

Supporting TSA Officers During the Government Shutdown: What You Can Do—And How to Do It Right

Transportation Security Administration officers (TSOs) are showing up every day without pay to keep our system secure and moving. The travel industry has an opportunity to step up. Done right, this support can make a real difference. If you want to support frontline workers, here's how to do it effectively and within the rules.



WHAT TO DO:

Coordinate donations with TSA Leadership, like the Field Security Director's (FSD) office in

advance. You can contact this office by: (1) Calling the airport's main administration office and asking to be connected to TSA leadership; (2) Reaching out to your airport authority or airline station manager, who can connect you directly; or (3) Using existing industry or airport contacts to identify the appropriate TSA point of contact.

Provide simple, useful items like coffee, water, snacks, pizza or donuts for break rooms.

Offer merchant-specific gift cards or vouchers (i.e. restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, etc.).

Consider supporting a food/essentials pantry at your local airport.

Be prepared to share your organization's name and additional information including donation details, approximate value, etc. for required tracking.

Keep donations easy to distribute across the workforce (i.e. individually packaged items or individual food items for shared spaces and TSA-managed distribution).

Focus on supporting officers—not creating additional work or complexity for TSA workers.



WHAT NOT TO DO:

Do not give cash or cash equivalents.

Cash, checks, Venmo, Zelle or general-purpose pre-paid cards cannot be accepted by TSA (this includes Visa, Mastercard, American Express, etc.).

Do not hand gifts directly to officers or to employees at checkpoints.

Do not target individual officers—donations must go to TSA as an agency.

Do not plan media moments, photo ops or branded activations—TSA officers cannot participate due to federal ethics rules prohibiting the appearance of endorsement, favoritism or operational disruption.

Do not expect individual recognition—donations are accepted and distributed at the agency level.

Do not create offers that apply only to certain TSA employees—support should be broadly available and non-discriminatory.

Do not assume larger or complex donations can be handled informally—coordinate in advance, especially for higher-value contributions.



When done right, these efforts provide meaningful support to the TSA workforce while respecting the rules that govern how federal employees operate.