

Trump administration

Trump and Musk launch mass layoffs at several US federal agencies

Termination notices sent to Department of Education and CFPB as Musk pushes to ‘delete entire agencies’

- [US politics live – latest update](#)

By Gloria Oladipo in New York, *The Guardian*, 13 Feb 2025

Mass layoffs have begun at several US agencies as [Donald Trump](#) and [Elon Musk](#) launch an unprecedented, large-scale plan to slash the federal workforce with the stated goal of cutting costs and boosting efficiency.

Termination notices were sent to employees at the Department of Education, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), and the General Services Administration (GSA), Reuters first reported on Thursday.

“The Agency finds that you are not fit for continued employment because your ability, knowledge and skills do not fit the current needs, and your performance has not been adequate to justify further employment with the Agency,” according to letters sent to at least 45 probationary employees at the SBA.

Similar notices were sent to about 100 recent hires at the GSA on Wednesday and 160 employees at the education department, Reuters reported.

The latest round of layoffs came as [Musk](#) said on Thursday that the US should “delete entire agencies” from the federal government as a part of his extraordinary strategy under the Trump administration.

Musk made the latest suggestion on a video call to the World Governments Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in response to a question about what changes he planned to execute under [Donald Trump](#)’s direction.

“I think we do need to delete entire agencies, as opposed to leave part of them behind,” said Musk, adding: “If you don’t remove the roots of the weed, then it’s easy for the weed to grow back. But if you remove the roots of the weed, it doesn’t stop weeds from ever going back, but it makes it harder.”

[Trump’s illegitimate power grab brings US closer to dictatorship](#)

[Read more](#)

Musk's appearance at the summit comes as his so-called "department of government efficiency" (Doge) has implemented widespread cuts across the federal government, firing people and demanding resignations and layoffs.

Since 20 January, when Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president, Musk and the controversial agency have swiftly gutted several US agencies, [including the](#) US Agency for International Development (USAid). The agency has carried out humanitarian and development projects abroad to save lives and also to exert "soft power", since the agency was created by the Kennedy administration.

On Tuesday, Musk [slashed nearly \\$1bn](#) in US Department of Education contracts, in effect shutting down an independent research arm meant to gather data on student achievement.

Federal employees are also preparing for large-scale layoffs as Trump and Musk promise to reduce workforces.

So far, Musk has rolled out a deferred resignation plan, the "Fork in the Road" program, under which employees who agreed to stop working soon would be paid through 30 September, although there is uncertainty about the validity of the payment offer.

After several legal challenges, a US district judge in Boston, George O'Toole Jr, [ruled on Wednesday](#) that the buyout offers could proceed. The program was previously halted in advance of its 6 February deadline after unions representing employees sued. But O'Toole determined that the unions did not have legal standing to challenge the resignation offers. A new deadline for staff to sign up is awaited, amid reports that not as many are signing up as Musk and Trump want, risking more compulsory layoffs.

The White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, celebrated O'Toole's ruling, telling the Associated Press: "This goes to show that 'lawfare' will not ultimately prevail over the will of 77 million Americans who supported President Trump and his priorities."

Such a statement highlights the battle between the executive branch and the co-equal judicial branch, with the White House pushing back against judges and uncertainty about its willingness to comply with rulings, even up to the US supreme court, in what many experts say is precipitating [a constitutional crisis](#).

Meanwhile, Everett Kelley, head of the American Federation of Government Employees union, told Reuters on Wednesday: "Today's ruling is a setback in the fight for dignity and fairness for public servants. But it's not the end of that fight."

Approximately 75,000 federal workers, about 3.75% of federal employees, have accepted a resignation offer so far, [Semafor reported](#). That figure is below the 5-10% of workers that the White House projected would take the buyout deals.

Amid the federal shakeup, Trump [said on Wednesday](#) that he wants to immediately close the Department of Education.

Linda McMahon, a former World Wrestling Entertainment executive and Trump's pick for education secretary, will face a Senate confirmation hearing on Thursday in which lawmakers will probably ask how she plans to cut the entire department.

Send us a tip

If you have information you'd like to share securely with the Guardian about the impact of cuts to federal programs or the federal workforce, please use a non-work device to contact us via the Signal messaging app at (646) 886-8761.

Why you can rely on the Guardian not to bow to Trump – or anyone

I hope you appreciated this article. Before you move on, I wanted to ask whether you could support the Guardian's journalism as we begin to cover the second Trump administration.

As Trump himself observed: "The first term, everybody was fighting me. In this term, everybody wants to be my friend."

He's not entirely wrong. All around us, media organizations have begun to capitulate. First, two news outlets pulled election endorsements at the behest of their billionaire owners. Next, prominent reporters bent the knee at Mar-a-Lago. And then a major network – ABC News – rolled over in response to Trump's legal challenges and agreed to a \$16m million settlement in his favor.

The Guardian is clear: we have no interest in being Donald Trump's – or any politician's – friend. Our allegiance as independent journalists is not to those in power but to the public. Whatever happens in the coming months and years, you can rely on the Guardian never to bow down to power, nor back down from truth.

How are we able to stand firm in the face of intimidation and threats? As journalists say: follow the money. The Guardian has neither a self-interested billionaire owner nor profit-seeking corporate henchmen pressuring us to appease the rich and powerful. We are funded by our readers and owned by the Scott Trust – whose only financial obligation is to preserve our journalistic mission in perpetuity.

What's more, we make our fearless, fiercely independent journalism free to all, with no paywall – so that everyone in the US can have access to responsible, fact-based news.

With the new administration boasting about its desire to punish journalists, and Trump and his allies already pursuing lawsuits against newspapers whose stories they don't like, it has never been more urgent, or more perilous, to pursue fair, accurate reporting. Can you support the Guardian today?

We value whatever you can spare, but a recurring contribution makes the most impact, enabling greater investment in our most crucial, fearless journalism. As our thanks to you, we can offer you some great benefits – including seeing far fewer fundraising messages like this. We've made it very quick to set up, so we hope you'll consider it. Thank you.

Betsy Reed

Editor, Guardian US

