

Agriculture Buildings and Facilities

Contingency Plan for Agency Close Down Procedures

This plan assumes that some Agency activities will continue and are essential to protect life and property and are excepted from close down procedures, such as:

1. Security personnel and all necessary equipment costs to protect life and property, including the security of the Secretary of Agriculture.
2. Emergency and Natural Disasters Response (i.e., floods)
3. Protection of Federal lands, buildings, waterways, equipment and other property and investments owned by the United States when the suspension of such activities would cause an imminent threat to human life and property.
4. All contracts in support of cyber security and infrastructure operations to support key positions and essential personnel.
5. Collection and Payment activities for previous legal obligations.
6. Excepted positions and support of excepted personnel as needed for close down procedures.
7. Emergency and Defense Preparedness.

This plan assumes that all funding for continuing operations beginning on the first day of an appropriations hiatus would come from the remaining discretionary prior year unobligated balances (carryover), within authorized apportionment, unless the debt ceiling is reached.

We have identified the estimated employment by category in the attached document.

We estimate that it will take the agency 7 days to complete orderly close down procedures.

The following plan addresses procedures for activities not excluded from close down procedures:

Prior to Day 1, the following actions will be completed:

The Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) and Departmental Management (DM) Directors will identify those functions that need to be performed that are solely associated with an orderly interruption of normal activities. Such functions may include, but are not limited to:

- Identify measures to secure records, personal property, real property, and facilities that will be maintained and protected until appropriate disposition is accomplished.
- Draft communications strategy for communicating with staff office employees.
- Draft communication strategy for making contacts outside the offices that is necessary to communicate our status, i.e. that USDA is shut down and providing an explanation for the hiatus.
- Identify all potential meetings, hearings and other previously arranged business that must be cancelled.
- Identify all essential employees and ensure these employees have been identified consistently, fairly and in compliance with applicable personnel regulations.
- Identify employees whose presence at work will be required to perform functions associated with the orderly cessation of program activities. This includes employee name, title and function the employee will perform.
- Identify all employees in International travel status and issue recall orders.
- Identify what instructions and procedures Human Resources Management will provide to employees for the close down period.
- Identify appropriate Department contacts for communications purposes and orderly close down of all offices.
- Initiate bargaining with unions and other employee representatives over furlough related topics.

First half of Day 1 (First Day funds are not available):

All employees will be directed to report to their supervisors to receive assignments of duties or other pertinent information for an orderly shutdown. For those employees teleworking, "report" may be done by telephone. Managers and supervisors will coordinate the following activities intended to terminate Agency's operations:

- Communicate close down instructions and procedures to all employees.
- Distribute furlough notices at headquarters and all field units to all employees who have not been determined to be necessary for the Agency's termination activities
- Contact any employees on leave and communicate that their leave is cancelled.
- Contact any employees in travel status, inform of shutdown status, and direct to return to duty station.
- Ensure all employees to be released complete timesheet entry and submit to approving official.
- Cease any employee transfer of station.
- Ensure all records; personal property and real property are secured.
- Cancel all meetings, hearings and previously arranged business.
- Validate existing communication strategy and employee contact information for future communication need.

There will be daily communications by the ASA's Office on the status of the close down procedures with the Department contacts previously identified.

The ASA will be responsible for:

- Providing instructions and procedures to managers and supervisors for all employees during the close down period. This will include provisions for call back of employees in the event it is determined they are needed to complete close down procedures.
- Providing specific instructions for employees to complete final time and attendance report.
- Ensuring individual furlough notices will be prepared, reviewed and approved.
- Ensure all employees timesheets are processed by the National Finance Center.
- Delay hiring of new employees and notify new hires of the reason for the delay.
- Coordinating with all Contracting Officers (COs) and contracting officer technical representatives (COTRs) to notify all contractors and vendors that work is suspended for the duration of the shutdown.

Employee Services and Recreation, including Agriculture Federal Credit Union branches and the Employee Services and Recreation Association, will be closed and inaccessible to employees and contractors as of the beginning of Day 1.

Second half of Day 1:

Managers and supervisors will coordinate the following activities intended to terminate Agency's operations:

- Document the status of cases and projects so that they can be resumed, transferred, or otherwise appropriately handled when the agency's ultimate funding situation is determined.
- Prepare files for permanent storage, transfer to related agencies, or other disposition.
- Complete identification of employees whose presence at work will be required to perform functions associated with the orderly cessation of program activities. This includes:
 - o Name of each employee required to continue shutdown operations.
 - o Title of each employee identified.
 - o Office where employed, and
 - o The termination function that each identified employee is to perform.
- A final listing of employees required for shutdown operations will be submitted by the Staff Office Directors to the ASA no later than the end of Day 2.
- COs and COTRs will continue to contact all contractors and vendors to let them know work is suspended.

Day 2:

Only employees who were previously identified as required to perform functions necessary for orderly shutdown of program activities will report for work.

Employees leading, directing and performing work identified as “excepted” from close down procedures on page 1, will continue to work.

Employees will be directed to perform only those activities as enumerated earlier.

As each shutdown function is completed, each Staff Office Director notifies the Chief of Staff for the ASA and NFC, of completion and identifies those employees who were responsible for the task.

Each employee whose shutdown functions are completed will be furloughed immediately and formally notified by their supervisor or appropriate Director if the supervisor is not available.

There will be daily communications by the ASA’s Office on the status of the close down procedures with the Department contacts previously identified.

Day 3 and until completion of close down procedures:

Only employees who were previously identified as required to perform functions necessary for orderly shutdown of program activities will report for work.

Employees leading, directing and performing work identified as “excepted” from close down procedures on page 1, will continue to work.

Employees will be directed to perform only those activities as enumerated earlier.

Employees completing close down functions, continue tasks as outlined under Day 2 for each succeeding day until the Chief of Staff for ASA determines the shutdown is complete.

There will be daily communications to and from the ASA’s Office on the status of the close down procedures.