

35-day government shutdown ends with temporary funding through mid-February

January 25, 2019

The longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history ended on January 25, when President Donald Trump signed a short-term spending deal that temporarily reopens affected agencies—including the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of the Interior—which had been shut down since the end of last year.

The legislation ([H. J. Res. 28](#)) provides continued funding at last year's levels for certain federal agencies through February 15, unless the applicable fiscal year (FY) 2019 appropriations bills for those agencies are enacted before then. This means that Congress and the administration have until February 15 to agree upon the remaining spending bills that have not yet been enacted for 2019, or pass another continuing resolution to extend funding at FY 2018 levels and push back their deadline to avoid another partial government shutdown.

Some science-supporting agencies were not impacted by the shutdown because they had already received their final appropriations for the current fiscal year, including the Department of Energy, the National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Now that the shutdown is over, grant and contract disbursements for impacted science agencies can resume, thus replenishing the financial reserves of research institutions that depend on government funding to operate. However, normal operations are not expected to resume for weeks or months as researchers and agency officials make up for lost time, according to the American Institute of Physics.

Although federal workers who went without pay during the shutdown will also get full back pay, many contractors whose work depends on federal contracts are not legally entitled to back pay and so face continuing financial uncertainty. If the president and congressional leaders do not reach a deal before the February 15 deadline to reopen the government for a longer period, many federal employees will again be furloughed or forced to work without pay.

Sources: American Institute of Physics; E&E News; Library of Congress; Politico.
