

The Hampton Roads community is affected by the Government shutdown

By Ukeme Offiong

The Hampton Roads community, as well as the United States, is being affected by the federal government shutdown. Food banks, federal workers, health insurance, and even travel are being affected by the shutdown.

Cindy, a receptionist from the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank, says, “We will continue to do what we do all the time; the demand has just increased”.

The Virginia Peninsula Foodbank is one of many food banks preparing for an influx of individuals coming to receive goods. She noted that there has been an increase in phone calls. They have been collaborating and planning distributions and working with partner agencies. And with every dollar you donate, they can buy 3 free meals.

Jordan, a Hampton University alumnus, is a social worker, and clients are greatly affected by the government shutdown.

Since the shutdown, health insurance has been standstill, and customers are waiting for the other shoe to drop. Health insurance in Virginia has some positive and negative sides.

Virginians who were eligible received a message from the State Corporation Commission letting them know that they would automatically receive insurance coverage in 2026. But unfortunately, health insurance rates are increasing.

Those rates were set to rise by 20% percent, but due to the government shutdown and the expiration dates of federal premium tax credits, that could increase. But the Virginia health exchange has contingency plans in place if the government extends that period.

Flights being canceled are also affected by the government shutdown. Air traffic controllers are not being paid by the government and are calling in sick. Air traffic controllers are “essential staff” and need to work even if they aren’t getting paid.

According to CNN, during the Halloween weekend, we’ve had the worst weekend for Air Traffic controllers. CNN said that “nearly 80 percent of traffic controllers were out Friday at facilities in the New York City area”. If the government shutdown continues, this can run into a big problem as the holidays are coming closer.

It is especially hurting the economy. An economics professor, Bob McNab, from Old Dominion University, spoke to 13 News Now about how federal workers not being paid is affecting monthly economic activity.

He told 13 News Now that we “estimate right now that we are losing two to four billion dollars a month of economic activity”.

We won’t see the true effects on the economy from the government shutdown until 2026.

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