

USDA to Reopen FSA Offices for Additional Services During Government Shutdown

Release & Contact Info

Press Release
Release No. 0005.19

Contact: USDA Press
Email: press@oc.usda.gov

(Washington, D.C., January 22, 2019) – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced that all Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices nationwide will soon reopen to provide additional administrative services to farmers and ranchers during the lapse in federal funding. Certain FSA offices have been providing limited services for existing loans and tax documents since January 17, and will continue to do so through January 23. Beginning January 24, however, all FSA offices will open and offer a longer list of transactions they will accommodate.

Additionally, Secretary Perdue announced that the deadline to apply for the Market Facilitation Program, which aids farmers harmed by unjustified retaliatory tariffs, has been extended to February 14. The original deadline had been January 15. Other program deadlines may be modified and will be announced as they are addressed.

"At President Trump's direction, we have been working to alleviate the effects of the lapse in federal funding as best we can, and we are happy to announce the reopening of FSA offices for certain services," Perdue said. "The FSA provides vital support for farmers and ranchers and they count on those services being available. We want to offer as much assistance as possible until the partial government shutdown is resolved."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has temporarily recalled all of the more than 9,700 FSA employees to keep offices open from 8 am to 4:30 pm weekdays beginning January 24. President Trump has already signed legislation that guarantees employees will receive all backpay missed during the lapse in funding.

For the first two full weeks under this operating plan (January 28 through February 1 and February 4 through February 8), FSA offices will be open Mondays through Fridays. In subsequent weeks, offices will be open three days a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays if needed to provide the additional administrative services.

Agricultural producers who have business with the agency can contact their [FSA service center](#) to make an appointment.

FSA can provide these administrative services, which are critical for farmers and ranchers, because failure to perform these services would harm funded programs. FSA staff will work on the following transactions:

- Market Facilitation Program.
- Marketing Assistance Loans.
- Release of collateral warehouse receipts.
- Direct and Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans, and Emergency Loans.
- Service existing Conservation Reserve Program contracts.
- Sugar Price Support Loans.
- Dairy Margin Protection Program.
- Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage.
- Livestock Forage Disaster.
- Emergency Assistance Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program.
- Livestock Indemnity Program.
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

- Tree Assistance Program.
- Remaining Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program payments for applications already processed.

Transactions that will *not* be available include, but are not limited to:

- New Conservation Reserve Program contracts.
- New Direct and Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loans.
- Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
- New or in-process Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program applications.
- Emergency Conservation Program.
- Emergency Forest Rehabilitation Program.
- Biomass Crop Assistance Program.
- Grassroots Source Water Protection Program.

With the Office of Management and Budget, USDA reviewed all of its funding accounts that are not impacted by the lapse in appropriation. We further refined this list to include programs where the suspension of the activity associated with these accounts would significantly damage or prevent the execution of the terms of the underlying statutory provision. As a result of this review, USDA was able to except more employees. Those accounts that are not impacted by the lapse in appropriation include mandatory, multiyear and no year discretionary funding including FY 2018 Farm Bill activities.

Updates to available services and offices will be made during the lapse in federal funding on the [FSA shutdown webpage](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/help/shutdowninfo). <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/help/shutdowninfo> Programs managed by FSA that were re-authorized by the 2018 farm bill will be available at a later date yet to be determined.