

From: FSIS User Information – FSIS
To: FSIS - All FSIS Employees
Date: Tue 5/19/2020 11:55 AM
Subject: Reopening USDA

The following message is being transmitted to you as a Departmental Administration (DA) service to all USDA employees.

Supervisors should make a copy of this email available to inspection personnel without Outlook accounts.

******* Please do not respond to this mailbox. Thank you. *******

Hello fellow USDA colleagues,

I'm incredibly proud of your efforts over the past few months to continue our critical mission to "Do Right and Feed Everyone." The resiliency and adaptability you've shown during this time has not gone unnoticed. The American people are expecting all of us at USDA to keep delivering our services, and you've made sure we have not let them down – even while we've been apart.

Our decision in the week of March 16, 2020 to move to maximum telework was to preserve the health of employees, support the national effort to flatten the curve, and reduce the impacts of COVID-19. This is succeeding thanks to your efforts to protect yourself, your colleagues, and your community and keep it as safe as possible for those who still must be on the frontlines performing mission-essential work. But even as we have been committed to these efforts, we recognize there are still questions and concerns regarding the status of USDA facilities as discussions nationwide turn to reopening the country.

We have worked hard to balance delivery of our services with protection of our employees, keeping your safety and health as our number one priority. Over the past few weeks, USDA has continued to analyze how to keep employees safe as we examine what reopening our offices and facilities would look like.

As such, we created USDA's Reopening Playbook as a framework to guide how Mission Areas, Agencies, and Offices must analyze, sequence, and implement decisions on reopening. This playbook is a three-phased approach based on the advice of public health experts and guidance contained in the White House's recently issued [Opening Up America Again](#) and the [Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-20-23: Aligning Federal Agency Operations with the National Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#). USDA's Reopening Playbook provides guidance on how Mission Areas, Agencies, and Offices can utilize data to drive decisions that enable employees to gradually, effectively, and safely return to their respective onsite functions.

Attached is a summary of the playbook with information on what you may expect in each phase and what is guiding your leadership's decisions on reopening. Mission Areas, Agencies, and Offices are required to consider many factors such as prevalence of COVID-19 in the community, decisions of state and local health officials, physical layouts of facilities, and the business need to return to the office.

Leadership has also been asked to take into account school closings and elder care, as well as health conditions that qualify employees as high-risk. Because this will be different for every community and every state, we wanted to provide a framework so your Mission Area, Agency, or Office can make data-driven decisions that make sense for you and your facility.

I want to assure you that reopening will not happen overnight, nor will it happen at the same time and in the same way for every facility across the country. Employees should continue to telework until you have been notified otherwise by your leadership and supervisors. Mission Area, Agency, and Office leadership will be in touch when your facility is ready to begin the reopening process.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your supervisor and stay tuned for updates from your Mission Area, Agency, or Office. There is still more hard work to be done, and we are still relying on your dedication to your work and your OneUSDA family.

Thank you,

Deputy Secretary Censky

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