National Science Foundation
COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

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Introduction
The National Science Foundation (NSF), along with the rest of the Federal Government, is committed to addressing essential work requirements consistent with best public health practices. The agency’s and Administration’s paramount concern is the health and safety of staff, on-site contractors, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce. As set forth in the January 20, 2021 Executive Order (EO) 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, the policy of the Administration is “to halt the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by relying on the best available data and science-based public health measures,” including taking a science-based and data-driven approach to safety in Federal workplaces.

In accordance with EO 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, NSF has developed this plan to delineate the safety measures it will follow to ensure the health and safety of its staff, contractors, and visitors to the greatest extent possible. This plan has been updated to comply with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-21-15, Safer Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles, (last updated September 13, 2021), OMB Memorandum M-21-25, Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Work Environment, the President’s Executive Order (EO) 14043, Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees, and EO 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors. The plan includes measures to protect health, such as requiring staff to be fully vaccinated, except in limited circumstances where a staff member is legally entitled to an exception; requiring the use of face masks by all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, during periods of high or substantial community transmission; limiting work-related travel for individuals who are not fully vaccinated; conducting contact tracing; and requiring symptom monitoring, isolation, and quarantine in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. The plan identifies the team responsible for monitoring and evaluating health and safety measures, and recommending changes as needed. The plan also includes measures aimed at promoting the safety of those working in and visiting the NSF building, physical distancing requirements, and guidance on hygiene and disinfecting shared equipment.

The guidance in this plan is reflected in the Workplace Safety: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted on InsideNSF. The FAQs will be updated whenever the guidance in this plan changes, and staff will be notified through the Weekly Wire and other means, as appropriate.

Goal
The health and safety of the NSF workforce and visitors is NSF’s highest priority. NSF leadership, in partnership with AFGE Local 3403, has worked to provide additional flexibilities for staff under NSF’s existing telework policy to address individual circumstances. In addition, NSF has established safety measures for fully vaccinated individuals and not fully vaccinated individuals, respectively, aligned to the latest guidance from the CDC and established public health best practices, based on evolving understanding of the pandemic. NSF will regularly monitor and reassess these measures to ensure the health and safety of its workforce and visitors to the greatest extent possible.

Vaccination
To ensure the safety of the Federal workforce and in compliance with EO 14043 and guidance
issued by the White House Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, all NSF staff, including Federal employees, Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignees, and Fellows, hereafter referred to collectively as “staff”), must be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021, except in limited circumstances where an individual is legally entitled to an exception. This applies to all staff whether they work in the NSF building or work offsite.

Staff are required to provide information and documentation of their vaccination status in the NSF Vaccination Status Reporting System. Staff must indicate the type of vaccine administered, the number of doses received, date of administration of each dose, and submit an approved form of required documentation, as set forth below. When providing this information, staff must certify under penalty of perjury that the information they are submitting is true and correct. Staff may provide a copy of the record of immunization from a health care provider or pharmacy, a copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, a copy of medical records documenting the vaccination, a copy of immunization records from a public health or state immunization information system, or a copy of any other official documentation containing required data points (the type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s)). Staff may provide a digital copy of such records, including, for example, a digital photograph, scanned image, or PDF of such a record that clearly and legibly displays the information outlined above. A recent antibody test cannot be used to prove vaccination status.

Individuals who start their government service after November 22, 2021, must be fully vaccinated prior to their start date, except in limited circumstances where an accommodation is legally required. However, should NSF have an urgent, mission-critical hiring need to onboard new staff prior to those new staff becoming fully vaccinated, the NSF Director may delay the vaccination requirement—in the case of such limited delays, NSF requires new hires to be fully vaccinated within 60 days of their start date and to follow safety protocols for not fully vaccinated individuals until they are fully vaccinated.

Staff are permitted to get required COVID-19 vaccination doses during duty time. Staff who receive the vaccine during duty time should not use administrative leave but should code the time spent getting the vaccine, including travel time, as regular hours in WebTA. Staff who do not receive the vaccine during their tour of duty must do so on their personal time.

Staff may take up to four hours to travel to the vaccination site, complete any vaccination dose, and return to work—for example, up to eight hours of duty time for staff receiving two doses. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the vaccine, only the needed amount of duty time will be granted. Staff who take longer than four hours must document the reasons for the additional time (e.g., they may need to travel long distances to get the vaccine). Reimbursement for reasonable transportation costs that are incurred as a result of obtaining the vaccine can be requested using Form 1164.

