

THE BIG HURT FED PLAZA BUSINESS IN A PINCH

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Body

On a good day, Faruge Hossain sells between 200 and 250 hot dogs to the crowds outside 26 **Federal Plaza**.

But yesterday was not a good day. Nor were the 19 ones preceding it.

A **big** chunk of Hossain's customer base disappeared once budget squabbles forced a partial shutdown of the **federal** government. Most of the 10,000 office workers employed at Manhattan's **federal** building were sent home until the government authorizes the money to pay their salaries.

"Now I sell 70, maybe 80, hot dogs a day," Hossain said while manning his cart in the bitter cold yesterday morning. "The **business** is very bad."

He's not the only one singing the blues. The shops and restaurants along lower Broadway, across from the building, all reported significant drops in **business** since the budget impasse began.

Some have given up. A pushcart vendor who sold baked potatoes outside the building has not been around for days. A local greenmarket has lost most of its vendors the last three weeks.

The trickle-down effect hit hard at **Federal** International Services, a private **business** that provides fingerprints, photographs and paper work for immigrants applying for citizenship at 26 **Federal Plaza**. The Immigration and Naturalization Service offices have been closed for 20 days, eliminating much of the company's **business**.

"We're losing between \$ 2,000 and \$ 3,000 a day because of this," said Dan Medina, the company's manager. "We have had to lay off four of our 10 employees. For a small company like us, that's serious. That's a **big** hit."

Medina said he hears complaints from the attorneys who help immigrants obtain their citizenship papers. "They're **hurting** too," he said. "They can't do their work until the government gets back in **business**."

Teodoro Bellulovich runs Stark's Veranda Restaurant across the street from the **federal** building. "We're way down," Bellulovich said. "We're probably losing about \$ 1,000 a day while this is going on. And the bills are still coming in; they're not going to wait for the government to get back in **business**."

Things are worse inside the building. Gary Serrapica runs the small newsstand and deli inside 26 **Federal Plaza**. He had to lay off one of five employees this week.

"Our **business** is down between 65% and 70%," Serrapica said. "We're down about \$ 1,300 a day in sales. And a lot of our inventory things like milk and yogurt are going sour sitting on the shelves."

Serrapica said he usually sells between 15 and 20 cases of soda a day. Since the budget impasse, he averages about 3 1/2 cases.

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"Thank God for the FBI," he said. **Federal** law enforcement agencies, deemed essential by the government, have not been affected by the shutdown. Their employees continue to work at 26 **Federal Plaza** and shop at Serrapica's newsstand.

So-called nonessential **federal** workers are not being paid while the budget impasse continues.

There is some relief. Con Edison says **federal** employees who can't make ends meet can call customer representatives listed on their utility bill and explain the situation. "In most cases we can work something out that will allow them to pay later," said John Mitchell, a Con Ed executive.

Graphic

HOWARD SIMMONS DAILY NEWS Gary Serrapica's newsstand biz is down about 65% to 70%. Stark's Veranda Restaurant is losing \$1,000 in biz every day. **Federal** International Services is losing \$2,000 to \$3,000 a day. Vendor Faruge Hossain has seen sales plummet almost 70%.

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