



Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

January 21, 2025

MEMORANDUM TO ALL AGENCY AND OFFICE HEADS

FROM: Gary Washington, Acting Secretary

SUBJECT: Hiring, Regulatory and Obligation of Funding Moratoriums

A. HIRING FREEZE

Today, President Donald J. Trump signed a [Presidential Memorandum](#) to put in place an immediate freeze on Federal civilian hiring across the Executive Branch and to prohibit the creation of new positions except in limited circumstances. The Memorandum also prevents circumvention of the hiring freeze through contracting with private parties.

B. FEDERAL REGISTER AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Yesterday, President Donald J. Trump's Chief of Staff, Susan Summerall Wiles, issued a [Memorandum](#) to the heads of all executive departments and agencies ordering an immediate halt to the publication of regulations. The Memorandum orders agencies to refrain from proposing or issuing any new rule in any manner until the President's appointed or designated agency heads can review and approve the regulation. Regulations that are not approved by President Trump's officials will not move forward.

The Memorandum authorizes the Director or Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget to exempt any rule that he deems to be necessary to address emergency situations or regulations subject to statutory or judicial deadlines that require prompt action.

Agency actions that impose significant costs on the public in the form of "guidance documents" are included in this review.

The Memorandum also instructs agency heads to consider postponing the effective date for rules that were published by the previous administration but have not yet gone into effect. This will allow a comprehensive review of factual, legal, and policy questions. The Memorandum recommends that Agencies should also consider opening comment periods to allow the public to provide comments about these rules.

C. MORATORIUM ON THE OBLIGATION OF FUNDS THROUGH GRANTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

In order to ensure that grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts entered into on January 21, 2025, and thereafter conform to all applicable laws and policies of the new Administration, a short-term moratorium on the execution of such documents is effective immediately. In addition, no action shall be taken to issue new requests for proposals and no notices of funding availability shall be issued.



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D. REQUIRED AGENCY AND OFFICE HEAD ACTION

1. Hiring

At this time, there are no exceptions to the hiring freeze with respect to the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Accordingly, effective immediately, agencies and offices are not authorized to extend an offer of employment to any person. Persons to whom an offer of employment has been extended, but acceptance has not been received, shall be contacted immediately and be informed that the offer has been revoked. Agency personnel officials should contact Anita R. Adkins, Chief Human Capital Officer in the Office of Human Resources Management if they have any questions on this matter at Anita.r.adkins@usda.gov

2. Federal Register Documents and Guidance Documents.

To ensure that the President's appointees have an opportunity to review and approve Federal Register publications, while continuing to move forward with the essential business of Government, I am directing mission areas and agencies to comply with the following instructions:

Guidance on Handling of Documents at or Pending Submission to the Office of the Federal Register.

1. Submission of documents to the Federal Register:

Until further notice, the ability for agencies to submit documents to the Federal Register for publication is withdrawn. Prior to publication all items must be submitted to the Office of Budget and Program Analysis and reviewed by OSEC. Please submit a list of items you expect to publish in the Federal Register within the next 90 days to OBPA as soon as possible.

2. Documents pending at the Federal Register:

All regulations that are currently at the Federal Register have been withdrawn so they can be reviewed by OSEC. The Office of Budget and Program Analysis will arrange for the necessary review of these items and communicate the results back to you as quickly as possible.

3. Regulations pending at the Office of Management and Budget:

Regulations pending at the Office of Management and Budget for clearance have been withdrawn. The Office of Budget and Program Analysis will arrange for the necessary review of these items and communicate the results back to you as quickly as possible.

4. Interim and Final Regulations that have been published, but are not yet Effective, and Proposed Regulations with a Comment Period that is Open:



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For interim and final regulations that have been published, but are not yet effective, agencies are directed to consider temporarily delaying the effective date by 60 days and extending or reopening the comment period by 30 days. For proposed regulations that have published and have an open comment period, agencies are directed to consider extending the comment period for an additional 30 days.

The Office of Budget and Program Analysis has developed a list of these regulations for your review and will distribute it to regulatory officers shortly. Please work closely with the Office of Budget and Program Analysis to ensure that the list is accurate and identifies any rules that may need an exception for reasons of emergency or other urgent situations relating to health, safety, environment, financial and national security matters. The Office of Budget and Program Analysis will arrange for the necessary review of these items and communicate the results back to you as quickly as possible.

5. Regulations under development within your Agencies:

Follow the procedures in Departmental Regulation (DR) 1512-1, Regulatory Decision-Making Requirements, for developing and clearing regulations that the Office of Management and Budget has designated as "Significant" or "3(f)(1) Significant" (formerly "Economically Significant").

Notwithstanding DR 1512-1, the authority for agencies to issue regulations designated "Not Significant" is hereby withdrawn until further notice. Regulations that the Office of Management and Budget has designated "Not Significant" must now be forwarded to the Office of Budget and Program Analysis for review. The Office of Budget and Program Analysis will develop a list of these regulations, arrange for the necessary review, and communicate the results back to you as quickly as possible.

The additional review time is not intended to impact regulations promulgated pursuant to statutory deadlines. To the extent that you believe you have such regulations, please provide a list to the Office of Budget and Program Analysis as quickly as possible so that we can discuss these matters with you and make the necessary communication to the Office of Management and Budget .

Agency personnel officials should contact Andrew Perry, Deputy Director of the Office of Budget and Program Analysis if they have any questions on this matter at andrew.perry@usda.gov.

3. Execution of Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts

Actions that will be taken regarding grants, cooperative agreements and contracts submitted to your agency or office for execution are temporarily suspended in order for the Office of Budget and Program Analysis and the Office of the General Counsel to determine if the agency may refrain from execution of the document without incurring any liability. This temporary suspension does not



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extend to normal day-to-day activities such as uniform contracts and agreements executed by local offices of the: Farm Service Agency; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Rural Development Agencies; and the Forest Service.

4. Further Guidance

In order for the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), the Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA), and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to be able to handle what is likely to be a large number of questions, your agency or office will establish one office and identify one contact person for the three afore-noted areas of concern from which inquiries will be submitted to the above-mentioned offices. As soon as those determinations have been made, provide that information to Ralph Linden at OGC at ralph.linden@usda.gov, John Rapp at OBPA at john.rapp@usda.gov, and Lynn Moaney at OCFO at lynn.moaney@usda.gov, and they will then provide to that contact person the appropriate personnel to whom your questions should be addressed. Your agency and office should contact your assigned OGC, OBPA, and OCFO contact for guidance as needed.