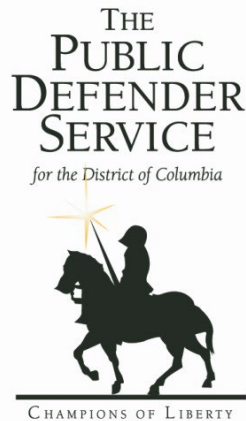


**PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
SHUTDOWN PLAN – January 30, 2026**



PLAN OVERVIEW:

The Anti-Deficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. §1341 and §1342, greatly restricts the conduct of operations by agencies during a lapse of appropriations. In a lapse of appropriations, the agency must shut down those activities and release (or furlough) those staff not excepted by agency heads within the guidance established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

OMB Circular A-11 Section 124 (Agency Operations in the Absence of Appropriations) requires agency heads to develop and maintain plans for an orderly shutdown of agency operations in the event of an absence of appropriations. Shutdown plans must be submitted to OMB either when first prepared or when revised.

OMB and DOJ guidance authorize agency heads to continue operations (requiring new obligations) when necessary for: 1) the orderly shutdown of agency operations and 2) the protection of life and property. The Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS) shutdown plan below assumes that the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the District of Columbia Superior Court, the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, the Pretrial Services Agency, the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia (CSOSA), the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the United States Parole Commission, the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Corrections, the Metropolitan Police Department, and other law enforcement entities within the District of Columbia criminal and juvenile justice systems will continue public safety and protection of property operations throughout the shutdown period.

PDS's mission is integrally related to the above agencies' law enforcement function through the provision of constitutionally or statutorily required legal representation. Thus, PDS employees

engaging in direct client representation and case-related/administrative support are necessarily encompassed by the designated exception for law enforcement.¹¹

Below, PDS details the functioning of the various law enforcement/justice agencies and PDS’s plan in response to provide the representation required for these law enforcement/justice activities to continue.

SHUTDOWN PLAN:

A. Shutdown Plan Points of Contact

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B. Shutdown Time Period

PDS requires approximately one-half of the business day following the date of the appropriation lapse to complete the initial shutdown of operations. PDS legal representation functions will continue throughout the lapse period. For purposes of this shutdown plan, legal representation functions are only those deemed necessary to complement ongoing law enforcement activities and for protection of life and property.

LAPSE PLAN SUMMARY OVERVIEW	
Estimated time (to nearest half day) required to complete shutdown activities	0.5 days
Total number of agency employees expected to be on board before implementation of the plan	240
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	7
Total number of employees to be retained under the plan for each of the following categories (may include duplicated counts):	
Compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations:	0
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	197

¹ The determination that case-related services must continue notwithstanding a lack of appropriated funds is also supported by Decisions of the Comptroller General, B-283599, September 15, 1999, and B-284566, April 3, 2000, recognizing that mandatory responsibilities, such as those for representation in criminal cases, must continue to be incurred. Further support can be found in the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel, Government Operations in the Event of a Lapse in Appropriations, memorandum from Walter Dellinger, Assistant Attorney General, for Alice Rivlin, Director, Office of Management and Budget, August 16, 1995. "... [T]he Antideficiency Act contemplates that a limited number of government functions funded through annual appropriations must otherwise continue despite a lapse in their appropriations because the lawful continuation of other activities necessarily implies that these functions will continue as well." Continuing law enforcement activities necessarily implies that PDS must continue providing the responsibilities assigned to PDS by the Constitution, PDS’s authorizing statute, and the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct.

Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	36
Necessary to the discharge of the President’s constitutional duties and powers:	0
Necessary to protect life and property:	0
Brief summary of significant agency activities that will continue during a lapse: see explanations below	
Brief summary of significant agency activities that will cease during a lapse: see explanations below.	

C. Shutdown Activities

OMB Circular A-11 requires that agency shutdown plans identify those “activities that are essential to operate their agencies during an appropriations hiatus.” The underlying assumption is that only those law enforcement (and health care) activities deemed necessary for protection of life and property or required for orderly shutdown are to be excepted.

