

The Government Shutdown is Adding Instability to Already Struggling Communities

People sometimes have a disconnect between what happens in Washington and how that affects life in an average household. However, the effects of the recent partial government shutdown are impossible to miss as it has directly impacted millions of families across the country in very important ways: wage earning, food, and housing.

As an Appalachian backbone organization committed to improving communities, Fahe is acutely aware of the negative impact of the shutdown in the lives of people. In places such as Appalachia that are dominated by small and rural towns, a shutdown is potentially devastating. Federal and related agencies are an important source of liquidity so the shutdown means a lack of finance flowing in our region. This coupled with years of disinvestment adds instability to families and communities that are already struggling.

A recent article in the [Washington Post](#) analyzes the impact caused by the cessation of funding for these programs. They began with the story of an elderly woman in Kentucky (in fact, someone being served by Fahe Member, Frontier Housing) who is waiting for a USDA loan to repair her aging home this winter.

Nonprofits across Appalachia are concerned because it not only affects their clients' lives but compromises their stability to provide essential services. At this moment, over 450 families working with Fahe have their dreams of homeownership placed on indefinite hold because United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offices are closed.

Thus, when the government shuts down, millions of Americans cannot access critical funds and services. For those who live in places like Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, Native American lands, and the Colonias along the Mexican border, they also lose access to capital for homes, and facilities such as school class rooms, or water treatment plants.

USDA has announced that the SNAP program will be funded through February via emergency funds. If the shutdown continues through March, the status of the program is uncertain. In our region of Appalachia, SNAP enrollment is

among the highest in the country, and it's the same story in other struggling parts of the country. In many areas of eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, and southwestern Virginia [the percentage of a county's population receiving assistance to purchase food ranges from 20% to nearly 60%](#).

Many small town grocery stores also depend on SNAP. They receive a [surge in business](#) during the time of the month when SNAP benefits arrive. USDA data shows that every dollar spent in SNAP generates up to \$1.80 in economic activity in that area.

This shutdown is directly ruining lives and placing families in jeopardy when it comes to their paycheck, their food, and their homes. It's time to end this shutdown.