



San Diego Steps Up to Help Federal Employees Amid Lengthening Shutdown

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Transportation Security Administration officers outside the Hawaiian barbecue at the airport.
Courtesy San Diego International Airport

As the government shutdown drags on through its 33rd day, and federal employees brace for a second missed paycheck, dozens San Diego organizations are stepping up to help.

The estimated 5,000 federal employees in the San Diego area are being offered everything from free food to [free symphony tickets](#) to make ends meet and preserve a semblance of normal life

Airlines, food banks, government agencies, restaurants, museums, credit unions, temporary staffing companies and social service charities are all helping.

On Thursday, Southwest, JetBlue, Hawaiian, Delta and American teamed up to provide a free Hawaiian barbecue lunch to some 500 security screeners, customs officers, Coast Guard personnel and aviation officials who are working without pay to keep air transportation functioning.

The San Diego Food Bank and [USO San Diego](#) are offering additional free meals and resources to those airport workers, including fresh produce and boxes of diapers for families with young children. Jewish Family Service of San Diego is also [providing food assistance](#), with handouts every Tuesday.

[Cabrillo Credit Union](#), which counts a third of its members as federal employees, is offering payroll loans with zero interest that are automatically repaid when the government reopens.

"Helping our member owners during this difficult time is extremely important to our team. We have different programs to support existing member owners, and new member owners, to help them get through this difficult, stressful time," said Jonathan Zide, chief operating officer.

Meanwhile, the shutdown over President Trump's demand for border wall funding entered a new phase Thursday with Congress finally voting on competing Democratic and Republican bills to reopen the government. Nothing was expected to pass, but lawmakers hoped that the votes would lead to negotiation. Federal workers are set to miss their second paycheck on Friday.

For some federal workers, a temporary job may be the answer, and the San Diego office of Manpower is stepping up and encouraging workers to apply.

"It's a fact of everyday life that bills must be paid, groceries must be purchased, mouths must be fed," said Phil Blair, executive officer of [Manpower West](#). "Within San Diego's military community, hundreds, perhaps thousands of locally-based families have been burdened by this ongoing crisis."

Many of the museums in Balboa Park are offering free admission, and the San Diego Symphony will provide four free tickets.

"The symphony can offer a few hours of beauty, pleasure and hope to the many individuals and families in our community facing hardships as a result of the shutdown," said Martha Gilmer, president and CEO.

