

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

Agency Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions Relating to Research Awards

The University continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) outbreak. The University maintains a [website](#) to provide students, faculty, and staff with updates about the virus and the impact to University operations.

This page is designed to provide timely information regarding the impact to sponsored projects at the University.

If you have a question that is not addressed on this page, please email TK Keith at THOMAS.KEITHIII@CUANSCHUTZ.EDU.

The Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) will utilize the email listserv to provide any time-sensitive information. To sign up for the listserv, please visit the [GC-UPDATES listserv page](#).

Federal Agency Guidance

Few federal awarding agencies have provided guidance on the impact to federal awards. This page will be updated as federal agencies release additional information.

Office of Management and Budget (Updated 3/11/2020)

- [M-20-11 Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants for Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released M-20-11, which enables federal awarding agencies to provide greater flexibility to recipients managing projects related to COVID-19 research. As of this time, these flexibilities **do not extend to other awards**.

National Science Foundation (Updated 3/9/2020)

- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) About the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) for National Science Foundation \(NSF\) Proposers and Awardees](#)

The NSF guidance provides answers related to NSF proposals and existing NSF Awards and about participation in NSF merit review panels. The NSF guidance does not alter existing policies for NSF proposals or awards. The guidance emphasizes the need for PIs to work closely with program officers at NSF if their research may be impacted by the outbreak.

The guidance states:

NSF is currently working internally as well as with our federal partners on a number of proposal and award-related issues pertaining to COVID-19. NSF will communicate with the community about these issues and will provide guidance as further information becomes available. **In the meantime, please continue to follow all relevant policies and procedures, including those of your organization, and apply those practices consistently.**

National Institutes of Health (Updated 3/11/2020)

The only guidance available to date --

- [NIH LATE APPLICATION POLICY Due to Public Health Emergency for United States for 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [NIH Guidance on Travel and Meetings](#)
- [NIH Extramural Response to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies](#)

- [General Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) – Proposal Submission and Award Management Related to COVID-19](#)

Important to note: The NIH guidance on late applications does not currently pertain to the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus. The late application policy is applicable only to applicants or recipient organizations that are officially closed or unable to submit grant applications.

The NIH Guidance on Travel and Meetings encourages individuals to take adequate precautions to protect their health and safety. The guidance also encourages reconsideration of in-person conferences or large meetings that are not mission critical.

The NIH Extramural Response to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies guidance identifies NIH procedures during emergencies, and currently only provides the Late Application Policy.

The General Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Proposal Submission and Award Management Related to COVID-19 provides general guidance to NIH recipients.

- NIH is encouraging all recipients that may have delayed financial, progress, or invention reports to promptly contact the NIH official. NIH will accept these late reports; however, grant awards will be delayed until NIH receives and accepts them.
- As of now, nonrefundable travel may not be charged to an award. NIH will provide further guidance as it becomes available.
- NIH does not directly address if travel and accommodations will be reimbursed. For now, University personal should follow the cost principles under section 7 of the [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#).

Frequently Asked Questions for Sponsored Project Administration

Travel

1. How does COVID-19 affect the University's travel policy?

The University published its most recent [travel policy update](#) on March 9, 2020. Effective immediately, all university-related travel – international and domestic – that is considered “nonessential” is stopped, regardless of the funding source. Essential travel requires approval by the administrative unit, dean, and the provost or applicable Vice Chancellor. If you have previously received approval and scheduled travel, you will still need to receive updated approval by your unit, dean, and the provost or applicable Vice Chancellor. Unit heads may impose more stringent travel restrictions.

2. I was planning grant-related travel, but the conference was cancelled due to precautions regarding COVID-19. May I still charge the travel-related costs to the grant?

To date, there is no federal guidance relating to charges to awards for non-refundable travel, conferences, and related expenses due to COVID-19. Costs charged to a federal award must adhere to the applicable cost principles, which require costs to be allowable, allocable, and necessary for an award. Charging cancellation costs to a federal award does not benefit the project; and, therefore, cannot be charged to a federal award without further guidance from the federal agency. For non-federal awards, be sure to follow the sponsor's policy.

