

National Science Foundation
Statement on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Issued on Monday, March 9, 2020

The safety and security of our staff, visitors and local community are priorities for the National Science Foundation (NSF). NSF is aware that many colleges and universities have begun imposing travel restrictions for their faculty, staff, and students. Given these developments and our limited understanding of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), NSF is taking the following steps to reduce risks while preserving our core mission.

Actions

NSF is temporarily (i) pausing all non-essential travel by staff; (ii) moving to wholly virtual merit review panels; and (iii) encouraging NSF-sponsored meetings, including those hosted at NSF headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, to be held virtually or rescheduled. NSF will phase in these measures during the week of March 9, 2020, with full implementation anticipated by March 16, 2020.

The agency will assess the need to continue these steps at least every two weeks. NSF will determine guidance for two weeks at a time and will release that guidance by the preceding Monday. For example, by Monday, March 23, 2020, there will be guidance for the weeks beginning March 29, 2020, and April 5, 2020.

This resource will be updated as new information becomes available.

Impact on NSF's acceptance and review of proposals

NSF will continue to accept proposals. Unless announced on NSF's website (<https://www.nsf.gov/>), proposal deadlines, target dates, and submission windows remain unchanged. NSF will continue to review proposals using *ad hoc* reviews and virtual panels, enabling the agency to maintain a high-quality and timely merit review process.

Reviewers scheduled to participate in person in an upcoming NSF merit review panel

Reviewers scheduled to participate in person in a panel between March 9 and March 13, 2020:
Reviewers who are scheduled to participate in review panels during the week of March 9, 2020, should continue with their plans unless (i) they are notified otherwise by a program officer or (ii) they would prefer to participate virtually. Reviewers who wish to participate virtually in a panel scheduled for the week of March 9, 2020, should notify the cognizant NSF program officer or other NSF staff member organizing the panel. The reviewers will then receive information about virtual participation.

Reviewers scheduled to participate in person in a panel after March 13, 2020:

NSF staff will contact reviewers who are scheduled to participate in an in-person review panel between March 16, 2020, and March 27, 2020, with information about new panel arrangements. Reviewers should anticipate that the panel will be virtual.

Reviewers who are scheduled to participate in an in-person review panel after March 27, 2020, should expect notification from NSF staff approximately two weeks in advance of the panel about any changes to the panel.

Virtual panel compensation:

Reviewers participating in panel sessions for a minimum of four hours are eligible to receive compensation at the NSF virtual panelist compensation rate.

Impact on award oversight

NSF will continue its oversight of NSF awards. Where site visits by NSF staff are a key part of that oversight, NSF staff will typically contact the awardee to make alternative arrangements, such as videoconferencing, to meet with the project team and review documentation. In cases where the presence of NSF staff on site is essential, NSF staff may make an in-person visit.

Impact on Advisory Committees and other non-panel meetings organized by NSF staff

NSF anticipates that most meetings scheduled to begin between March 15, 2020, and March 28, 2020, will be conducted virtually or postponed. NSF staff will contact participants with additional information. Information for members of the public planning to attend affected meetings will be on NSF's website. NSF will provide updates for these types of meeting beginning after March 28, 2020, approximately two weeks in advance of the meetings.

Other non-panel visitors to NSF

At this time, NSF remains open to scheduled visitors who are not participating in panels. However, NSF strongly encourages making those meetings virtual where practicable. Should an in-person visit be necessary, please contact your NSF point of contact prior to traveling to the meeting to obtain the most up to date information about the posture of the agency.

Cancellation of invitational travel to or from NSF headquarters

Individuals canceling invitational travel to or from NSF headquarters (for example, merit review panelists and Advisory Committee members) are responsible for canceling any travel arrangements that they have made. These arrangements include lodging reservations as well as air and rail travel reservations **not** made through NSF's travel agent.

Impact on meetings funded via a grant from NSF

Organizers of meetings funded via NSF grants or cooperative agreements that are scheduled to occur outside NSF through March 28, 2020, may wish to hold these meetings virtually or reschedule them for later dates, but they should also consult with their organizations for their organizational policies and practices. Individuals planning to attend these meetings should seek information from the meeting organizers, recognizing that it may be a few days before organizers have had an opportunity to assess the situation.

Coronavirus-related research

NSF recently released a Dear Colleague Letter ([NSF 20-052](#)) describing the agency's interest in proposals for rapid-response fundamental, non-medical, non-clinical-care research that can immediately explore how to model and understand the spread of COVID-19, inform and educate about the science of virus transmission and prevention, or encourage the development of processes and actions to address this global challenge. Prospective principal investigators should review this Dear Colleague Letter.

Additional Information

Additional information on NSF's response to the emergence of COVID-19 is on NSF's home page (<https://www.nsf.gov/>). Reviewers or principal investigators with specific questions should contact the cognizant NSF program officer for the pertinent program. Sponsored research offices with questions may wish to contact NSF's Division of Grants and Agreements. Contact information for NSF staff is on NSF's website.