



By [Dan Rosenzweig-Ziff](#)

Government shutdowns, like the one Washington is facing, can cost the American economy billions of dollars. There have been four shutdowns in recent history that have lasted five days or more, racking up extra administrative costs, forcing federal workers to penny-pinch and preventing small businesses from obtaining loans.

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Furloughed federal employees cannot work during a shutdown, but once a deal is reached, they must be paid back for the time they would have been working. That means the government, and American taxpayers, still must pay for thousands of days of lost work. In the last decade, for example, over 56,000 years of work productivity were lost during three government shutdowns that spanned more than 50 days cumulatively, according to a Senate report from 2019.

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The 2018-2019 partial shutdown lasted 34 days and cost \$11 billion.

A shutdown at the end of 2018 that ran through the new year was partial because five of the government's 12 appropriation bills had been funded. Even still, the shutdown over funding Trump's proposed border wall reduced the U.S. gross domestic product by \$11 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. And \$3 billion of that lost money would never be recovered, the office estimated, the equivalent of 0.02 percent of the gross domestic product for 2019.