Staff may be granted up to four hours of administrative leave to receive any authorized COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, if they are eligible to receive such a booster shot. Similarly, staff may be granted up to four hours of administrative leave to receive any authorized additional dose of
COVID-19 vaccine. The administrative leave will cover the time it takes to travel to the vaccination site, receive the vaccination dose, and return to work.

If staff spend less time getting the vaccine booster shot or additional dose, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted. Staff should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before using administrative leave for purposes of obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot or additional dose. Staff may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent getting a booster vaccine shot or additional dose outside their tour of duty.

In the case of booster shots, this policy may be applied retroactively to the time when authorized booster shots became available (i.e., no earlier than September 22, 2021, when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) amended the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to allow for the use of a single booster dose). In the case of additional doses, this policy may be applied retroactively to the time when authorized additional doses became available (i.e., no earlier than August 12, 2021, when the FDA amended the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to allow for the use of an additional dose in certain immunocompromised individuals).

**Legally Required Exceptions**

There are two instances in which staff may request a legally required exception to the vaccination mandate—because of a medical disability or a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. Staff can submit requests for an exception at any time. Determining whether an exception is legally required will include consideration of factors such as the basis for the claim; the nature of the employee’s job responsibilities; and the reasonably foreseeable effects on the agency’s operations, including protecting other agency staff and the public from COVID-19. Because such assessments will be fact- and context-dependent, the Office of Equity and Civil Rights will consult the Office of the General Counsel on questions related to assessing and implementing any such requested accommodations.

NSF has provided forms for staff to use to request legally required exceptions. Staff should use the Vaccination Status Reporting System to request exceptions and submit their forms. The information on the forms will be used to help determine whether the employee is entitled to an accommodation. NSF may ask for other information as needed to determine if the individual is legally entitled to an accommodation. NSF has consulted with its Senior Agency Official for Privacy and the Office of the General Counsel to address all legal considerations and privacy requirements in developing its forms, including but not limited to an appropriate Privacy Act Statement. NSF will comply with any applicable recordkeeping and other requirements.

If the decision on a request for an exception is still pending on November 22, 2021, the enforcement process, if necessary, will not begin until after a decision on the exception is made. If an employee’s request for an exception is denied, following NSF’s established process for consideration and appeal, the employee must receive their first (or, if a one-dose series, only) dose within two weeks of the final determination to deny the accommodation. If receiving a two-dose series, the employee must receive the second dose within six weeks of receiving the first dose. If the employee received a first dose of a two-dose series prior to seeking an
accommodation, the employee must receive their second dose within two weeks of the final determination to deny the accommodation or within a week of the earliest day by which they can receive their second dose, whichever is later.

Extensions Due to Medical Circumstance that Necessitates Delay of Vaccination
Even in cases where the employee does not meet the legal definition of “disability” to be entitled to an accommodation under the Rehabilitation Act, in some limited circumstances NSF may grant an extension to a vaccination deadline based upon other medical considerations, for example in circumstances where the CDC recommends delaying vaccination for COVID-19 for adults. Staff should submit documentation of medical reasons that may not qualify as a disability but that necessitate a delay in vaccination to the Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR). Upon receipt of documentation, NSF will grant an extension, consistent with the nature of the medical necessity, and specify a new date by what date the individual must be fully vaccinated.

Enforcement
Federal employees
Federal employees who fail to comply with the requirement to be fully vaccinated or provide proof of vaccination and have neither received an exception nor have an exception request under consideration by November 22, 2021, have failed to follow instructions. Employees who fail to follow instructions are subject to discipline, up to and including termination or removal. Consistent with the Administration’s policy, NSF may initiate the following progressive discipline process:

- **Letter of Counseling.** Employees will be issued a Letter of Counseling and educational information on the vaccine to remind them of the vaccination requirement. Employees will be given five calendar days (not including holidays) to submit documentation establishing tangible action towards the completion of required vaccination dose(s) or to request a legally required exception.

- **Suspension.** If an employee fails to provide documentation showing tangible action taken towards completion of vaccination requirements within five calendar days after receiving the letter of counseling, the agency will initiate an action to suspend the employee from duty without pay.

- **Removal.** If an employee fails to comply with the vaccination requirement during the suspension period, an action to remove the employee from NSF and the Federal service will be initiated.

