



READY TO REOPEN CHECKLIST

With a tentative deal reached to reopen the federal government, you will have a myriad of tasks to tackle. It is imperative that you prioritize the people and operations that support them on day one. Below is a checklist for restarting your agency, drawn from the lessons learned and best practices from agencies across government.

SENIOR LEADERS

- Welcome employees back and be visible, such as by standing at the front door of headquarters or walking through the offices with coffee and donuts.
- Have a message ready to send to the entire agency, thanking them, articulating the meaning of their work and identifying the immediate path forward.
- Schedule a department-wide town hall, with virtual access for regional offices.
- Form a reopening team to oversee restart issues and serve as the hub for information and questions on the restart process.
- Have clear talking points for all supervisors to be disseminated before the rest of staff returns to work.
- Avoid any language that suggests a “paid vacation” or otherwise invalidates the difficulty employees have faced.

SUPERVISORS

- Sit down with direct reports to thank them and listen to questions and concerns. Listen for specific suggestions to share back with senior leaders.
- Talk with direct reports about priorities and reassess timelines as needed.
- Draw a connection between their work and the agency mission.
- Help them get back to meaningful work as quickly as possible.
- Be prepared to deal with the personal and focus on listening.
- Be prepared to say “I don’t know, but I will find out and get back to you.”

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Ensure the workplace is clean, garbage is emptied and facilities do not show any disrepair.
- Promptly troubleshoot issues returning employees may face when reentering the workplace, such as personal identity verification cards and computer access.
- Prioritize time cards and payroll. Determine how returning employees will be paid, ideally within three days of reopening.
- Share FAQs on HR issues and available resources, such as employee assistance programs, with staff, and continue to do so on a regular basis.
- Shared service payroll providers should provide step-by-step guidance for HR staff, including clarifications on shutdown-specific situations. Similarly, share step-by-step instructions for supervisors and employees so that timecards can be submitted and approved correctly.
- Create a hotline or share a help email to answer questions on operational restart issues.