3. What guidance does the Procurement Service Center (PSC) provide regarding travel?

The PSC's [Procedural Statement](#) on travel outlines the University's travel policies and procedures. Important considerations for travel include:

- Christopherson Business Travel does not cover trip cancellations. Departmental approval is required before trip insurance can be purchased.
- If cancellations are made by the airline, the airline will typically reimburse the airfare cost or allow the full value of the ticket to be used for future travel. Refunds would be applied to the speedtype that was used for the purchase.
- If the traveler initiates cancellation of the airfare, the value of the ticket (minus the change fee) will be available for future use. If the unused ticket is used for another individual, additional change fees may be applied. The recommendation is to wait as long as possible to cancel your airline ticket, as airlines may initiate cancellation and either refund the ticket or allow full value for future purchases.
- Hotels will typically allow for cancellation with no charge anywhere between 24 and 72 hours prior to the date/time of check-in. Please refer to the hotel's policy.
- If a conference has been cancelled, the conference may reimburse registration and conference hotel bookings. Airfare is typically not reimbursed by the conference and is the responsibility of the traveler to cancel.
- Refunds and change fees are airline-specific, and airlines are continually changing their policies. Please refer to the airline's most recent policy for guidance.

4. I need to purchase travel soon. What should I do?

The University has restricted all non-essential travel. Do not book any travel that is not essential to the project. For essential travel, do not purchase refundable fares unless the cost increase is less than \$200; this is the typical cancellation fee. Please be advised a number of airlines, including United, are waiving cancellation fees for travel through April 30, 2020. The full value of the ticket can then be used for any travel occurring within one year of the date of purchase. Please refer to, and carefully review, each airline's most recent policy before purchasing a ticket. Please work with your Department grant administrator and Office of Grants and Contracts to ensure costs are allocated appropriately.

5. I have a conference or travel award, but the conference has been canceled. What should I do?

You should contact the program officer as soon as possible to obtain guidance meeting the terms and conditions of your award.

6. Who should I contact if I do not know what to do?

Due to the nature of this situation, guidance is continually changing. Please reach out to your Post Award Specialist in the Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) for any assistance. If you have contacted your award's program officer at a federal agency, please ensure all communication is adequately documented and retained.

Personnel

7. Can an employee in self-isolation still charge time and effort to an award?

In general, yes, provided the employee remains engaged with the project work. Current prior approval requirements regarding disengagement and effort reductions remain in effect. For additional information, please review [2 CFR 200.308\(c\)\(iii\)](#).

8. Can an employee's sick leave be charged to an award?

Yes. Yes. Pursuant to the campus' indirect cost rate agreement with the federal government, sick leave and other paid absences that are permitted under University policy may be charged to the grant. Employees using sick leave must follow University policy.

9. Can charges related to telework, such as a laptop, be charged to an award if I am required to work from home?

Costs related to telework are generally considered indirect costs and may not be charged directly to a federal award unless specifically approved by the sponsor. You should discuss your telework needs with your manager.

Subrecipients

10. One of my subrecipients is at an organization that is closed. What impact will this have on my research?

Most federal research awards provide for a one-time no-cost extension (NCE) up to twelve months. This would be an acceptable programmatic justification for an NCE. Prior approval is required for any additional NCEs. Please contact your OGC Post Award Specialists if you have concerns about subrecipient performance. Current prior approval requirements regarding disengagement and effort reductions remain in effect. For additional information, please review [2 CFR 200.308\(c\)\(iii\)](#).

Proposal Deadlines

11. Will federal agencies provide an extension to proposal deadlines?

Current NIH guidance for COVID-19 only applies to organizations that are closed due to the outbreak. For now, you should plan on meeting all sponsor deadlines. If you have a specific situation, you may want to contact the program officer identified on the funding opportunity announcement.

Non-Federal Awards

12. I have an award from a non-federal sponsor (industry, association, state government, etc.). What should I do?

Each non-federal sponsor maintains its own policy and guidance. You should contact the sponsor directly for guidance. You are also encouraged to relay any information received from the non-federal sponsor to your OGC Post Award Specialist.