

In reporting the Trump administration cuts, my goal was to show real examples of the impact of the cuts, explain what impact they were having on real people and keep an eye on what our elected officials were doing to protect Rhode Islanders.

I think we accomplished these goals with this series of stories.

As a staff, we put out a lot of inquiries in an effort to talk to people affected by the cuts. In the stories on the 14 layoffs at the USDA office in Warwick, I was fortunate that a source for a previous, unrelated story encouraged one of those workers to contact me.

I met four of them for a sit-down interview and tried to get a sense of what impact their sudden firing was having on their lives. I also looked to explain what role the Warwick USDA office serves for Rhode Islanders. Despite repeated calls, the USDA wasn't helpful. The agency's only response after repeated inquiries was a boilerplate statement from Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins.

I'm happy that we were able to follow up and report that the workers had been given back their jobs, although two decided to take employment elsewhere.

In the stories on the cuts by the National Institutes of Health, we wanted to show our readers the impact such cuts would have on major Rhode Island institutions, including Brown University, the University of Rhode Island and hospitals, such as Women & Infants Hospital in Providence.

That meant digging into the lawsuits filed by a coalition of attorneys general, including Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha, and finding the accompanying legal declarations from hospital managers. In highlighting the information from those declarations, we were able to help our readers understand the specific work these cuts jeopardized, including clinical trials for cancer, how many jobs would be lost and the impact on Rhode Island's economy.

~Jack Perry, digital producer, The Providence Journal

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2025/02/22/former-federal-workers-in-ri-believe-firings-were-illegal/79227220007/>

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