IPAs and Fellows
IPAs and Fellows who fail to comply with the requirement to be fully vaccinated or provide proof of vaccination and have neither received an exception nor have an exception request under consideration by November 22, 2021, are in violation of their assignment agreement. Therefore, NSF may initiate the following enforcement process:

- **Letter of Counseling.** IPAs and Fellows will be issued a Letter of Counseling and educational information on the vaccine to remind them of the vaccination requirement.
IPAs and Fellows will be given five calendar days (not including holidays) to submit documentation establishing tangible action towards the completion of required vaccination dose(s) or to request a legally required exception.

- **Termination of IPA or Fellow agreement.** If an IPA or Fellow fails to provide documentation showing tangible action taken towards completion of vaccination requirements within five calendar days after receiving the letter of counseling, the agency will issue a notice to the IPA or Fellow that their agreement will be terminated within 75 calendar days. NSF will also notify the IPA’s home institution or the Fellow’s sponsoring organization.

At any point during the enforcement process, an individual, including Federal employees, IPAs, or Fellows, may provide documentation of actions taken to meet the vaccination requirement, such as scheduling an appointment or receiving a first vaccine dose, in which case any enforcement action will be held in abeyance contingent on the employee’s continued actions to meet the vaccination requirement. NSF will follow all negotiated and administrative grievance processes and adhere to the agency’s disciplinary policies in the Personnel Manual (PER) and Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

In requesting vaccination information and exception requests from staff, NSF has complied with applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act, and applicable collective bargaining obligations. NSF has consulted with its Agency Records Officer, Chief Information Officer, and Senior Agency Official for Privacy to determine the best means to maintain this information to meet NSF’s needs. Employees’ vaccination information is securely maintained and is not maintained in the electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF). Access is limited to a small number of individuals who have a need to know. Staff should not send their vaccination documentation or requests for exceptions to anyone in NSF, including themselves, via email.

**Definition of Fully Vaccinated**

For purposes of its safety protocols and consistent with CDC guidance, NSF considers staff, onsite contractor employees, and visitors [fully vaccinated](#) for COVID-19 two weeks after they have received the requisite number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or that has been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization. For Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or AstraZeneca/Oxford, that is two weeks after an employee has received the second dose in a two-dose series. For Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen, that is two weeks after an employee has received a single dose. Clinical trial participants from a U.S. site who are documented to have received the full series of an “active” (not placebo) COVID-19 vaccine candidate, for which vaccine efficacy has been independently confirmed (e.g., by a data and safety monitoring board), are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they have completed the vaccine series. Currently, the U.S. based AstraZeneca and Novavax COVID-19 vaccines meet these criteria.

**Onsite Contractor Employees**

Onsite contractor employees who are not yet contractually required to be vaccinated will be
asked to have a completed Certification of Vaccination Form before entering the NSF building and carry it with them while in the building. NSF will not maintain Certification of Vaccination forms from contractor employees. Onsite contractor employees must attest to the truthfulness of the response they provide. NSF has complied with any applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act in requesting this information. Contractor employees who are not fully vaccinated, decline to provide their vaccination status, or decline to complete a Certification of Vaccination Form must be able to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result within the past three days. The test result must be from an FDA-approved test and display the individual’s name and the date of the test. Contractor employees who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to enter the NSF building. Contractor employees who are not fully vaccinated, or who choose not to provide vaccine information are required to comply with CDC and agency guidance for not fully vaccinated individuals, including wearing masks regardless of the transmission rate in a given area and physical distancing.

**Visitors**

Visitors will be allowed to enter the building on a limited basis in support of mission need during business hours only, 7:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Visitors must be able to present a completed Certification of Vaccination Form and carry it with them while in the building. NSF will not maintain Certification of Vaccination forms from visitors. Visitors who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide their vaccination status must be able to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result within the past three days while in an NSF building. The test results must be from an FDA-approved test and display the individual’s name and the date of the test. Visitors who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to enter the NSF building. Visitors who are not fully vaccinated or who choose not to provide vaccination information are required to comply with CDC and NSF guidance for not fully vaccinated individuals, including wearing masks regardless of the transmission rate in a given area and physical distancing. NSF hosts should notify their visitors of these requirements prior to their arrival on site.

NSF hosts are responsible for ensuring their visitors follow mask and physical distancing guidelines while in the NSF building.

