Security benefits are not subject to appropriation, the Social Security Administration has told the House Committee on Ways and Means that the checks would go out.

Would Medicare payments be made, to doctors, hospitals, including emergency hospitalization and ER visits?

The House Committee on Ways and Means asked the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) if they have any information as to what would happen if there were a government shutdown and CMS would not give any guidance. According to Ways and Means, CMS had not thought about it. According to Ways and Means, the House Committee on Financial Services also made a similar request to CMS. CMS did note that Medicare doesn't pay in real time. There's a minimum two-week lag time, so if the government is shut down for more than two weeks there could be an issue. CMS could also hold claims like they did with doctors in a previous situation. According to the Congressional Research Service, non-essential services could see an impact. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services will have to issue guidance on what they deem to be essential

Would Medicaid/SCHIP payments be made?

According to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, because Medicaid allotments are paid to states in advance on a quarterly basis, it is likely states will not see an immediate impact from a temporary government shutdown and consequently, nor will providers who serve the Medicaid and SCHIP populations.

What would happen with disability benefits (SSDI)?

According to the Committee on Ways and Means, disability benefits would continue to be paid. New benefit applications for retirement, disability, and survivors benefits may be delayed depending on the staffing plan Social Security develops, as the number of staff on hand would determine the amount of work processed. The plan is still with OMB for their review.

What would happen with Unemployment Benefits?

According to the House Committee on Ways and Means, benefits weren't affected during the 1996 shutdown, and as mandatory spending, they would not expect them to be. States were just transferred their quarterly amounts to pay state benefits through at least the next two months. There is a concern about federally funded state administrative funds, but the Department of Labor just did a major transfer of state administrative funds in anticipation of the shutdown.

What would happen with Work training programs?

According to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, workforce training programs are funded through June. Unless there is a protracted shutdown there should be no impact.

What would happen with Welfare (TANF)?

According to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, TANF is shared jurisdiction with Ways and Means. Education and the Workforce has jurisdiction over the work requirements portion and Ways and Means has jurisdiction over the funding. According to staff at the House Ways and Means Committee, TANF is authorized through FY 2011, and states have received their quarterly allocations through June 30. As a result, there would be no effect on states receiving their federal funds to run TANF. TANF was extended by the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (H.R. 4783) for all of FY 2011.

How would housing – Section 8, Section 202 (elderly), Section 811 (disabilities), homelessness programs – be affected?

According to the House Financial Services Committee, HUD programs would be affected in some way though it is not clear how. Most of the HUD programs are run on schedules other than day-to-day Federal involvement – that is, they are administered by local authorities, they are grants made to non-Federal entities (public or private), or they are contract payments made in advance (payment is made now for services to be rendered, rather than services being performed and sending a bill after). In some way, and depending on the length of a shutdown, those programs would be affected where there will be no actual disbursements under 202 or 811 during the shutdown. However, they will not close overnight.

Would the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation be affected?

According to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, participants in terminated plans at PBGC would not be affected by a government shutdown.

How would Food stamps be affected?

According to the House Committee on Agriculture, without knowing USDA's contingency plans, it's hard to definitively say what would happen to food stamps. In short, food stamps would not immediately be affected at all. Food Stamps since they are administered at the state level should continue. USDA would have to determine how exactly that happens, but in the 1996 shutdown food stamp delivery was not compromised. During an absence of appropriation every agency would have to limit obligations to those needed to maintain the minimum level of essential activities necessary to protect life and property. It's believed food stamps would be maintained, but without definitive word from USDA it is speculation. Food stamp recipients should see no lapse in their benefits.

What would happen to school lunches?

According to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce there should be no impact felt by students. They would continue to get a school lunch. Unless the shutdown dragged on to May there would be no impact by the schools. The program is reimbursed on a quarterly basis and the next reimbursement would be in May.

How would student Loans/work study be affected? Would funding be released? Would repayment checks be cashed?

According to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, CRS has limited information on the student aid programs as OMB has directed the agencies not to speak to anyone about shut down plans. Most of the impact is still unclear. However, Pell Grants would

likely continue to be made since those are forward funded. Loan funds would likely continue to flow but there is some question about the administrative aspects of the aid disbursement. Much of student aid is run by contractors, who would have likely been paid for the year (although, that is not certain either). It is unclear about whether students would be able to file their FAFSAs since there would not be any administration support for the website, etc.

How would Farm Subsidies be affected?

According to the House Committee on Agriculture, direct payments go out twice a year, in an advanced direct payment form and a final direct payment. The advanced direct went out months ago and the next one is not supposed to come out again until October, so no direct payments would be affected. Most payments from USDA in the form of "subsidies" come out during certain times of year and would not be affected by a short term shutdown. Conservation payments might be affected during the time of a shutdown but could certainly be sent out after a shutdown ended. USDA has not shared their contingency plans so it is unknown exactly how FSA and NRCS staff would be affected but it is assumed that those offices would close during this time.

Would FHA Mortgage loans be affected?

According to the House Financial Services Committee, under a temporary government shutdown, FHA will no longer have the commitment authority to endorse/insure new loans. Lenders offering FHA loans may chose to go forward with the loan at closing, but they would have to assume the risk that FHA would normally take on. Some lenders' internal governance do not allow that, others do; it depends on the individual lender. Therefore, while the FHA endorsement process does not come until a couple of weeks after closing, it is committee staff's understanding that a temporary shutdown could disrupt closings.

How would the National Flood Insurance Program be affected in terms of mortgage closings and payment of claims?

According to the House Financial Services Committee, NFIP would continue to pay claims and sell policies in the event of a shutdown. Responses to day-to-day questions would be curtailed due to only essential personnel being on the job.