

Cherokee Nation Fact Sheet

Federal Government Shutdown and Cherokee Nation Response

October 28, 2025

What is a Federal Government Shutdown?

A federal government shutdown occurs when Congress fails to pass a funding bill before October 1, the start of the fiscal year.

When this happens:

- Federal agencies lose legal authority to spend money
- Many federal employees are furloughed.
- Most programs pause, except those protecting life and property.

Why Shutdowns Hit Tribes Hard

Tribal Nations depend on federal funding promised under treaties and the federal trust responsibility. These funds support health care, housing, education, public safety, and social services.

During a shutdown:

- Federal payments and reimbursements are delayed or halted.
- Staff who process tribal contracts are furloughed.
- Tribes must use their own funds to cover federal obligations.

Cherokee Nation's Response

[Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and Deputy Chief Bryan Warner declared a State of Emergency](#) due to food insecurity caused by the federal shutdown.

To protect citizens, Cherokee Nation is investing over \$6.75 million in emergency relief, including:

- Food Distribution Expansion – Seamless immediate transition of eligible [SNAP](#) recipients, at their option, to the tribe's federally funded [Food Distribution Program](#), which has months of reserves available through its eight grocery store-style sites located in rural areas of the tribe's 7,000-square-mile reservation.

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- \$4.5 million in Direct Payments to impacted Cherokee Nation citizens living within the reservation and contiguous counties receiving SNAP at levels based on average monthly SNAP payments in Oklahoma, around \$185 per individual.
- \$1.25 million for Food Banks – Grants to local food banks and food-security nonprofits.
- \$255,000 for Local Partners – Support for CCO- participating nonprofits running food programs.
- WIC Program Continuation – Up to \$750,000 to extend WIC for one month if the shutdown continues.

Funding comes from the Emergency Management Act and Public Health and Wellness Fund Act, with the Sovereign Wealth Fund available if the shutdown persists.

Resources for Citizens

- Emergency Food Payments: Applications are expected to be available by November 3 on the Gadugi Portal.
- Food Distribution Enrollment: Visit Cherokee Nation Human Services or call 918-453-5422

We cannot bailout the federal government of all its fiscal dysfunction, but we can, and we must, steer our reserve funding to stem the needless hunger this shutdown will impose.