1. Continuation of Law Enforcement in Court Matters: The District of Columbia Courts’ Shutdown Plan for 2013,² stated that the courts would continue those “functions necessary and essential to the continued resolution of cases without interruption,” and, thus, “all essential case supporting services... will be continued.” District of Columbia Courts’ Shutdown Plan at 1, October 2013. The plan stated that this continuation of operations was required both because the Constitution guarantees certain protections³ and because “the suspension of criminal, juvenile and neglect operations of the Court would imminently threaten the safety of human life, and the suspension of all civil proceedings would pose an imminent threat to the protection of property under the ‘emergency’ exception.” *Id.* at 2, October 2013.

Both prosecuting authorities in the District of Columbia, the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia and the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, historically proceed with criminal prosecutions, delinquency prosecutions, and involuntary civil commitments even in the event of a federal government shutdown. The courts cannot process criminal cases, and prosecuting authorities cannot perform the part of their law enforcement function that occurs in the courts, without court-appointed counsel for criminal defendants and juvenile respondents.

PDS’s Plan: PDS therefore will retain 175 employees who provide legal representation services for matters before the Court of Appeals and in the Superior Court.

PDS provides direct representation in these cases through the Trial Division (52 employees), Appellate Division (18 employees), Mental Health Division (17 employees), Civil Legal Services (7 employees), Investigations Division (43 employees), the Special Litigation Division (15 employees), the Defender Services Office (9 employees), and the Office of Rehabilitation

² PDS does not have access to the courts’ current shutdown plan.

³ For example, pursuant Supreme Court decisions interpreting the requirements of the Constitution, the District makes detention/release decisions for individuals within two days of their arrest. *Gerstein v. Pugh*, 420 U.S. 103, 125 (1975) (states “must provide a fair and reliable determination of probable cause as a condition for any significant pretrial restraint of liberty, and this determination must be made by a judicial officer either before or promptly after arrest”); *County of Riverside v. McLaughlin*, 500 U.S. 44, 56 (1991) (“...we believe that a jurisdiction that provides judicial determinations of probable cause within 48 hours of arrest will, as a general matter, comply with the promptness requirement of *Gerstein*”).

and Development (14 employees).⁴

2. Continuation of Post-conviction Law Enforcement: PDS understands that the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia (CSOSA) and the U.S. Parole Commission intend to continue essential law enforcement operations. Thus, CSOSA will continue to execute parole violator warrants, and the U.S. Parole Commission will continue to hold the required probable cause hearings and revocation hearings within the statutorily required time frames.

PDS's Plan: PDS's Parole Division (11 employees) provides representation in 95 percent of these cases, and the staff in that Division would be excepted.

3. Continued Operation of Federal and District of Columbia Secure Facilities: There is no plan for an alteration of conditions of confinement for committed youth or individuals incarcerated in Federal Bureau of Prisons, D.C. Department of Corrections, and D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services facilities during a federal government shutdown

PDS's Plan: Those PDS lawyers within the Community Defender Division representing clients in administrative institutional hearings must provide representation in those matters and would be excepted (11 employees).

⁴ PDS Trial Division attorneys provide representation in more than 60 per cent of the most serious felony cases (e.g., homicide, rape, armed carjacking) in the Superior Court. The Investigations Division supports the work of these lawyers. Without investigation, the representation provided by these lawyers would be constitutionally insufficient. *See Kimmelman v. Morrison*, 477 U.S. 365 (1986) (failure to investigate and present Fourth Amendment claim was constitutionally ineffective assistance of counsel). The Office of Rehabilitation and Development provides mitigation services to the Trial Division lawyers and clients. Without mitigation investigation, the representation provided by the trial lawyers would be constitutionally insufficient. *See Wiggins v. Smith*, 539 U.S. 510 (2003) (decision of counsel not to expand their investigation of petitioner's life history for mitigating evidence beyond presentence investigation report and department of social services records fell short of prevailing professional standards). The Mental Health Division provides representation in more than 50 percent of indigent individuals facing involuntary civil commitment. The Civil Legal Services constitutionally insufficient. *See Wiggins v. Smith*, 539 U.S. 510 (2003) (decision of counsel not to expand their investigation of petitioner's life history for mitigating evidence beyond presentence investigation report and department of social services records fell short of prevailing professional standards). The Mental Health Division provides representation in more than 50 percent of indigent individuals facing involuntary civil commitment. The Civil Legal Services Division provides special education representation for children facing delinquency charges and represents individuals facing various civil actions as the collateral consequences of criminal charges, including matters in the Family Division of the Superior. The Defender Services Office supports the court appointment system by determining the eligibility for court-appointed counsel of every child and adult arrested in the District of Columbia and coordinating the availability of non-PDS attorneys and PDS attorneys for appointment to new cases on a daily basis.

EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZED BY LAW	
Division	Number of Employees
Trial	52
Appellate	18
Mental Health	17
Civil Legal Services	7
Investigations	43
Special Litigation	15
Defender Services Office	9
Office of Rehabilitation and Development	14
Parole	11
Community Defender	11
TOTAL	197

PDS's Plan: In addition to the 197 employees expressly authorized by law, thirty-six of the 240 employees are being retained to provide essential support as necessarily implied by law. These employees consist of fifteen executive team members, five human resources specialists, eight budget & finance employees, six administrative employees, and five IT employees as provided in the following table.

NECESSARILY IMPLIED BY LAW	
Division	Number of Employees
Executive	12
Human Resources	5
Budget & Finance	8
Administrative	6
Information Technology	5
TOTAL	36

Staff to be furloughed: PDS plans to furlough employees, including attorneys, involved in long term administrative and legal projects (e.g., legislative analysis, planning, and systemic litigation) (7 employees) during a lapse in funding provided there are no contractual or court deadlines within three weeks of the start of the shutdown.

D. Preliminary PDS Notification to Employees

The PDS Director will issue a preliminary notification to all PDS staff and applicable contractors of a possible shutdown due to a lapse of appropriations. The timing of this advance notification will be based on OMB guidance and/or the imminent nature of the situation. Staff will be notified as follows:

- PDS may be shut down on an approximate date due to a lapse of appropriations.
- Once appropriations have lapsed, some normal PDS operations will cease, and a shutdown process will take place on the first regular business day after the appropriation lapse. All PDS staff, regardless of leave, travel, AWS, or telecommuting status, must report to work on this date either in person or through electronic means unless they are unable to do so (e.g., because they are out of the country, etc.).
- Supervisors must immediately contact staff currently on leave or travel to notify them of the possible shutdown.
- Certain staff will be excepted through all or part of the shutdown period. Excepted staff are necessary to continue PDS's direct legal representation functions and protect life and property. Certain staff will be furloughed through all or part of the shutdown period. PDS will inform staff members of their exception or furlough status. All staff will be formally notified of their exception or furlough status during the shutdown process.
- All PDS policies remain in effect for both furloughed and excepted staff.
- PDS rules and approval processes surrounding outside employment apply to all staff during the lapse of appropriation.
- In the event the appropriation lapse takes place just before or during non-regular business days, all excepted staff must continue to perform scheduled work during the non-regular business days leading up to the next regular business day (shutdown day).
- Staff must postpone or cancel all planned PDS training and non-case-related travel scheduled to take place within the shutdown period.
- All planned/approved paid leave (e.g., annual, sick) during the shutdown period is cancelled. All paid leave during a lapse of appropriations is cancelled, and all employees will either be in excepted work status or furloughed. All AWS schedules for excepted employees will be suspended during the shutdown period.
- Information concerning employee pay, benefits, and leave throughout the shutdown period will be issued by PDS based on OPM guidance.
- Furloughed staff may not perform voluntary work for PDS during the shutdown period. Furloughed staff should not use PDS cell phones or access PDS systems for work purposes.
- Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) and Contracting Officers (COs) must ensure that all contractors receive preliminary notification that they must contact their CORs and COs to determine the contractors' work status during a shutdown.
- Staff must stay apprised of PDS's shutdown status and when those who have been furloughed must return to work. This notification may be done by their supervisors, the PDS Internet, or PDS voice mail or through the media.
- Furloughed employees will be advised to use voice mail and out-of-office email functions to redirect calls and messages as appropriate.