If access is needed for a visitor (i.e., someone without an active PIV card -- former employee, vendor, visitor) the Directorate/Office point of contact or organizational sponsor should submit the visitor information into the Visitor Access System (VACS) with at least 24-hours advance notice. Further, the sponsor should act as the visitor escort or assign someone in the organization as the escort. At this time, the Visitor Center is not open so visitors will be processed at the front entrance guard post.

**COVID-19 Coordination Team**

The members of NSF’s COVID-19 Coordination Team include:

- Division Director, Division of Institution and Award Support
- Deputy Assistant Director, Directorate for Engineering
• Chief Acquisition Officer and Division Director, Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support
• Deputy Office Head, Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management
• Deputy Office Head, Office of Information and Resource Management (chair)
• Deputy Division Director, Division of Information Systems
• Deputy Office Head, Office of International Science and Engineering
• Deputy Office Head, Office of Equity and Civil Rights
• Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
• Deputy Division Director, Division of Human Resource Management
• Division Director, Division of Administrative Services

The COVID-19 Coordination Team currently meets on a biweekly basis, or more frequently as needed, to review compliance with agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, consider potential revisions to agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols pursuant to guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force and current CDC guidelines, and evaluate any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team Sub-Group provides research, justification, information, plans, and options for developing and proposes COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols to the COVID-19 Coordination Team. COVID-19 Coordination Team Sub-Group members include:

• Deputy Division Director, Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support
• Safety and Occupational Health Manager
• Human Resource Specialist, Pay and Benefits Branch
• Branch Chief, Workforce Relations Branch
• Deputy Division Director, Division of Information Systems
• Deputy Division Director, Division of Administrative Services
• Deputy Division Director, Division of Financial Management
• Directorate Liaison Group Member
• Head, Facilities Management Section
• Communications Officer, Office of Information and Resource Management
• Directorate Liaison Group Member
• President, Local 3403, American Federation of Government Employees
• Division Director, Division of Administrative Services (chair)
• Branch Chief, Facilities and Operations Branch
• Deputy Division Director, Division of Institution and Award Support

The COVID-19 Coordination Team coordinates with the General Services Administration, where appropriate, and the lessor’s designated representative.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team provides recommendations to Head of the Office of Information and Resource Management, and Chief Operating Officer, for final decision. Staff
may submit questions and concerns regarding COVID-19 workplace safety to covid-concerns@nsf.gov. Please note, this mailbox is not anonymous.

**Face Masks and Physical Distancing**
Individuals—including staff, onsite contractor employees, and visitors—who are not fully vaccinated, or who have declined to provide their vaccination information when requested, must maintain a distance of at least six feet from others at all times, consistent with CDC guidelines, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and work spaces and properly wear a mask regardless of community transmission level, consistent with CDC guidelines. **Consistent with CDC guidance**, those who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during outdoor activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

During periods of high or substantial transmission in the local area, fully vaccinated people must wear a mask in indoor settings, except for limited exceptions outlined below, including in offices, conference rooms, and all other communal and work spaces.

During periods of low or moderate transmission, in most settings, fully vaccinated people generally do not need to wear a mask or physically distance in the NSF building, except where required by Federal, State, or local laws, rules, or regulations. Individuals who are fully vaccinated can wear a mask during periods of low or moderate transmission if they so choose.

Requirements for face masks for fully vaccinated individuals based on local transmission rates will be determined as indicated in the Levels of Community Transmission section below and posted at building entrances, throughout the building and on NSF.gov.

Masks must cover the nose and mouth and be in accordance with current CDC guidance. CDC recommends the following: disposable masks, masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), masks with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets. Novelty/non-protective masks, masks with ventilation valves, or face shields as a substitute for masks are not permitted.

Disposable masks are available upon entry at guard stations for use by individuals who do not have a mask. Reusable cloth masks are available for staff and contractors at the mailroom window on the first floor, east wing. Up to two reusable masks per person will be distributed.

Individuals who are required to wear masks must wear them at all times in the building with the following exceptions: (1) when an individual is actively eating or drinking while maintaining physical distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines or (2) when an individual is alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door. Masks must be worn by individuals in workstations.

Individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.
Individuals for whom wearing a mask raises a disability or religious issue can submit requests for accommodations along with required documentation to the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at rarequest@nsf.gov. Contractor employees who require a reasonable accommodation should contact their supervisors and request that the supervisor discuss the need with their contracting officer.

