|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Metatag Type |  |
| Title | The Real Life Consequences of the Federal Hiring Freeze |
| Source | The Atlantic |
| Author(s) | Alissa Greenberg |
| Published/Uploaded | Feb 9, 2017 |
| URL | https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/02/real-life-consequences-hiring-freeze/516150/ |
| Total Images | 1 |
| Total Videos | 0 |
| Total Ext. Links | 1 |
| Total Items Comprising the Sample | 1 |
| Total Word Count | 514 |
| Contributor | AR |

After months of waiting and a few hour-long trips into Austin from his home in New Braunfels, Texas, for background checks, Terry Flemings was finally going to start working as a transcriptionist at the Internal Revenue Service. Flemings had applied for the job in October but had been wading through paperwork since then and hadn’t been able to confirm his start date, January 25, until after New Year’s. He was excited to finally leave his grueling schedule driving for Uber and Lyft behind and transition to a job, in Austin, with health insurance and dependability.

Then, two days before he was supposed to start, he received a voicemail from an IRS recruiter. At first it sounded like she was confirming his start date, but the message ended with unexpected instructions: Do not come to the office tomorrow. A follow-up email said, in part:

As of [sic] a result of the President’s order on January 23, 2017 freezing all federal civilian hiring, IRS must place an immediate hold on firm job offers. Please do not report to your new position at the IRS on your scheduled date. This rescission is due to issues beyond the IRS [sic] control and is not a reflection on you … We regret that we cannot honor the final job offer that was extended to you at this time and acknowledge this late notice may have significant impact to you and your family.

“The President’s order” was referring to the memorandum Donald Trump signed on January 23 ordering a 90-day halt to the hiring of federal employees. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer made clear at a press conference that day that the order is a stopgap, meant to restrict the growth of the federal government while the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) work on a longer-term plan to cut what the administration sees as unnecessary government oversight. In the meantime, the collateral damage of the order is stress, anxiety, and confusion introduced into the lives of not just new hires at federal agencies such as Flemings, but also current employees, who have found themselves unable to transition into new positions or stuck in departments that are now semi-permanently short staffed.

Flemings’s experience is just one example of the uncertainty the freeze has sown in some people’s lives, and the status of his job ended up changing yet again. Two days after his offer was rescinded, he received another phone call re-offering it; despite his frustration with the situation, he gratefully accepted. Flemings estimates that there were 30 people in his intake session in Austin and notes that over the course of five days, the IRS ran six or seven such sessions a day. The OMB guidance issued since his offer was rescinded states that people who were offered a job before January 22 with a starting date before February 22 should have their offers honored, so it’s likely the others at those intake sessions—and possibly people in other cohorts being onboarded around the country—were subjected to similar turns of events.