



Government Shutdown: Giving and getting help

Saturday, January 26, 2019

The Bay Area has a large number of federal workers affected by the federal shutdown and they're part of the 800,000 federal employees that have either been furloughed or working without pay since Dec. 21.

They won't receive their next paychecks until the government reopens. A number of businesses stepped in to offer everything from specials to freebies to assistance.

We have a list of places where you can give help to federal workers. And, if you're being affected by the shutdown, we've compiled a list of resources where you can get help.

GETTING ASSISTANCE:

Transit:

The [San Mateo County Transit District](#) will provide free bus and train rides to all federal government employees affected by the shutdown beginning on Thursday, January 24. Federal workers will need to show their federal government employee identification cards to bus operators on SamTrans and train conductors on CalTrain.

Gas:

[Fremont Valero Gas Station](#)

(Located at Mowry Avenue & Fremont Boulevard)

Fremont Valero station owner Ray Olyaie [plans to give away](#) \$20,000 worth of gas. Requirement: Must be a Fremont resident and show government ID. Olyaie was moved by watching the news & hearing stories of unpaid federal workers unable to pay bills and support their families. He hopes other gas stations will do the same thing.

Cellphone Providers:

Most of the major wireless providers, including [Verizon](#), [Sprint](#) and [AT&T](#), are working with government employees offering short term assistance or flexible payments.

Banking, Credit Cards:

Banks, credit card companies, lenders and loan servicers also have assistance options available. Experts say it's best to take advantage of this help before missing payments. Included in the list: [Bank of America](#), [Chase](#), [Discover](#), [Wells Fargo](#) and more.

Grants and no-interest loans are available for affected federal workers. Employees can apply for small grants or no interest loans from the [Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund](#).

Pets:

Help is available for pet owners needing assistance feeding their animals. Napa-based [Jameson Animal Rescue Ranch](#) (JARR) says it will provide food for any kind of pet including dogs, cats, fish and even horses. The non-profit rescue says it can ship the pet food to those in need. People who would like to receive the pet food have to apply. They have to live in Northern California and submit a picture of their federal ID, and a piece of mail or business card with their application. To apply, contact JARR's Community Resource Information Center at 707-927-3536 or email Helpinganimals@jamesonrescueranch.org

Food:

[Lefty O'Doul's Buffet & Café](#)

(145 Jefferson Street, Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco)

Lefty O'Doul's offers furloughed federal employees and their families FREE all they can eat lunch and dinner buffet, every day until the shutdown ends. Nick Bovis, Owner: "Come be my guest for lunch and dinner every day until the madness ends and you can go back to work. Bring your whole family, and all you have to do is show a federal ID. We are on the honor system here at Lefty's."

[Wonderful Restaurant \(Chinese\)](#)

(270 Broadway, Millbrae)

"Wonderful" is [offering 50 percent off meals](#) to any federal worker who isn't getting paid.

Wonderful is located an exit up from SFO where air traffic controllers have already missed a paycheck. The discount offer at wonderful will last until the government is reopened.

[The FruitGuys](#)

The FruitGuys, located in South San Francisco, is [donating fruits and vegetables](#) to SFO FAA, border and customs patrol, and TSA furloughed employees. Founder & CEO Chris Mittelstadt grew up flying and knows how hard the air traffic controllers worked.

Haircuts:

[Blades Co.](#)

San Francisco's Blades Co. barbershop is offering free men's haircuts to anyone who is furloughed.

Requirement: Bring federal ID.

GIVING ASSISTANCE:

Food:

Bay Area Food Banks

Text FEED to 80077 to donate \$10.00 to our Bay Area food banks. You can also organize your own food drive, or volunteer by finding [your local food bank](#). \$10.00 donation to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. Charges will appear on your wireless bill, or be deducted from your prepaid balance. All purchases must be authorized by account holder. Must be 18 years of age or have parental permission to participate. Message and Data Rates May Apply. Text STOP to 80077 to STOP. Text HELP to 80077 for HELP. Full Terms: mGive.org/T. Privacy Policy: mGive.org/P

United for US Fund

Created by United Way, the [United for the US Fund](#), is a collaborative project by labor unions, corporations, and nonprofits to help federal workers. Local United Way chapters are providing financial services, counseling and, emergency help with rent, food and other basics. United Way says 100% of donations will go to the affected parties.

Feeding America

[Feeding America](#) is working with a network of food banks to support affected families. On their website, you can pledge money or enter your zip code to find nearby food banks where you can donate or get help.

If you just want to do your part and buy a furloughed federal worker a beer, there's a new website called PayItFurloughed.com where people are coming together to buy local craft brews for federal employees impacted by the government shutdown.

TSA Agents:

Donate to TSA Directly

TSA agents are allowed to accept gift card, with conditions. The cards have to be for a specific store, instead of a cash card good anywhere. TSA says if you drop them off at the airport, you have to ask for a TSA supervisor or manager, who will distribute them to workers.