



Pennsylvania Department of the

# AUDITOR GENERAL

Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General

Twitter: @PaAuditorGen

## News for Immediate Release

Jan. 8, 2019

### **Auditor General DePasquale: Federal Shutdown Forces Contracted Workers to Seek Jobless Benefits from State**

**HARRISBURG** – With the federal government shutdown lingering well into its third week, Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today noted that federal contract employees who have no hope of getting back pay are facing dire choices, including applying for jobless benefits.

“An estimated four million people nationwide work for the federal government on a contract basis, many in low-wage or part-time jobs,” DePasquale said. “Unlike full-time employees who may eventually receive back pay, these workers have no chance of being paid for the time they were needlessly furloughed.”

The situation, DePasquale said, is driving some impacted workers to apply for unemployment compensation at a time when the state’s benefit system is already busy handling applications resulting from seasonal job market fluctuations.

“The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry saw a huge surge in jobless benefit applications from impacted federal workers in the final week of December – up almost 850 percent from the same week one year earlier,” DePasquale said. “While I’m glad the state is ready to assist, the unemployment compensation system was not designed to handle what has turned into a hostage situation.”

DePasquale noted that small businesses that rely on federal contracts may not be able to sustain a prolonged financial hit or may face the loss of their workforce as employees look for other jobs.

“As Pennsylvania’s fiscal watchdog, it’s my job to speak up whenever a situation results in extra costs to taxpayers or a disruption to our economy,” DePasquale said. “The pointless federal shutdown is causing hardship for tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians and it’s time for Washington elites to stop playing games with the lives of hardworking Americans.”

To learn more about the Department of the Auditor General, please visit [www.paauditor.gov](http://www.paauditor.gov).

###