

USDA to Reopen FSA Offices for Limited Services During Government Shutdown

By USDA
 Washington – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced that many Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices will reopen temporarily in the coming days to perform certain limited services for farmers and ranchers. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recalled about 2,500 FSA employees to open offices on Thursday, January 17 and Friday, January 18, in addition to Tuesday, January 22, during normal business hours. The offices will be closed for the federal Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday, January 21.

In almost half of FSA locations, FSA staff will be available to assist agricultural producers with existing farm loans and to ensure the agency provides 1099 tax documents to borrowers by the Internal Revenue Service's deadline.

"Until Congress sends President Trump an appropriations bill in the form that he will sign, we are doing our best to minimize the impact of the partial federal funding lapse on America's agricultural producers," Perdue said. "We are bringing back part of our FSA team to help producers with existing farm loans. Meanwhile, we continue to examine our legal authorities to ensure we are providing services to our customers to the greatest extent possible during the shutdown."

Staff members will be available at certain FSA offices to help producers with specific services, including:

- Processing payments made on or before December 31, 2018.
- Continuing expiring financing statements.
- Opening mail to identify priority items.
- Information on the locations of FSA offices to be open during this three-day window will be posted:
 - On the USDA website.
 - On Twitter at @SecretarySonny and @USDA.
 - On USDA's Facebook.

While staff are available in person during this three-day window, most available services can be handled over the phone. Producers can begin contacting staff on January 17 here.

Additionally, farmers who have loan deadlines during the lapse in funding do not need to make payments until the government shutdown ends.

While January 15, 2019 had been the original deadline for producers to apply for MFP, farmers have been unable to apply since December 28, 2018, when FSA offices closed because of the lapse in federal funding. Secretary Perdue has extended the MFP application deadline for a period of time equal to the number of business days FSA offices end up being closed, once the government shutdown ends. These announced days of limited staff availability during the shutdown will not constitute days open in calculating the extension. Producers who already applied for MFP and certified their 2018 production by December 28, 2018 should have already received their payments.

More information on MFP is available at www.farmers.gov/manage/mfp.

Additional \$10.5 million Funding for Pre-K Programs

By Michele Hanna / Preschool Program Specialist for Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality (PAKEYS)

HARRISBURG – Governor Tom Wolf announced an additional \$10.5 million to help preschool-age children transition to kindergarten. The funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services builds on the governor's commitment to expanding early education for Pennsylvania's youngest children.

"I am committed to investing in young children and their futures," said Governor Wolf. "That starts by continuing to make early education a priority for Pennsylvania. Supporting children as they move from preschool to kindergarten helps them succeed in the classroom. This early success creates opportunities for them to do well in school for years to come."

Since taking office in 2015, Governor Wolf has successfully worked with the state legislature to expand state-funded preschool by \$115 million, adding more than 9,600 slots in Pre-K Counts, and an additional 1,300 in Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program.

"Research shows that children with access to high-quality early learning programs go on to perform better in school and beyond," said Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Secretary Pedro A. Rivera. "By investing in these programs, we are ensuring that students have the building blocks in place to succeed as they enter elementary school."

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) applied for the federal Preschool Development Grant, which will be used to provide professional development for early learning educators and to promote partnerships among early learning providers, community agencies, and school districts to help children prepare for successful transitions from early learning programs to kindergarten. OCDEL is a collaborative effort between PDE and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS).

"Behavioral challenges can make it harder for children to succeed in education, especially when these needs go unidentified and unaddressed. Recognizing behavioral challenges early can help educators work with students so they do not become barriers to academic, social, and emotional development," said DHS Teresa Secretary Miller. "This grant will allow early education programs around Pennsylvania to better meet the unique and complex needs of children they educate, setting a stronger foundation for success throughout all levels of education."

Funding will also support strategic planning to expand access to behavioral supports for medically eligible children birth to age 5, and recruit coaches currently in ECE programs to participate in a coaching support pilot project.

COLUMBIA STORAGE GROUP Content Sale

Columbia Self Storage will sell the contents of the occupant's leased space at public auction to satisfy the owner's lien on StorageTreasuries.com all personal property stored in this facility by: Scott Marsh, unit 114, Harley Adams, unit 214A, Joyce Cinelli, unit 223A, Shana Ceaser Unit 245, and Jennifer Volpe Unit 246. All units consisting of boxes, furniture, misc. items.

Items will be offered for sale by auction to the highest bidder for enforcement of storage liens. Auction will be held at 9AM, Tuesday, January 29th, 2019 on StorageTreasuries.com.

All auction sales are FINAL. Cash only and paid at Columbia Self Storage, 1059 Pennsylvania Ave., Pen Argyl, PA 18072. Columbia Self Storage reserves the right to refuse any bid.



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Right - Ghadir Aburokba, a Palestinian from Gaza, who is the first Fulbright scholar to come to East Stroudsburg University

ESU's First Fulbright Scholar Learns and Teaches

By Elizabeth Richardson

EAST STROUDSBURG - Last spring, when the United States was preparing to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, East Stroudsburg University Dr. Sam Quainoo's public policy and administration class had a spirited discussion about the pros and cons of that controversial move.

At the center of that debate was Ghadir Aburokba, a Palestinian from Gaza, who is the first Fulbright scholar to come to East Stroudsburg University. Aburokba has been studying for her master's degree in political science since arriving at ESU in August 2017. She graduates Saturday.

In that class, Aburokba was able to bring real-world experience and understanding of the troubles in the Middle East to her classmates in an engaging and productive way.

"It was a very heated debate," recalls Quainoo. "She gave both sides of the argument in a very knowledgeable way. She brought a kind of understanding that only somebody who has lived this experience can actually share. We all left the class better off because of her contributions."

Most likely, that is exactly what the late U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright had in mind when in 1946 he shepherded through Congress the legislation that created the Fulbright program to sponsor international educational exchanges. Fulbright, of Arkansas, had studied at Oxford University in England in the 1920s and traveled extensively in Europe, learning firsthand what a transformative experience it could be.

Fulbright scholarships are extremely prestigious. The U.S. State Department sponsors the Fulbright program with more than 155 countries, enabling students from abroad to study in the United States and American students to learn at universities around the world. Fulbright scholars have gone on to become Nobel Prize winners, heads of state, ambassadors and leading scientists, innovators, educators and artists.

Aburokba went through an extensive application and interview process for the Fulbright. Once she found out she was selected, she chose ESU as one of four universities she would like to attend. The Fulbright program then selected ESU for her and she arrived on campus in August 2017.

Aburokba said she's had a great experience here and found the campus community to be welcoming and eager to learn about her life in a refugee camp in Gaza, where her parents and most of her four sisters and two brothers still live.

Though she had spent her junior year in high school as an exchange student in Minnesota, Aburokba wasn't sure what to expect from ESU students.

"They were all really nice," she said. "I made a lot of friends. I was really happy to find that some Americans are really interested to know about my country. They would sit with me at lunch and ask me so many questions about my country."

She also found mentors in the faculty, with whom she hopes to keep in touch.

L. Johan Eliasson, Ph.D., professor of political science, was her faculty advisor for her master's thesis, while Sam Quainoo, Ph.D. professor of political science and chair of the department and Ko Mishima, Ph.D., associate professor of political science, served on the committee that heard her thesis defense.

Aburokba said from Dr. Eliasson, she learned a lot about how to research subjects in international relations, something she had done little of during her undergraduate studies in English language and

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