

American Airlines will suspend flights to 15 U.S. cities amid aid debate

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - American Airlines Group Inc ([AAL.O](#)) said Thursday it plans to suspend flights to 15 U.S. airports in October as travel demand remains low as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Congress has been weighing for weeks whether to grant U.S. airlines another \$25 billion in payroll assistance that would keep tens of thousands of airline workers on the job for another six months and extend minimum service requirements.

American said it will cancel just over 700 flights in October to and from those 15 airports but warned it could make additional cuts or could reconsider if Congress provides additional assistance.

“This is the first step as American continues to evaluate its network and plans for additional schedule changes in the coming weeks,” the airline said.

The debate over airline assistance has been stalled as Congress has struggled to reach agreement on a broader coronavirus assistance package.

Some lawmakers think Congress and the White House may not reach a deal until September.

Major U.S. airlines that received portions of \$25 billion in payroll assistance were required by the U.S. Transportation Department to maintain minimum flights through Sept. 30, but the government could opt to extend those requirements. American received \$5.8 billion in payroll assistance.

Several airlines have been privately warning lawmakers they would be forced to suspend service to some smaller airports without assistance,

American will halt flights to Del Rio, Texas; Dubuque, Iowa; Florence, South Carolina; Greenville, North Carolina; Huntington, West Virginia; Joplin, Missouri; Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, Michigan; Lake Charles, Louisiana; New Haven, Connecticut; New Windsor, New York; Roswell, New Mexico; Sioux City, Iowa; Springfield, Illinois; Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Williamsport, Pennsylvania starting Oct. 7.

Travel and transportation sectors, including hotels, restaurants, performance venues, public transit and passenger railroad Amtrak, are seeking significant government assistance.

The U.S. Travel Association said Wednesday that travel “businesses and workers cannot wait until September or until after the election. Congress must come together immediately to pass meaningful legislation.”