

**Message to the Workforce from Bob Gibbs, Chief Human Capital Officer/Assistant Administrator,  
Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer – Important Information Related to the Government  
Shutdown – January 22, 2019**

This note is designed to:

- Continue my check-ins on behalf of myself and NASA's leadership
- Provide important information on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Furlough Notice you will be receiving
- Share information about the "Back Pay" bill that was signed by the President on January 16, 2019
- Provide information on IT and
- Remind you of some available resources

Before I start, I wanted to let you know that leadership understands this is a challenging time for everyone, particularly since the lapse has now exceeded 30 days. We are mindful of the stress, confusion and worry the shutdown may be causing you and your families and want to ensure we continually stay in touch during this time of uncertainty as a way to both connect as a NASA family and to share information. Thank you again for your commitment and patience as the lapse in appropriations continues.

As a reminder, important information is being added to NASA's shutdown public website on a daily basis so please remember to visit often. The link to the website is:

<https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm>. The site includes important documents such as *NASA Shutdown Furlough Guide for Employees* that includes comprehensive guidance and information. As a general rule, NASA's guidance documents do not duplicate federal-wide guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Therefore, we recommend employees review both NASA's shutdown public website in coordination with OPM's. The OPM shutdown website can be located at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/furlough-guidance/#url=Shutdown-Furlough>

The following is a list of important information we wanted to share:

1. **2<sup>nd</sup> Furlough Notice.** You will be receiving a 2<sup>nd</sup> Furlough Notice from your Center HR Office.
  - a. *Why am I receiving a 2<sup>nd</sup> Furlough Notice?* When a shutdown furlough goes beyond 30 calendar days, the OPM regulations require agencies to treat it as a second shutdown furlough and issue another furlough notice.
  - b. *How do I acknowledge receipt of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Notice?* Your Center HR Office will instruct you (possibly via an ENS message) how to acknowledge receipt of your notice (e.g. virtually accessing your work email or mobile device). As a general rule employees should not need to come onto the Center to acknowledge their notices. Employees who are unable to acknowledge virtually/remotely are not expected to take extraordinary measures to do so and we will address it when we return to work. Centers may provide additional guidance so please carefully review Center communications for additional details.
  - c. *What should I expect when I log into my computer to acknowledge the notice?*
    - i. Given the length of the shutdown due to a lapse in funding for NASA, when you log into NASA's network, you may experience an automatic software update to your Virtual Private Network (VPN) client. Also, depending upon the length of time your computer has been off the network, your ACES computer will receive

critical patches and you may be prompted to reboot one or twice. Critical patches may include operating system security updates, as well as updates to applications, including but not limited to, Adobe DC/Reader and Firefox.

- ii. Finally, because almost all employees are connecting remotely, NASA is experiencing high VPN usage. If you experience delays connecting to the VPN, please select the secondary profile option in your VPN client before attempting to reconnect or wait a few minutes and try again. The secondary profile points the end user's AnyConnect client to a different enterprise VPN instance.
    - iii. If you experience any additional issues while attempting to connect to the VPN, please contact the Enterprise Service Desk (1-877-677-2123).
  - d. *Do I need to do anything other than acknowledge receipt of my notice?* No, employees should only be acknowledging their furlough notice. You are not required to conduct an orderly shutdown, change your voicemail, out of offices messages, etc.
    - i. NASA has determined that non-expected employees may use government-issued IT devices for the limited purposes of receiving notifications regarding furlough status and to access information posted on <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm> **As a reminder, non-expected employees may not conduct "regular" work (e.g. check or reply to routine work emails, etc.) during the shutdown nor may they do so while acknowledging their second 2<sup>nd</sup> furlough notice.**
  - e. *I'm hearing a rumor that Reduction in Force (RIF) regulations and rules apply since the furlough is lasting longer than 30 calendar days, is this true?* No, per the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Reduction in Force (RIF) regulations and SES competitive furlough requirements are not applicable to emergency shutdown furloughs because the ultimate duration of an emergency shutdown furlough is unknown at the outset and is dependent entirely on Congressional action, rather than agency action.
2. **Back Pay.** The President signed S.24 the "Federal Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019," into law. The bill guarantees that Federal civil servant workers at departments/agencies affected by any lapse in appropriations that begins on or after December 22, 2018, will receive wages withheld during the shutdown. Even with the passage of the bill, salaries for any employees cannot not be paid until after a Continuing Resolution (CR) or FY 2019 appropriations legislation is signed and we are back to work. After we return to work, we will work quickly to retroactively pay employees. Additional guidance and information on retroactive timekeeping will be provided after normal operations resume.
  3. **Employee Assistance Program.** NASA's EAP provides confidential, short-term, counseling assistance and referral to employees who are dealing with issues such as: depression; anxiety; family conflicts; marital problems; eldercare; substance and alcohol abuse and occupational stress. During the partial shutdown/furlough while NASA Center clinicians are unavailable, an EAP provider (Workplace Options) is staffed with professional and licensed mental health counselors to temporarily support employees. Counselors can be contacted at 1-888-728-1404.
  4. **Resumption of Regular Duty.** As a reminder, once a Continuing Resolution or an FY 2019 appropriation legislation is signed you must follow the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Web site ([www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)), the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) Customer Contact Center

phone number (1-877-677-2123), and any Center-specific guidance for information on Government operating status and directions on when to return to work.

Please refer to the “Message from Bob Gibbs to the Workforce” dated January 11, 2019 located on the NASA Shutdown Website at <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm> for a more comprehensive list of the available resources.

We recognize the hardship this shutdown is putting on all employees and we will continue to do what we can to mitigate the impact. We’ll continue to check-in and share news/information as it becomes available so please continue to monitor <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm>. We value your service and perseverance during this difficult time and we will continue to hope for resolution soon.