If an employee who is required to wear a mask is not eligible for an accommodation and is not wearing a mask, the employee will be reminded to wear a mask in accordance with Federal government-wide policy requiring mask-wearing in Federal buildings. If the employee refuses, they will be reported to their supervisor, and may be barred from the building for the safety of others while appropriate disciplinary measures are considered.

**Elevators**

When physical distancing is required due to an individual’s vaccination status, personnel should use the physical markings on the floor in elevator lobbies to maintain a distance of six feet. Based on a space assessment of the elevators in the NSF building, the physical distancing limit is two passengers per car to allow distancing at opposite corners of elevator cars. Individuals should follow the masking guidance for their vaccination status and the current level of community transmission. Posted signage explains current procedures.

**Levels of Community Transmission**

NSF assesses community transmission rates for COVID-19 in all counties within a 25-mile radius of NSF headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia weekly to determine proper safety protocols consistent with CDC guidelines and guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, such as mask-wearing requirements. NSF references CDC’s [COVID Data Tracker County View](https://data.cdc.gov/pf/covid-data-tracker-county-view) to determine community transmission rates.

When the level of transmission in any county or locality within a 25-mile radius of Alexandria, Virginia increases from low or moderate to substantial or high, NSF will implement more protective safety protocols consistent with CDC guidelines and guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, such as updating its masking guidance to require all individuals to wear masks inside the building, as soon as operationally feasible. When the level of transmission in all counties or localities within a 25-mile radius of Alexandria, Virginia is reduced from high or substantial to moderate or low, the level of transmission must remain at that lower level for at least two consecutive weeks before NSF will revise its safety protocols, such as masking, to those recommended for areas of moderate or low transmission by CDC guidelines and guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. If the City of Alexandria imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements, those requirements will be followed by NSF staff and onsite contractor employees, in the NSF building.

**Telework**

NSF leadership, in partnership with AFGE Local 3403, has worked to provide additional flexibilities for staff under NSF’s existing telework policy to address individual circumstances. Staff should consult with their supervisors to discuss their individual situations and the flexibilities available to them.
Contact Tracing
The NSF Safety and Occupational Health Manager, in coordination with the COVID-19 Coordination Team, will collaborate with and support the contact tracing programs of State and local health departments to help identify, track, and manage contacts of COVID-19 cases. The Safety and Occupational Health Manager will engage in coordination with facilities staff to implement infection control and workplace safety efforts once informed of a case of COVID-19 (either due to specific symptoms or positive test).

The Safety and Occupational Health Manager will make disclosures to State and local public health officials as required or necessary to provide for the public health and safety of staff and contractors, in accordance with local public health mandates. If COVID-19 cases occur within NSF headquarters, the Safety and Occupational Health Manager will recommend—in consultation with local public health officials—appropriate next steps.

In accordance with OSHA’s recordkeeping requirements, if an employee tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection, NSF will record the case on the OSHA Illness and Injury Log if each of the following conditions are met: (1) the case is a confirmed case of COVID-19; (2) the case is work-related (as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5); and (3) the case involves one or more relevant recording criteria (set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7) (e.g., medical treatment beyond first aid, days away from work). NSF also follows state and county reporting requirements.

NSF will notify staff and contractors of positive COVID-19 cases if the individual has been in the building within the past seven days and consistent with local and Federal privacy and confidentiality regulations and laws. In all cases, NSF will conduct sanitization and contact tracing as needed.

Travel
There are no NSF COVID-19 restrictions on official travel for individuals who are fully vaccinated. Staff who are fully vaccinated do not need to get tested before or after domestic travel or self-quarantine after travel, unless required by their destination. However, all air passengers coming to the United States from abroad, including NSF staff who are fully vaccinated, are required to have a negative SARS-CoV-2 viral test result no more than three days before the flight to the United States departs or must show documentation of recovery from COVID-19 within the previous 90 days before they board a flight to the United States. Fully vaccinated travelers traveling abroad should get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after traveling; self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; if symptoms develop, isolate and get tested; and follow all recommendations or requirements of their local U.S. destination after travel.

Official travel for individuals who are not fully vaccinated is limited to mission-essential travel only unless it is contrary to a reasonable accommodation to which an employee is legally entitled. Mission-essential travel must be authorized by the cognizant Assistant Director/Deputy Assistant Director/Office Head/Deputy Office Head following the guidance in OD 20-06 and stated below:

- Is the purpose of travel to perform essential duties related to the protection of life and property?
- Is the purpose of travel to ensure ongoing functioning of NSF-funded major facilities?
• Is the travel time-sensitive or can it be performed at a later date?
• Can the events associated with travel be conducted by phone or video conference?
• What is the duration of the proposed travel?

