

Date: January 18, 2018

To: University of Delaware Research Community

From: Charles G. Riordan, Vice President for Research, Scholarship and Innovation

Subject: Potential Federal Government Shutdown

As has been widely reported, the federal government faces the potential of a shutdown when its current budget expires this Friday, January 19th. While Congress continues to seek resolution to avert a shutdown, I write providing guidance regarding the impact a shutdown would have on UD's sponsored programs. In brief, it is expected that work on active awards will continue during a shutdown. New awards will not be initiated nor will pending proposals be reviewed nor processed. Most personnel—program managers, grant administrators, etc.—are prohibited from working, or even accessing their computers during the shutdown. Thus, if you have urgent business to conduct with them, contact federal personnel before the close of business Friday, January 19th. For context, the last federal government shutdown lasted two weeks. The Research Office will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as information becomes available.

Additional information and guidance:

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) website lists contingency plans for all the federal agencies. The link to the website is <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/agency-contingency-plans/>

1. Federal agency employees who are paid with annual appropriations and who perform an activity associated with contract or grant administration, including oversight, inspection, payment, or accounting will generally not continue work during a shutdown. This means that normal, routine, ongoing operational and administrative activities performed by federal employees relating to contract or grant administration (including payment processing) cannot continue when there is a gap in funding.

2. Agencies have the ability to halt activity on grants, though this is not expected to happen for research. In general, active grant and contract activity funded with FY2018 or prior year appropriations can continue. However, agency personnel most likely will not be available for approvals, supervisory support, and other administrative functions.

- a. In addition, it is not certain what will be the functionality of automated payment systems. Consequently, institutions should recognize that there is some risk that requests for reimbursement will not be processed.

b. Other electronic administrative systems may or may not be available, depending on each agency's approach.

c. In the event of a shutdown, no new awards will be issued and most likely no new obligations will be made. If your award is incrementally funded and new funds are to be obligated in fiscal year 2018, this will not happen during the shutdown.

d. Agencies have the ability to delay proposal deadlines to compensate for any lapse in government activity. Most likely, new grant applications will not be accepted, though this also may depend on each agency's internal approach.

3. Agency specific guidance should be made available on a case-by-case basis. Agencies are required by OMB to implement agency plans for operation during a shutdown. Most likely, each agency plan will not be identical. In addition, certain programs may have special operating instructions.

Contact your Contract and Grant Specialist in the Research Office if you receive any specific direction from sponsors in regards to a government shutdown. The Research Office will continue to monitor the situation and communicate to the research community any necessary information as it becomes available.