

Businesses offer furlough freebies, shutdown specials and assistance to federal workers

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Call them “shutdown specials” and “furlough freebies.”

While a deal to end the longest government shutdown appears to be far off, some businesses are offering furloughed federal workers a little relief ranging from free meals, restaurant discounts to deferring payments and zero-interest loans.

Around 800,000 federal employees have been furloughed or working without pay since Dec. 21 and won't receive their next paychecks until the government reopens.

Friday, Jan. 11 was the first payday most furloughed employees missed.

“We're here to help ease the burden of trying to pay bills on time during the shutdown,” AT&T said in a statement. “As long as the shutdown is in effect, our customer service team will waive late fees, provide extensions and coordinate with you on revised payment schedules.”

Other major wireless providers including Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon are also willing to work with affected government employees.

Here are the businesses helping out:

More: Furloughed workers to get back pay once government shutdown is over

More: Government shutdown: Food banks worry about having enough supplies if stalemate drags on

More: How to keep your finances above water if you are furloughed

More: Government workers tighten belts, brace for first missing paychecks during shutdown

Deals and freebies outside D.C.

Other businesses across the country also are helping out federal workers. Here are some of the offers:

Mid-Hudson Children's Museum: The Poughkeepsie, New York museum is holding its next [“Federal Workers Free Pizza and Play Family Night”](#) Wednesday, Jan. 16 starting at 5 p.m. and will offer free admission for two adults, one of whom must be a federal employee, and their children living in the same household. The event is free, but pre-registration is required and a federal ID will be needed to enter the event. Learn more on the museum's [Facebook page](#) including a link to register.

BAM Rose Cinemas: At New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music movie theater, furloughed federal staffers can see the first show of the day of any film Monday through Thursday for free when they present a federal employee ID at the box office, according to this blog post.

Museums: Many attractions outside D.C. are also offering free admission including many in Colorado, the Denver Channel reported, and the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science in Miami, Florida.

PETA: Through Friday, Jan. 18, PETA is giving away free vegan dog food at its Norfolk, Virginia headquarters, while supplies last. Out-of-work federal employees should call 757-622-7382 to arrange a pick-up time.

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