



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

September 25, 2015

To: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads
All Federally-funded Principal Investigators

Taylor Eighmy

From: Taylor Eighmy, Vice Chancellor for Research & Engagement

CC: Jimmy Cheek, Chancellor
Susan Martin, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor
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Re: Preparing for a Possible Federal Government Shutdown

This Monday, the White House Office of Management and Budget held a conference call with federal agencies to begin the process of preparing for a possible government shutdown:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2015/09/22/white-house-starts-shutdown-ball-rolling/>

Though momentum appears to be developing around efforts to avoid a shut down, NSF today has issued early guidance on preparation for a shutdown:

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=shutdown15001

Consequently, it is both prudent and proactive to begin preparation for a possible shutdown. We intend to use communication strategies that were used during the FY13 shutdown. If a shutdown is imminent, then additional memos will be shared with you on Wednesday, September 30th and Thursday, October 1st with further updates. Hopefully, a shut down will be averted.

By way of background, here is what our approach might look like, based largely on what happened in FY13:

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- **Posting Individual Agency Plans:** This web page (<http://research.utk.edu/budget-outlook/>) is now live will be updated as appropriate with agency plans and developments on the shutdown.

Further, here is additional likely guidance:

- **Possible Stop Work Orders:** During the FY13 shutdown, some agencies issued stop work orders for field research programs (e.g., U.S. F&WS). This impacted the pay for some graduate students and staff, but departments were able to temporarily cover those costs.
- **Proposal Submittals:** Generally speaking, we anticipate that ORE would continue to process proposals and we would expect that Grants.gov would be maintained by the agencies so that proposals can be submitted. Like FY13, we would expect that they will be held in the queue and processed after the shutdown is complete. Other agencies that use web-based portals (e.g. National Science Foundation) may shutdown their websites entirely, meaning no proposals can be submitted to those agencies.
- **New Awards:** We would anticipate that new awards are likely to be delayed until after the shutdown is over. In the event of a shutdown, please be very cautious about spending funds before an award document is received. All expenditures must occur in the period of performance.
- **Routine Administration of Grants and Contracts by the Agencies:** It is expected that requests for re-budgeting, no cost extensions, award continuations, and other action decisions would be significantly slowed down.
- **Access to Federal Facilities:** It is also likely that federal facilities may not be available during this time. Faculty should inquire directly with those facilities.
- **Availability of Funds:** Most agencies would likely continue to allow automatic drawdowns. We do not anticipate any impacts relative to fund availability as long as the shutdown is minimal.

If you have questions, then please contact David Smelser, assistant director of sponsored programs in the Office of Research & Engagement (dsmelser@utk.edu, 4-1840).