

The Federal Government Shutdown and Landscape Architects:

Today the federal government is officially shutdown, as Congress failed to pass any of its fiscal year 2014 appropriations bills or an omnibus spending bill that would pay for the federal government's expenses from October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014. As a result of this shutdown, many federal services will be interrupted and more than 800,000 federal workers, including landscape architects, will be furloughed, losing pay. The shutdown will last until Congress passes and the president signs a spending agreement that will continue to fund the government. The last shutdown in 1995-96 lasted 21 days.

While it is still unclear how the current shutdown will impact all facets of the federal government, below is a summary of how the shutdown could impact the landscape architecture profession.

Department of the Interior

The [Department of the Interior](#) is one of the largest federal employers of landscape architects. Agencies under its authority include the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Land Management, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. The Department of the Interior has 72,562 employees. More than 58,000 will face furloughs, and those remaining on the job as exempted workers have mostly law enforcement and security-related duties.

The National Park Service [will close](#) more than 400 national parks and monuments, including Yosemite National Park in California, Alcatraz in San Francisco, and the Statue of Liberty in New York. All the memorials on the National Mall — including the Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Martin Luther King Jr. memorials, as well as the Washington Monument — will be closed to visitors and barricaded. The last time this happened during the 1995-96 shutdown, some 7 million visitors around the country were turned away. Landscape architects working in these national parks will be furloughed and the communities and businesses that rely on these tourist attractions will feel the economic brunt of these closures.

Department of Transportation

About one-third of [Department of Transportation](#) (DOT) employees will be furloughed due to the shutdown. "Essential" personnel will report to work, including those whose jobs are tied to safety functions, like air traffic controllers. Employees' paychecks and transportation programs that are funded through the Highway Trust Fund and not discretionary spending will also continue through the shutdown. So, programs under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), like the Transportation Alternatives Program, will continue.

However, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which is not funded under the Highway Trust Fund, will halt all operations and will not issue grants, cooperative agreements, or sign contracts for FTA programs like New Starts. Other programs, like the popular Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) also will come to a temporary standstill.

General Services Administration

The [General Services Administration](#) (GSA) will not make payments to contractors for products and services not obligated before the funding lapse. [USA.gov](#) and [GobiernoUSA.gov](#) will remain available during a shutdown but will not be updated, except in an emergency. GSA will not maintain other websites providing government information and services to citizens.

Environmental Protection Agency

[The Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) work on administering state revolving funds will cease immediately, as will work promoting and implementing the Campus RainWorks student design competition. The EPA has over 16,000 employees, and more than 15,500 will face furloughs. Work on superfund sites and in security are among those exempted from the furlough.

Department of Agriculture- US Forest Service

Around 60 percent of [US Forest Service](#) (USFS) staff will be subject to furlough, including many landscape architects. Those activities exempt from furlough include fire suppression, law enforcement, and emergency and disaster response. Recreation areas managed by the USFS will close.

Small Business Administration

[Small Business Administration \(SBA\) lending programs](#) that will close include small business set asides, procurement assistance, business development and technical assistance, and the size standards office. Emergency loans and disaster recovery loans and loan processing will continue.