

Impact in Washington State of Trump and Musk's Reckless Mass Layoffs

See below for a select, non-comprehensive list compiled by the office of U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, of some of the ways workers in Washington state have been impacted by Donald Trump and Elon Musk's reckless assault on our nation's federal workforce:

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): More than [1,000](#) VA employees were fired last week as the VA announced Thursday that roughly 2.3 percent of its “probationary” workforce had been dismissed effective immediately. In addition to these indiscriminate mass firings, VA researchers are not having their typical 3-year terms renewed—as is standard practice across administrations when researchers have ongoing grant funding for research projects—and those NTE (term-limited, with “not-to-exceed” dates of their terms) researchers who are “non-clinical” employees are now being fired. To be clear, these are VA researchers who are in the middle of research on topics including mental health, alcohol and opioid withdrawal, cancer treatments, burn pit exposure, prosthetics, diabetic ulcers, and much else. Approximately 350 NTE roles across the VA and 200 extramural research roles are being vacated, leaving 10,000 veterans without care. About \$900 million is appropriated for VA-funded research every year; that is now being compromised because many of those conducting the research have been laid off. Multiple researchers at VA Puget Sound have already lost their positions due to the expiration of their NTE terms. This number will continue to rise as those with expiring terms reach their NTE date unless the hiring freeze is lifted.

Hanford: At Hanford, in addition to those who took the so-called “Fork in the Road offer,” approximately a dozen people were laid off—including safety engineers, environmental scientists, people who monitor and respond to urgent safety issues, folks who make sure Hanford workers' rights are protected, and others who are critical to the Hanford cleanup mission and the safety of the workers there. These reckless firings will slow down critical cleanup work and make workers less safe. Trying to run Hanford with a skeleton crew is a recipe for disaster that could have irreversible impacts. An adequate federal workforce is essential for oversight of the work executed by nearly 12,000 contractor workers at the Hanford site. These layoffs will hurt companies, workers, and their families across Eastern Washington.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA): Between employees who were fired, those whose job offers were rescinded, and those who took the “Fork in the Road offer,” we estimate that BPA is losing between 450 and 600 skilled workers as a result of Trump and Elon Musk's attempts to gut the federal workforce. This includes everyone from electricians and engineers to dispatchers, lineworkers, cybersecurity experts, and so many other people who help keep the lights on in the Northwest. Importantly, these are positions funded by ratepayers—not with federal funding.

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL): The Trump administration needlessly laid off a handful of employees at PNNL last week—workers who power cutting-edge research and groundbreaking innovations on everything from energy storage to nuclear security.

National Parks Service (NPS): Nationwide, the Trump administration has fired [about 1,000](#) newly hired National Park Service employees who maintain and clean parks, educate visitors, and perform other functions. It is unclear at this time how many NPS staffers in Washington state have been impacted. The National Park Service is already operating well below prior staffing levels despite significant increases in visitation—as a result of onerous budget caps during the 2010s, the National Park Service lost 15% of its staff while park visitation also increased by 15 percent. National Park units experience a summer surge in visitation that peaks in July, and the Service hires more than 6,000 seasonal employees to manage that extra work. Without full-time or seasonal staff during this peak season, visitor centers may close, bathrooms will not be properly maintained, campgrounds may close, guided tours will be cut back or altogether canceled, emergency response times will drop, and visitor services like safety advice, trail recommendations, and interpretation will be unavailable.

Murray led a recent [letter](#) urging Interior Secretary Doug Burgum to immediately take action to resolve looming staffing shortages at the National Park Service.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS): Reports indicate that the United States Forest Service has fired about [3,400 workers](#) nationwide. It's unclear at this time how many USFS workers in Washington state have been impacted. These workers maintain campgrounds and trailheads, enforce forest rules, monitor wildlife, and assist with important wildfire mitigation work. Many fire officials are already warning that this and any further cuts will be a disaster for wildfire response this season. Senator Murray sent a [letter](#) to Acting USDA Secretary Gary Washington expressing alarm over the universal hiring pause for permanent and seasonal firefighters at USDA.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): We are still working to get an accurate count of layoffs in Washington state. Nationwide, approximately 400 FAA employees were fired, including just under 100 represented by the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists union—including maintenance mechanics, aeronautical information specialists, aviation safety assistants, and management and program assistants.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): About 25 TSA officers in Washington state, mostly at Sea-Tac, on their “probationary” period—meaning they had been promoted or hired in the past year—were fired within the past two weeks. Transgender TSOs were pulled from screening duty.

Department of Health and Human Service (HHS): Nationwide, the Trump administration has reportedly fired more than 5,000 employees—and counting—from the Department of Health and Human Services. It is unknown how many of those fired are in Washington state, but these layoffs will have huge impacts on our state. Everything from public health prevention and response, biomedical research, community and rural health care, and emergency preparedness is at risk. Last week, the Washington State Department of Health's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officers, who are employed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), were told they were being fired. While they have not received termination notices yet, they are coming to work each day knowing they might be fired at any moment, without cause. EIS officers are the nation's “disease detectives” and they play a critical role in supporting state and local public health efforts.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS): Thousands of workers at USDA have been fired, including hundreds of ARS employees who often partner with land grant universities, like Washington State University, on important research on behalf of local agricultural commodities. It is unclear at this time how many of these workers are in Washington state and what impact this will have on local agriculture production.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): While no NOAA layoffs have been announced yet, we anticipate that up to 1,300 workers at NOAA nationwide will be let go in the coming days. NOAA has a huge footprint in Washington state and employs more than 700 workers across the state—mostly in the Seattle area where the Western Regional Center and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center are headquartered. Layoffs will disrupt vital fisheries stock surveys and analysis, coastal and marine ecosystem management, weather monitoring, ecosystem restoration work, and other important scientific research.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD): There are reports that the Trump administration terminated hundreds of probationary employees last Friday and are planning to cut HUD's workforce by 50 percent, or nearly 4,300 staff across all offices. HUD's Region X office is based in Seattle and it is unclear at this time how those workers will be impacted. Senator Murray led a [letter](#) to HUD Secretary Scott Turner last week demanding a halt to any further staff cuts at the agency. Still identifying impacts in Washington state.

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA): Nationally, it has been reported that 17 CISA employees who have worked with election officials to provide assessments and trainings dealing with a range of threats (e.g. cyberattacks, physical security challenges) have been placed on leave, pending review. These changes will hurt preparedness in states including Washington, which has seen recent threats to election security—including an arson incident at a ballot drop box in Southwest Washington this past fall. CISA has helped Washington state defend against previous election-related threats.

This fact sheet is not comprehensive, and information changes from hour to hour and day to day regarding Trump and Elon Musk's reckless attack on the federal workforce and how it is impacting federal workers in Washington state. The administration has failed to provide clear answers, and the actual number could be higher. This lack of transparency and responsiveness to Congress, and thus the American people, is without precedent.

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