

What Does the Government Buy on Its Year-End Spending Spree? Here's What Made the List.

The month of September marks the end of the fiscal year and the beginning of the federal government's annual spending frenzy. Federal agencies scramble to spend what's left in their budgets, in fear that leaving excess funds will prompt Congress to send less in the following year. We call it "use it or lose it" spending, and it happens every year.

[Our latest OpenTheBooks.com oversight report](#) on the fiscal year 2018 use-it-or-lose-it spending frenzy quantified \$97 billion spent by federal agencies in September. This marks a 16-percent increase from fiscal year 2017 and a 39-percent increase from fiscal year 2015.

In the final seven days of the fiscal year, agencies spent \$53 billion – that's more than they spent in the entire month of August.

In total, 66 agencies participated in the shopping spree. The Department of Defense spent \$61.2 billion in September alone, while the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services spent more than \$5 billion each.

This year's last-minute transactions purchased fidget spinners, guns and ammunition, office furniture, CrossFit equipment, vehicles, alcohol, musical instruments, lobster tail, and more.

Federal agencies spent \$462 million on public relations and marketing contracts in September alone. In total, 38 departments spent money on marketing research, newspaper ads, PSA campaigns, media tours, radio advertising, and more.

In just one month, federal agencies signed nearly 10,000 contracts to purchase furniture. These purchases included a Wexford leather club chair, costing the Department of Defense more than \$9,000. Agencies spent \$2.7 million on ergonomic chairs, \$1.1 million on sit-to-stand desks, \$650,000 on sofas, and more than \$40,000 on clocks.

In September, agencies spent \$295 million on transportation. Departments purchased vehicles from the Ford Motor Company and General Motors, plus motorcycles (\$10M), golf carts (\$675K) and snowmobiles (\$130K).

These examples are only the tip of the iceberg. As the national debt surpasses \$22 trillion, it's time to end Washington's use-it-or-lose-it spending culture.

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[Image Credit: [Max Pixel](#)]