All requests and decisions must be documented. All travelers must sign and attach a COVID-19 Travel Guidance Notification Form when submitting their travel authorization in Concur.

All travelers should adhere strictly to CDC guidelines before, during, and after travel. All travelers, including NSF staff who are fully vaccinated, should take health and safety precautions and self-monitor for symptoms. All travelers are required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth on all planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while indoors in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and indoor train stations. Travelers are not required to wear a mask in outdoor areas of a conveyance (like a ferry deck, outdoor train station, or an unenclosed top deck of a bus). The CDC has extensive guidelines for both domestic and international travel, and Federal workers should consult these resources carefully before traveling. Additional resources for official travel can be found on the GSA COVID-19 Information site and the CDC Travel site.

An individual who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during or upon returning from travel should isolate following CDC guidance and notify their supervisor immediately. If the individual was in the NSF building in the past seven days, they or their supervisor should notify the Safety and Occupational Health Manager, Barry Carlisle, at safety@nsf.gov as soon as possible.

Personnel who are not fully vaccinated and may have been exposed to COVID-19 during travel but have not been tested and are asymptomatic should self-quarantine in accordance with CDC guidance, which is currently for ten days without testing and if no symptoms are reported during daily monitoring, or seven days if a diagnostic specimen tests negative and no symptoms are reported during daily monitoring.

**Testing**
Federal employees who have been exposed to persons with COVID-19 at work will receive diagnostic testing at no cost to the employee. Individuals should obtain a COVID-19 test from their healthcare provider, local pharmacy or local testing site and use Form 1164 to request reimbursement for any associated expenses.

The cost of testing for current infection with SARS-CoV-2, required for official travel and not covered (or reimbursable) through travel insurance, can be claimed in a travel voucher as a Miscellaneous Expense.

NSF will be establishing a screening testing program for individuals with approved exceptions, consistent with forthcoming guidance on agency screening testing programs from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. Further information will be provided when NSF’s screening testing program is established.
In consultation with NSF’s Agency Records Officer, Chief Information Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Senior Agency Official for Privacy, and Office of the General Counsel, NSF has established protocols for managing COVID test results that promote privacy and IT security, while also providing the relevant information to agency officials who need to know in order to implement safety protocols.

Symptom Monitoring
Staff, contractors, and visitors who do not feel well will not be permitted to enter NSF headquarters. Only staff, contractors, and visitors who answer “no” to the following screening questions, which are posted at the entrance to the building, will be permitted access.

Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact (six feet or closer for a cumulative total of 15 minutes) with:

- Anyone who is known to have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19?
  OR
- Anyone who has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

Are you isolating or quarantining because you tested positive for COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19?

Are you currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test?

Individuals who answer “yes” to any of these questions are instructed that they may be at increased risk of COVID-19, and they should leave the building, return home, and contact their primary care provider and supervisor.

Any individual, regardless of vaccination status, who develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the workday must immediately isolate, wear a mask (if the individual is not already doing so and one is available), notify their supervisor, and promptly leave the workplace. The individual or their supervisor should notify the Safety and Occupational Health Manager, Barry Carlisle, at safety@nsf.gov, as soon as possible.
Supervisors should contact the Pay and Benefits Services Branch in the Division of Human Resource Management if they have questions regarding staff who have to stay out of the workplace or leave the workplace during the workday due to COVID-19 symptoms.

**Quarantine and Isolation**
Any individual with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 should isolate, pursuant to [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/when-you-should-stay-home.html), and in compliance with State and local laws/regulations. Personnel who are not fully vaccinated and who have had a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should follow CDC and State and local guidance for quarantine. Personnel who are fully vaccinated and have had close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should get tested 5-7 days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms. These individuals should also wear a mask indoors and in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative. If their test result is positive, they should isolate for 10 days.

**Confidentiality**
All medical information collected from personnel, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable law and policies on confidentiality and privacy, and accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of personnel. NSF consults, as appropriate, with its Agency Records Officer, Chief Information Officer, Senior Agency Official for Privacy, and Office of the General Counsel to determine appropriate information management protocols. Staff should contact the Division of Human Resource Management for all questions relating to personal medical data.

