



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

March 17, 2020

M-20-16

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Russell T. Vought  
Acting Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Vought".

SUBJECT: Federal Agency Operational Alignment to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus  
COVID-19

The Federal Government is aggressively responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Federal Government, in partnership with state and local governments and the private sector, is adopting a concerted near-term operations posture that will appropriately align critical resources to slow down the transmission of COVID-19, while also ensuring that Government operations continue.

The Government must thoughtfully manage all our resources in a way that aligns with our desired outcome of slowing the transmission of COVID-19. This aggressive posture may affect Government operations as agencies work to balance the needs of mission-critical work and greater social distancing. Consequently, while the Federal Government remains operational, agencies must take appropriate steps to prioritize all resources to slow the transmission of COVID-19, while ensuring our mission-critical activities continue.

In order to achieve this posture, consistent with [The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America](#), the Government must immediately adjust operations and services to minimize face-to-face interactions, especially at those offices or sites where people may be gathering in close proximity or where highly vulnerable populations obtain services. Exceptions may be needed when continued operations and services are necessary to protect public health and safety, including law enforcement and criminal-justice functions. Non-mission-critical functions that cannot be performed remotely or that require in-person interactions may be postponed or significantly curtailed. Agency heads have flexibility to realign individuals or work units to higher priority activities.

Agency heads shall utilize the full extent of their legal authority and discretion to execute this realignment of non-mission-critical activities, while also ensuring that their agencies continue to serve the American people and operate in the most efficient manner possible to deal aggressively and promptly with the current situation. Agencies shall communicate with their customers to encourage them to delay transactions which are not time-critical and to ensure that available resources can be re-prioritized to mission-critical activities. Agencies shall communicate to the public how service levels may be impacted, and should leverage mechanisms for receiving and acting on feedback.

This Memorandum is consistent with the President's declaration of a national emergency pursuant to section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5191(b), concerning the COVID-19 outbreak.

Specifically, agency plans and operations shall accomplish the following:

- Reduce and re-prioritize non-mission-critical services to free up capacity for critical services;
- Identify and resolve supply challenges that may be limiting factors or bottlenecks;
- Identify a variety of transportation limitations that could impact service delivery;
- Whenever possible and appropriate, leverage existing materials and content relating to authoritative information on COVID-19, share status of Federal actions on <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>, and provide communications in line with the [National Response Framework](#);
- Maximize telework across the nation for the Federal workforce (including mandatory telework, if necessary), while maintaining mission-critical workforce needs;
- Assess professional services and labor contracts to extend telework flexibilities to contract workers wherever feasible;
- Consider streamlining regulations and approval processes for critical services, including issuing general waivers policies and delegating decision-making where appropriate; and
- Ensure agency policies and procedures restrict individuals infected with, or at higher risk for serious illness from, COVID-19 from accessing Federal facilities, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, as well as the Privacy Act of 1974, and other legal requirements. These agency policies must specifically include considerations not only for Federal employees, but also for contractors and visitors while balancing the needs to perform mission critical functions. Agencies shall review CDC, as well as U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) guidance below, as well as other appropriate resources, when developing and implementing new or modified policies and processes.
  - [CDC Interim Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
  - [CDC Risk Assessment and Public Health Management Decision Making](#)
  - [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
  - [DOL Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

### **Next Steps**

- Within 48 hours of the issuance of this Memorandum, all agencies must review, modify, and begin implementing risk-based policies and procedures based on CDC guidance and legal advice, as necessary to safeguard the health and safety of Federal workplaces to restrict the transmission of COVID-19.
- As previously directed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), agency heads shall review and modify operations that maximize resources and functional areas to deliver mission-critical functions and other Government services safely and efficiently, incorporating the above factors. Agencies shall work closely with their leads for COOP to fully leverage agencies' authorities to execute their missions during the pandemic.