E. Shutdown Day

All PDS staff who are able must report either in person or through electronic means to work on the first regular business day after appropriation lapse.

Supervisors will provide release notices to appropriate staff. Furloughed staff will be asked to complete necessary functions, secure their belongings/office, and return home. In cases where furloughed employees do not report to the office, supervisors must make every effort to contact them and inform them of their release status. All furloughed staff will be expected and report their time accordingly.

Excepted staff must continue to perform their excepted business functions and report their time accordingly.

F. Contractors

In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) § 42.1303, stop-work orders will be issued by PDS's Office of Budget and Finance (OBF) to all affected contractors on the first business day following an appropriation lapse. OBF will coordinate with program managers to compile a complete list of all current contractors, determine those contractors with funding and purpose necessary to continue work in an appropriation lapse, and determine those contractors to whom stop-work orders will be issued.

Contractors funded by prior-year appropriations, non-appropriated funds, or current fiscal year appropriated funds properly obligated prior to an appropriation lapse may continue to perform services according to the terms (purpose, funding, period of performance) of the contract. However, in cases where a COR of such a contractor is furloughed, COR responsibilities must be formally transferred to a qualified, excepted employee or a stop-work order must be issued to the contractor. In addition, it may be determined that the contractor's function is not necessary or cannot be performed effectively during the shutdown; in that instance, a stop-work order will be issued.

Contractors funded by prior-year appropriations, non-appropriated funds, or current fiscal year appropriated funds properly obligated prior to the appropriation lapse and who do not receive stop-work orders may work under the terms of the contract. However, payments will not be issued to the contractor for these goods or services until an appropriation is passed by Congress.

PDS will retain contractors as needed for ongoing support during the Government shutdown: one administrative support contractor for the Office of Human Resources, two support personnel for PDS's IT infrastructure, and one for the Office of Budget and Finance.

Contractors who are to receive properly obligated current fiscal year appropriated funds and who are to perform case-related functions may work pursuant to the terms of the contract. Payments will not be issued to the contractor for these goods or services, however, until an appropriation is passed by Congress and signed into law. Contractors who are to receive properly obligated current fiscal year appropriated funds but whose work is not case-related or otherwise required for the protection of life and property will be issued stop-work orders.

G. FY 2026 Obligations and Payments After Appropriation Lapse

During an absence of appropriations, agency heads must limit new obligations to “excepted services or goods.” Excepted services or goods are those needed for 1) conducting the orderly shutdown of agency operations and 2) the protection of life and property.

PDS may incur necessary new obligations for these two purposes; PDS cannot pay (disburse funds) for these new obligations until an appropriation is passed. Excepted employees and vendors who are directed to perform new tasks in the absence of appropriations will be assured that the United States will not contest its legal obligation to make payment for such services and that they will be paid when an appropriation is passed by Congress.

Contractors:

PDS may incur new obligations for expert or other services directly related to on-going cases, and then, only when delay in procuring the expert or other service would adversely impact a client.⁵ PDS may not issue payments for any obligations incurred post-appropriation lapse until after an appropriation is passed by Congress.

Personnel/Employee Salaries and Benefits:

PDS may retain employees during an appropriation lapse.

If authorized, PDS may issue payments to employees during the shutdown period for work performed prior to the appropriation lapse.

PDS may not issue payments during the shutdown for work performed by excepted employees after an appropriation lapse, including that performed by excepted/furloughed staff on the shutdown day and all work performed by excepted employees throughout the shutdown period, until after an appropriation is passed by Congress.

⁵ No purchases of goods or services will be permitted other than those required to further case resolution activity (e.g., expert witnesses, transcription services, video enhancements).