**Leave**

*Leave for vaccination side effects*
Staff may be granted up to 2 workdays of administrative leave if they have an adverse reaction to any COVID-19 vaccination dose that prevents them from working (i.e., no more than two workdays for reactions associated with a single dose). Staff may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence.

*Leave to accompany a family member being vaccinated*
Staff may be granted up to 4 hours of administrative leave per dose to accompany a family member (as defined in OPM’s leave regulations, see 5 CFR 630.201) who is receiving any COVID-19 vaccination dose. If an employee needs to spend less time accompanying a family member who is receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, they should only be granted the needed amount of administrative leave. Staff should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before being permitted to use administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccination purposes. Staff will not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent outside their tour of duty helping a family member get vaccinated. This policy applies to covered vaccinations received after July 29, 2021.

*Leave related to quarantine*
Staff should be aware that official or personal travel may result in a mandatory quarantine before they are allowed to return to the workplace. If quarantine is required because of official travel or workplace exposure, the employee should telework if they are able to safely do so. If the
employee is unable to telework, they may use weather and safety leave. If quarantine is required because of personal travel, and the employee is otherwise expected to be present onsite, the employee may take personal leave while quarantining. If an employee refuses to quarantine or refuses to take personal leave while under mandatory quarantine after personal travel, NSF may elect to bar the employee from the workplace for the safety of others. If NSF bars the employee from the workplace, the employee will be placed on administrative leave until the agency promptly determines what status the employee should be placed in while on quarantine.

Leave related to isolation due to SARS-CoV-2 infection
If an employee is subject to isolation due to being infected with COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee may request sick leave, as weather and safety leave would be unavailable. Staff may also request accrued annual leave and other forms of paid or unpaid leave in this situation as appropriate. (See OPM CPM 2020-02, February 7, 2020). If an employee is on official government travel and gets infected with COVID-19, it is considered a workplace exposure; therefore, the employee should telework if they are able to safely do so, otherwise, they may use weather and safety leave.

Occupancy
There is currently no building occupancy limit for NSF headquarters. The occupancy limit for standard-size workspaces, team rooms, meeting rooms, and directorate conference rooms when physical distancing is required is indicated in the Meetings section below.

Meetings
All NSF-sponsored meetings must be conducted virtually until NSF begins reentry.

After reentry begins, any NSF-sponsored in-person meeting, conference, or event held at any location with more than 50 participants must be approved by the NSF Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the agency’s COVID-19 Coordination Team. The NSF sponsor of the event should submit a request through their Assistant Director to the COVID-19 Coordination Team at covid-concerns@nsf.gov. The request should include the name, dates and location of the event, the expected number of participants, the NSF sponsor, and a justification for holding the event. Requests should allow 15 business days for review.

Meetings of NSF staff
After reentry begins, all meetings of NSF staff must have a virtual meeting platform option, such as Teams or Zoom.

All in-person meeting participants must follow the masking and physical distancing guidance in the Face Masks and Physical Distancing section above. The occupancy limit for standard-size workspaces, team rooms, and directorate conference rooms when physical distancing is required are as follows:

- Workstations – 1 (in some cases, alternating occupancy may be required to ensure physical distancing)
- 100-square-foot (SF) Offices – 2
- 120-SF Offices – 2
• 180-SF Offices – 3
• Team Rooms – 2-3, depending on room size (capacities listed outside of each room)
• OAD Conference Rooms – 6
• Directorate Conference Rooms – 8

Meeting room capacities for both when physical distancing is required and when it is not will be listed in the Conference Room Scheduler and posted outside of each room.

Meetings with external participants
In-person external attendees at any meetings, conferences, or events hosted by NSF and held at NSF headquarters, regardless of event size, will be required to follow the procedures in the Visitors section above. NSF sponsors should notify in-person attendees of these requirements prior to their arrival on site.

NSF sponsors of in-person meetings, conferences or events with external attendees held at a location other than NSF headquarters must require each external attendee to present a completed Certification of Vaccination Form for visual review by the NSF sponsor. External attendees who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide their vaccination status must be able to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result within the past three days to the NSF sponsor. (NSF sponsors should not collect Certification of Vaccination Forms or COVID-19 test results from attendees.) The test results must be from an FDA-approved test and display the individual’s name and the date of the test. Attendees who are unvaccinated, are not fully vaccinated, or who choose not to provide vaccination status must comply with masking and physical distancing requirements for individuals who are not fully vaccinated consistent with CDC and agency requirements. All in-person attendees in areas of high or substantial transmission must wear a mask in public indoor settings regardless of vaccination status. Where a locality imposes more protective pandemic-related safety requirements, those requirements must be followed by in-person attendees. NSF sponsors should notify in-person attendees of these requirements prior to their arrival at the meeting.

