

**2024 Federal Shutdown –  
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers for Employees**

**The following guidance is offered to state agency employees who are furloughed or who have their hours reduced because their agency does not have adequate funds to support their position during the 2024 Federal Shutdown. These FAQs are intended to provide general information about a federal shutdown furlough. Please contact your agency’s HR Office with more specific questions.**

**1. What is furlough and how does it impact my employment?**

A furlough is the placement of an employee in a temporary non-duty, non-pay status because of lack of work or funds, or other non-disciplinary reasons. If there is a federal shutdown, a shutdown furlough will impact some state employees when their agency no longer has the funds necessary to support their positions. Some employees may be fully furloughed, while other employees have their pay and regular work schedule temporarily reduced based on the proportion of their compensation that comes from federal funds.

**2. I know that some or all my compensation comes from federal funds. Will I be furloughed if there is a federal shutdown?**

Only some, not all, federally supported state employees may be furloughed or have their hourly schedule reduced. In many cases, funds will be available to compensate the employee despite the federal shutdown. During the shutdown, each agency’s budget staff will determine whether funds are available. Don’t assume that you will be furloughed, or that your schedule will be reduced, unless you receive a notification from your supervisor or agency HR staff.

**3. How will I be notified if my position is impacted by the 2024 federal shutdown?**

Anyone who is furloughed or has a work schedule reduction due to the federal shutdown will receive verbal or written notice from their supervisor or agency HR staff. If the initial notice is verbal, your agency will follow up with a written notice as soon as possible.

**4. How long will the furlough last?**

Unknown. It will continue until Congress enacts legislation to finance the federal government.

**5. Will employees who are furloughed get paid?**

Congress will determine whether furloughed employees receive pay for the furlough period. In the past, Congress has frequently provided retroactive pay, but there is no guarantee that Congress will take this action.

**6. Can furloughed employees take other jobs while on furlough?**

Yes, but because the federal shutdown may end at any time, the state’s Dual Employment and Secondary Employment policies continue to apply. Before engaging in outside employment, contact your supervisor to ensure compliance with policy and obtain agency approval.

**7. Will furloughed employees continue to be covered under the State Health Plan in March?**

Yes. The State Health Plan premium is paid one month in advance; therefore, the February payroll includes the cost of coverage for the month of March. If the shutdown continues for many days, employees should contact their agency HR Office for more information about paying premiums in March. State Health Plan coverage will continue in April only if premiums are paid.

**2024 Federal Shutdown –  
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers for Employees**

- 8. What happens to an employee’s coverage under the NCFlex insurance programs if furloughed?**  
Employees’ NCFlex insurance program coverage will end at the beginning of the furlough unless the employee continues their NCFlex coverage by paying the vendors directly. Refer to page 40 of the Enrollment Guide at this link -- [NCFlex Enrollment Guide](#). NCFlex continues to work with vendors, and this answer may be updated during the shutdown. Please stay in touch with your agency HR Office.
- 9. Are employees entitled to unemployment compensation while on furlough?**  
In the event of an extended furlough, employees may become eligible for unemployment compensation. However, if Congress approves retroactive payment for the furlough period, employees may have to pay back to the Division of Employment Security any unemployment compensation that they received. For more information about unemployment in North Carolina or to file a claim online, visit the [Division of Employment Security \(DES\) website](#) or call the DES Customer Call Center at 888-737-0259 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- 10. Does the State Employees Credit Union (SECU) provide any services to assist with financial hardships resulting from the furlough?**  
Yes. The SECU can help with some services to employees who are furloughed because of a federal shutdown. Employees should contact their local SECU branch for assistance or visit [SECU Branch Services](#).
- 11. Are employees who have been furloughed eligible for Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services through McLaughlin-Young Group?**  
Employees in permanent positions who have been furloughed are eligible for EAP services for up to 90 days through McLaughlin Young Group. EAP counselors will be available to help an employee assess their situation and plan for dealing with challenges associated with temporary job loss. Furloughed employees may access the NC EAP provided by McLaughlin Young Group 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling 1-888-298-3907 or 704-717-5295, or visit <https://www.mygroup.com/>. There is no cost to the employee or the employee’s immediate household family members.
- 12. Will an employee receive Retirement Service Credit during the furlough period?**  
It depends on the duration of the furlough. If an employee receives a paycheck, then retirement contributions are made. If an employee is placed on LWOP, the employee is not making contributions to the [Retirement System](#), so the system does not allow Retirement Service Credit. If Congress approves funds for retroactive pay to the beginning of the furlough, then credit will be awarded, provided the retroactive period is less than 90 days.