

FEDERAL WORKERS ALLIANCE

COLLECTIVELY REPRESENTING OVER 300,000 FEDERAL WORKERS

June 1, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

The undersigned unions of the Federal Workers Alliance (FWA), representing upwards of 300,000 federal workers, are writing regarding the government's response to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, and its responsibilities to the safety of the civil service professionals who work on behalf of all Americans.

As agencies prepare to recall workers back into offices and other workstations, and necessarily back onto public transportation, into cities, and onto roads, the undersigned organizations strongly urge the federal government to prioritize the safety and security of its workers.

First and foremost, in localities where local and state authorities are responding to discreet outbreaks and higher threats to public health, the federal government must allow employees to continue sheltering in place, and working from home, unless and until it is safe to return to the office. Failure to adhere to local and state guidance will exacerbate this worldwide pandemic and all but ensure that its deleterious effects linger for months and years to come.

In jurisdictions where local authorities have begun a phased "re-opening" agencies must ensure full protections are implemented before re-opening their worksites and be flexible in allowing federal employees to develop a schedule that both meets the essential elements of their mission but also protects the health of the workers, and their families – many of whom will lack childcare options for the foreseeable future.

For worksites to be deemed safe to return, by scientifically qualified public health professionals, the undersigned unions of the FWA demand the federal government implement the following for federal employees as well as all contractors at the worksite:

- (1) Liberal accommodations must be made for employees with preexisting conditions that make them, and their families, more susceptible to COVID-19.
- (2) Engineering controls and work practice controls, such as negative pressure rooms, barriers, and work schedule changes must be implemented to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19.
- (3) All individuals present in the worksite should be expected to wear masks to reduce the possible spread of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets.

- (4) Personal protective equipment (PPE), including respirators, gloves, and other PPE, must be provided at the worksite, and worn by employees to lessen the chance of transmission at the worksite, where engineering and other controls have not fully reduced the risk of transmission. For nurses and other healthcare workers caring for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients, PPE should include a powered air-purifying respirator and coveralls that include a head and shoe covering, and gloves.
- (5) Hand washing and sanitizing stations must be provided, as well as time in the day for workers to sanitize their work areas and any parts of which that are available to the public.
- (6) Assign and ensure that all shared / common areas and equipment are sanitized at regular intervals by personnel qualified and trained in disinfection of COVID-19.
- (7) On-demand testing for employees who suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19 must be offered. The most reliable tests available should be used.
- (8) Administrative leave must be granted for employees who suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19, to ensure that employees are not pressured into coming to the worksite while they suspect they may be infected.
- (9) Immediate and thorough notice to be provided to employees at worksites where a person who has been suspected of having COVID-19 was present. This notice should include, at minimum, information about the time, location, duration, and nature of the possible exposures. Weekly or regular updates on suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases at worksites to be provided to employees' unions.
- (10) Administrative leave be granted, and flexibility ensured (i.e.: telework), for all employees who suspect they have been exposed to the virus, and for employees who have previously tested positive who are volunteering to donate plasma or data to the CDC and other scientific organizations that are working on solving the COVID crisis
- (11) Agree to pre-implementation negotiations with unions when collectively bargained agreements do not provide for necessary return to work protocols.

The safety of federal workers directly impacts the safety of all Americans. We share in your desire to resume the vital work of federal employees as soon as it can be responsibly achieved, and we hope you recognize that it is paramount that workers be protected while performing their duties. We must insist that you take these reasonable actions to ensure their safety. Anything less will put hundreds of thousands of dedicated federal employees, their families, and the Americans they serve, in unnecessary danger.

If you have any questions, contact FWA legislative co-chairs Matt Biggs at (202) 239-4880 or Steve Lenkart at (202) 216-4458.

Sincerely,

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO (AFT)
Antilles Consolidated Education Association (ACEA)
Federal Education Association/National Education Association (FEA/NEA)
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (MM&P)
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA)
Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO (MTD)
National Association of Government Employees, SEIU (NAGE)
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National Nurses United (NNU)
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)
Overseas Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS)
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)
Seafarers International Union/NMU (SIU)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART)
SPORT Air Traffic Controllers Organization (SATCO)
United Power Trades Organization (UPTO)