

# ALA American Library Association

September 22, 2015

Shaun Donovan, Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Re: Plan for Ongoing Access to Electronic Information During Government Shutdown


Dear Director Donovan:

On January 28, 2014, the Council of the American Library Association formally adopted the attached Resolution, which we previously shared with your office. It calls upon OMB to make clear to all federal agencies that access by the public to essential information on agency websites is an "excepted" activity warranting the retention of paid personnel or the obligation of funds to assure ongoing access.

I am writing today to reiterate that request and to underscore the importance of continued access to government information in the event of a federal government shutdown on October 1. This concern is born from experience during the 2013 government shutdown when some federal websites became inaccessible, while others continued to function to varying degrees of their full capacities.

Express guidance from your agency issued in the remaining days of September would be greatly appreciated. ALA would be pleased, of course, to assist in its creation or dissemination.

Sincerely,



Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director  
Washington Office

**RESOLUTION ON MAINTAINING GOVERNMENT WEBSITES  
DURING A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**

*Resolved*, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. urges the President to direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Department of Justice (DoJ) to develop guidance to federal agencies stating that, in the event of a government shutdown or other emergency, continued access by the public to essential information on agency websites is an “excepted” activity that would warrant the retention of paid personnel or the obligation of funds to assure access;
2. urges the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in the absence of such a guideline, to direct each agency to communicate the status during a shutdown of its website to the Government Printing Office (GPO) or another appropriate agency, which would widely communicate to the public and update information about which agencies are maintaining their websites, which are updating them and which are closing them;
3. urges OMB to require each agency to determine what information is essential and should be available if a government shutdown or emergency should occur. For such an occurrence, develop a contingency plan for continued public access to information;
4. urges OMB to direct agencies to work with GPO in hosting their online publications and data in the Federal Digital System (FDSys) or other publicly accessible means;
5. urges GPO to expand its automated harvesting of Federal agencies’ websites and to redirect persistent uniform resource locators (PURLs) to GPO-harvested copies rather than agency websites; and
6. urges that GPO or another appropriate agency be directed to maintain a clearinghouse of web pages that provide alternate ways of accessing government information.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association  
Tuesday, January 28, 2014 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Keith Michael Fiels

ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council