



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

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Federal Employees' Union Seeks Real Answers on Trump Administration's Coronavirus Preparedness and Response for the Federal Workforce

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) responds to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidance released yesterday to federal agencies regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19) preparedness for the federal workforce and the continuity of operations during an outbreak. Numerous questions remain unanswered concerning the future of the Coronavirus in the United States, and this uncertainty is causing considerable anxiety among federal workers, many of whom are particularly vulnerable to Coronavirus exposure because their jobs require direct contact with the public or work in close proximity to others in an environment where illness can spread rapidly.

“Federal employees are working on the front lines every day, many of them directly interacting with the traveling global population,” stated Randy Erwin, NFFE National President. “While we appreciate yesterday’s guidance from the Trump Administration, OPM’s general statements on workplace flexibilities and self-quarantine are wholly inadequate. We need clear guidance on how agencies are to manage their workforce and perform their mission if the Coronavirus pandemic worsens as expected in this country.”

The [OPM guidance](#) released on March 3rd encourages agencies to review continuity of operations plans, such as telework policies, and it offers guidance on visitor access, travel, and symptoms of illness. NFFE seeks more information on protocols related to prophylaxis medicines and equipment, procedural adjustments for physical interaction with the public beyond visitors’ centers, direction regarding potential workforce disruptions, the use of administrative time to encourage home quarantine for higher risk employees, how and when protective equipment will be distributed, and more.

“The time to start answering these questions is now, not after the pandemic takes full hold here in the U.S. By then, it will be too late,” continued Erwin. “History tells us that limited guidance to departments and agencies often backfires because guidance is embraced inconsistently from agency to agency and location to location. That inconsistency can cause problems in and of itself. The Trump Administration must get specific and issue detailed plans explaining how it will keep the government running and keep federal employees safe. It is time for the Trump Administration to provide real answers.”

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Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide.

NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO.

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