Environmental Cleaning
Enhanced cleaning is performed in all common use/high touch/high density spaces throughout the building (e.g., lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells) five times a day. In the main lobby of the building, enhanced cleaning is performed 12 times a day. Office space that is in regular use is cleaned regularly, and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Wipes, gloves, and other EPA-approved disinfectants are available in locations providing on-site services. Physical barriers such as plexiglass shields have been installed where appropriate.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the building (if the individual has been in the building up to seven days prior), enhanced environmental cleaning will be performed in the spaces that the individual occupied or accessed in accordance with CDC and GSA guidance.

• If fewer than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, the space will be cleaned and disinfected.
• If more than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, the space will be cleaned.
• If more than 3 days have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

If such enhanced cleaning is required, NSF will wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before cleaning or disinfecting. Personnel and visitors may be asked to vacate the affected space until cleaning or disinfection is completed. The Division of Administrative Services will determine the appropriate scope of workspace closures.

NSF will notify staff and contractors of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases whenever the individual has been in the building within the past seven days. Suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases should be reported to the Safety and Occupational Health Manager, Barry Carlisle, at safety@nsf.gov, as soon as possible.

Hygiene
Hand sanitizer stations are available at the building entrances and throughout workspaces, and contain FDA-approved hand sanitizer, with at least 60% ethanol and manufactured in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). NSF has ensured the hand sanitizer is not on the FDA’s do not use list. Stations are replenished throughout the day. Individuals who find a station needing to be resupplied should contact BuildingServices@nsf.gov.

Personnel are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently, particularly after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after being in a public place or shared space.

Ventilation and Air Filtration
Based upon currently available information and guidance from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, the NSF facility was built with an HVAC system that implements best practices for fresh air, temperature, and humidity to control infectious disease. The facility design incorporates the recommended high-efficiency filtration level, has over double the recommended outside air volume, and uses MERV 13 filters.

NSF has worked with building engineers to maximize ventilation in the building. The fans are kept running 24/7 for continuous exchange of air.

NSF will continue to review available options for further improvements.

Shared Spaces
Shared tools and equipment must be disinfected by users anytime the equipment is used by or transferred to a new person. Standard operating procedures for disinfecting shared tools and equipment before transferring them to a new person have been developed, and staff who work in spaces where such transfers occur have been trained on using them. This includes phones, computers, and other communication devices; kitchen implements; and other office equipment. Refrigerators, water coolers, and coffee brewers with disposable cups (or a personal re-usable
cup/container) and single serve condiments and creamers may be used with proper hand hygiene. NSF will provide disinfectant wipes in locations providing on-site services.

Installed visual markers will promote physical distancing within common spaces, and furniture will be removed as needed. Posted signage will outline the number of people who can use common spaces at any one time.

Occupancy guidance for physically distancing in shared spaces, such as pantries and restrooms, is posted at the entrance to each space.

Collective Bargaining
Consistent with President Biden’s policy to support collective bargaining, NSF works to satisfy applicable collective bargaining obligations under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 when implementing workplace safety plans. There may be collective bargaining obligations over the impact and implementation of the Agency Model Safety Principles and CDC guidelines. NSF will promptly notify AFGE Local 3403 of the actions it intends to take to require compliance with CDC guidelines providing a meaningful opportunity for AFGE Local 3403 to consult, as appropriate, as provided in Section 2(c) of EO 13991. NSF will provide draft plans to AFGE Local 3403 in order to provide a meaningful opportunity for the union to consult.

Implementation of Safer Federal Workforce Task Force principles and guidelines is essential to protect the health and safety of NSF staff, onsite contractor employees, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce in Federal buildings, in federally controlled worksites, and on Federal lands. They constitute Government-wide policy that is in effect for employees subject to the requirements of Executive Order 13991 and Executive Order 14043. Since agencies need to act quickly due to the COVID-19 emergency and to protect the health and safety of employees, contractor employees, and visitors, NSF begins communicating with AFGE Local 3403 as soon as possible and otherwise satisfy any applicable collective bargaining obligations under the law at the earliest opportunity. NSF consults with the Division of Human Resource Management and Office of General Counsel to determine appropriate labor relations obligations.