



## **USICH FY 2015 CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR POSSIBLE LAPSE IN APPROPRIATIONS**

The Executive Director (ED) and the Director of Finance and Administration (DFA) would be the agency leads in executing a federal government shutdown at USICH, and would be responsible for ensuring agency operations are halted per OMB and OPM guidance, and that the safety and security of agency facilities, IT and other systems are ensured during the shutdown period.

USICH, per Anti-Deficiency Act and Department of Justice decisions, does not conduct excepted services. Therefore, agency operations would cease for the entire period of the shutdown, and all employees would be affected by a lapse in appropriations and would cease to work during this time period.

Section 124 of Circular A-11 requires specific responses regarding an orderly shutdown in the event of the absence of appropriations. USICH's responses are as follows:

### Section 124.2

USICH estimates that it will need a maximum of 4 hours to shut down its operations. USICH employees will be allowed a maximum of 4 hours work time in order to shut down operations on the next workday after the shutdown is effective. Shutdown activities will include such activities as: 1) communications to stakeholders, vendors and others regarding the shutdown; 2) website, email and voicemail message postings notifying all of the shutdown; 3) issuance of furlough letters to employees; and 4) other necessary activities to support the agency's orderly shutdown of operations.

The number of staff on-board before implementation of this plan totals 21 -- 14 professional staff, 4 support staff, and 3 interns.

There are no employees at USICH who are excepted employees because of protecting life and property. Consequently, the number of employees who would be retained during a funding lapse would be zero.

USICH believes its main activities in the event that a federal government shutdown occurs would fall under two primary categories – Personnel and Communications, Travel.

### **Personnel**

Upon announcement of a federal government shutdown, USICH would notify employees to return to

work on the next business day, or telework as approved by their supervisor, and work for a maximum of four hours on agency shutdown activities.

Official furlough notices will be issued electronically to employee's government email accounts on Tuesday, October 1, during the four hour shutdown period. The USICH ED and DFA would be responsible for disseminating all pertinent information to employees regarding this matter. Such communication will include the legal basis for the shutdown, the period of time the shutdown will cover, if known, any pertinent information related to employee pay, benefits, and tenure per OPM guidance, prohibitions against voluntary work during this time period, and guidance for employees to check OPM, OMB, news and other communication portals for the latest information or for any changes related to this matter, such as an early cessation or extension of the shutdown.

All communications with employees regarding a federal government shutdown would be handled electronically.

### **Communications, Travel**

USICH's blackberry server will be disabled during the shutdown period. Additionally, the agency's web-based email program will be disabled during the shutdown period.

Employees will be requested to submit their personal email addresses and/or phone numbers to the DFA in order to be contacted when official word is announced on when to return to work.

USICH's website would not be operational during the shutdown period and a message would be posted on the website regarding the shutdown. Additionally, USICH will change our main line's voicemail message to reflect our operational status. Employees will activate email out-of-office messages, as well as change voicemail messages. Key contractors and other key agency stakeholders will be contacted directly, as necessary, to communicate how the shutdown will affect their business and ongoing services (if already obligated) with the Agency.

Any travel already scheduled during this period will be rescheduled as feasible. Staff whose travel has already been obligated and/or ticketed and who are enroute to their destination when the shutdown is announced, must be recalled to their duty station because there is no authority to incur new per diem obligations. If the funding lapse is expected to be for a short period of time, employees may elect to stay at their travel destination and await any updates on resuming work and/or travel, but the employee will be responsible for all expenses. If the shutdown continues for more than 2 days, the employee will return to the location dictated by their travel authorization. No per diem, hotel or other travel-related expenses are authorized to be incurred during the shutdown period, however.