

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN STINGS NONPROFITS

By James T. Ingram

Back on October 1 the United States government, unable to resolve partisan political disagreements, shutdown for the first time in 17 years.

And while the shutdown was brief, the impact was immediate; with many agencies dependent upon federal funding, laying-off or furloughing “non-essential” workers and even “essential” workers faced the prospect of delayed paydays.

Unfortunately, at the same time, the government shutdown leads to increased demands upon nonprofit organizations to compensate for the dearth of services.

In fact, according to Tim Delaney, president and CEO the National Council of Nonprofits, irrespective of the occasional Washington political gridlock “charitable nonprofits do all they can to keep their doors open to serve the communities across America.”

Diana Leon-Taylor, president and CEO of the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington takes it a step further, adding that when “funding gets cut for food stamps, people still need to eat, so they’re running to food banks, they’re running to any nonprofit that distributes food or resources... It creates a disproportionate demand that becomes very challenging for nonprofits to serve.”

Whether it results in delays in airport check-in due to cutbacks in TSA staff or reduced funding to programs like *Meals on Wheels* or delays in Social Security deposits, which many senior citizens rely upon, or the closing of National Parks and monuments to tourists due to furloughed park rangers and staff, the ripple effects of the government shutdown are negatively impactful.

The trickle-down effect is that when people are hurting, unemployed, laid-off, furloughed or in a state of limbo because of federal funding issues, the entire economy, which is based upon consumerism, suffers.

That is the travesty, especially when gridlock is of our own doing and unnecessary.

