

Message from Bob Gibbs to the NASA Workforce – Important Information Related to the Government Shutdown – January 11, 2019

I am reaching out on behalf of NASA's leadership to provide you with an update on the government shutdown and provide information and resources during this difficult time. While some of this information may be repetitive, we wanted to take this opportunity to both provide you with the updated information we currently have as well as highlight important issues.

First, I understand that this is a difficult time for everyone. So, I would like to thank you all for your commitment and patience as the lapse in funding continues.

As a reminder, important information is being added to NASA's shutdown public website on a regular 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. Since appropriations legislation has not been enacted, NASA employees will not be paid on January 11, 2019 for the pay period December 23, 2018 – January 5, 2019. Once appropriations legislation is signed, and if back pay is authorized, we will work quickly to retroactively pay all employees. If back pay is not authorized, we will work quickly to retroactively pay excepted employees for work performed during the shutdown after appropriations are signed.
2. Most NASA associated credit unions are offering low/no APR loans or "skip-a-payment" options to assist employees during the shutdown. Please visit <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm> and review the document titled *Credit Union and Bank Assistance During a Shutdown* to find a list of participating credit unions and assistance being offered. This document is being updated as information becomes available. Note: Other credit unions/banks not on this list may be offering assistance so if your institution is not on the list, please reach out to determine if they can provide assistance.
3. For employees applying for, or considering, unemployment compensation you can find more information at <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm>, to include a copy of required Standard Form (SF) 8 under the "Unemployment and Worker's Compensation Information" section. Please be advised, if funding resumes in the near future, or if Congress authorizes back pay (which it historically has done), you will be required to pay back any unemployment benefits you received.
4. As a reminder, professional and licensed counseling assistance/support for those who are experiencing anxiety, depression, family conflicts, substance/alcohol and other addictions, occupational stress, and similar challenges, is available through the Agency's after-hours Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The toll-free number is available during the furlough: 1-888-728-1404. This temporary EAP support is confidential, short-term, and may be helpful while local onsite NASA Center EAP clinicians are unavailable.

5. The 2018 W-2s are now available in Employee Express (EEX) for viewing and printing. Hard copy W-2s are in the process of being printed and prepared for mailing. IBC anticipates mailing to be completed by January 22, 2019 or sooner as printing is completed.
6. Employee Express is available for employees during the shutdown. Employees having problems accessing Employee Express, should contact Employee Express at EEXHelp@opm.gov or submit a help ticket using the Submit Help Request link located on the Employee Express "Contact US" web page <https://www.employeeexpress.gov/Contact>. (The GSA Client outage from January 9-16, 2019 noted on the website does not impact NASA)
7. Employees will see a Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) debt on their Earnings and Leave Statement for the pay period ending 01/05/2019. To ensure an employee's Health Insurance continues, the Agency has paid the employee's share on behalf of the employee. Should back pay be approved, the employee's share that was paid by the Agency will be taken from the back pay wages.
8. Employees whose badges and/or passwords are expiring should review the applicable FAQs located at <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm>
9. For Excepted travel, continue to follow your Center Travel point of contact's (POC's) guidance. For Non-Excepted travel set up in CONCUR before shutdown, that is being reviewed daily and being cancelled 24 hours in advance of travel start dates by the Center's travel POC. Any reservations made outside of CONCUR remain the responsibility of the traveler to cancel. With respect to paying travel card bills, if you have already received reimbursement you should pay for that travel, but otherwise employees do not have to pay their travel card bills during the shutdown and can wait until we have an appropriations, we can process vouchers, and they are reimbursed. The travel card company will not take any adverse actions against employees during the shutdown for non-payment such as cancelling their card or reporting late payments which might affect their credit rating. But you will need to submit vouchers as soon as the shutdown is over to avoid actions our vendors may be entitled to take after the Government is back in normal operations.
10. Employees considering temporary employment outside NASA should review the Office of General Counsel (OGC) guidance on "Seeking Outside Employment during a Shutdown" located at <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm>.
11. Employees who were scheduled to take use-or-lose annual leave prior to the end of the leave year (January 5, 2019) may be eligible to have their leave restored once funding resumes consistent with applicable regulations. Instructions and guidance on how to request restoration of this leave will be provided after normal operations resume.
12. Employees who have questions on the status of their benefits, to include the impact of the shutdown on changes during the shutdown, can review the Office of Personnel Management's *Guidance for Shutdown Furloughs* at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/furlough-guidance/guidance-for-shutdown-furloughs.pdf>
13. Employees with questions about retirement processing during a shutdown should refer to *FAQs on Retirement During the Current Shutdown Furlough* located on the NASA People Shutdown site for additional information at <https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/shutdown/shutdown.htm>.

We recognize the hardship this shutdown is putting on all employees and we will continue to do what we can to mitigate the impact. And we will continue to hope for a quick resolution.