

FSA Modified Workflow Field Guide During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) National Emergency

**Field Version 17
May 19, 2021**

Seek information from your immediate supervisor and/or the MyFPAC website for the latest guidance.

For internal FSA use only. Not for distribution.

Version updates found in FSA's Modified Workflow Field Guide (MWFG) v17

Reasons for update:

Updated Section 1 to include link to Emergency Operations Branch COVID-19 page.

Note: Page titles in the Table of Contents are clickable hyperlinks to the content.

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Introduction

1 General Guidance

As a mission-critical agency, FSA will continue to support America's farmers through its vital work on maintaining the integrity of the US food supply. While we may face many challenges with our current work environment, FSA will continue to provide support while prioritizing the safety of our producers and employees.

A USDA Workforce Safety Plan

The [USDA COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#) is a guide to how mission areas, agencies, and staff offices are to implement public health best practices as determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This document replaces all previous guidance.

B FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan

The FPAC COVID Workforce Safety plan provides agency guidance and standard operating procedure on health, safety, and workplace operations. Please access the most current version of the plan at [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Standard Operating Procedures](#).

Items that were previously covered in this guide that will now be maintained by the safety plan include, but may not be limited to:

- Staffing
- Physical Distancing
- Face coverings and PPE
- Visitors
- Travel
- Cleaning
- Signage
- Telework
- Exposure Matrix

Please contact Cherie Moore or Ryan Lukassen for questions or comments on this guide.

C Internal Links

- MyFPAC: <http://myfpac.usda.gov>
- DAFO PPOD SharePoint: <https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fsa-dafops/SitePages/PPOD.aspx>

D External Links

- <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>
- <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>
- Media Inquiries: FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov

E Additional IT Assistance

- **NCR-CTS Support:** Phone at 1-877-873-0783 and email at CTSTechnicalSupport@wdc.usda.gov
- **Submit Ticket to OCIO CEC:** Submit via ‘HELP’ icon in desktop taskbar tray.
- **CEC Help SharePoint:** <https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/CEC/SitePages/default.aspx>

Section 1: Office Operations

Section 1: Office Operations

2 Office Operations

FSA is committed to ensuring employees are protected and able to continue to do their important work in this environment. This will occur as the agency and its dedicated field staff continue to serve and meet the needs of all customers even if that is without face-to-face contact with producers.

F Office Status

Please refer to the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Standard Operating Procedures](#) for current office status policies and Personal Protective equipment(PPE) requirements.

If a facility can continue to provide service via phone, email, mail, physically distanced field visits or shifting work to alternate locations, the office is NOT considered closed.

New signs or substantive updates to office signage must be cleared by OEA.

3 Physical distancing

A Physical distancing

Please refer to the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Standard Operating Procedures](#) for current requirements .

B Maintaining Physical Distancing While Completing Work Activities

Please refer to the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Standard Operating Procedures](#) for current requirements on office visits, face to face interactions, and office staffing levels.

To facilitate the passing of required paperwork between FSA employees and customers, the following options should be considered:

- If available, a separated vestibule prior to entry into USDA offices could be used to pass documents between FSA employees and customers
- If available, an accessible mailbox or mail slot could be utilized to facilitate document transfers
- A weighted, lidded receptacle placed outside the USDA office door (rolling filing cabinet, lockbox, storage tub, etc.)
- Utilize the Box file-sharing platform and OneSpan solution for secure eSignature. For more information, visit the myFPAC page under Agency Resources: <https://myfpac.usda.gov/agency-resources/online-document-signature-solutions/index.html>.

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Employees are also encouraged to explore the use of video-conferencing technology to communicate with customers. Services such as Microsoft Teams have been used with success by many FSA employees and customers and typically have no cost associated with the use of the services. Please see [Section 3](#) for information on use of videoconferencing for conducting FSA business.

Employees are encouraged to expand the use of document sharing amongst office staff. Digitizing pertinent documents will need to be completed at times by individuals physically in the office. All PII requirements must continue to be complied with.

4 Teleworking Guidance

A Telework Guidance

For the most up to date guidance on telework, please see [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Operation Procedures](#).

An employee without a USDA-laptop can access USDA systems from home. They must have a personal computer (Windows or Mac) to use for their work and internet access in order to be telework capable.

- Citrix software and a LincPass reader (e.g. office keyboard) can be used to access USDA systems on a personal computer. See Section 4 ([link](#)) for more information.
- RFSs still must be completed for eligible interactions even if contact is not face-to-face (22-AO, par. 33). Please also be reminded of Notice AO-1751, [Clarifying Receipt for Service \(RFS\) During COVID-19](#), for clarifying current policy.
- See additional information on technology-related telework guidance in Section 3 ([link](#)) and Section 4 ([link](#)).
- When administering programs to customers, do not create or modify forms or checklists for the producer as they are a violation of the Paperwork Reduction Act (it's fine to create internal checklists).

B Additional Telework Information & Training

- Your immediate supervisor will have the most updated telework guidance.
- MyFPAC (<http://myfpac.usda.gov>) has multiple resources for teleworking employees, including:
 - Links to training on AgLearn and LinkedIn (free for employees) on maximizing productivity when teleworking
 - Telework Instructions and Best Practices guide from on the MyFPAC site.

a

5 Phone, Email and Voicemail

Section 1: Office Operations

A Email and Phone Access

Phone and Teleconferencing:

- See [Section 3](#) for more information on phones and teleconferencing while teleworking. It includes how to forward phones, other how-to guides, and general best practices.
- Section 3 also offers appropriate voicemail scripts to use.

Email:

- See [Section 4](#) for more information and details on systems access. To access email remotely:
 - USDA-issued laptop: Connect to VPN.
 - Home computer with LincPass reader: Connect to Citrix.
 - Home computer without LincPass reader: Visit <http://portal.office.com> and log in following appropriate prompts.
 - See [Section 1, Paragraph 4, Sub-Paragraph B](#) below for guidance on Out of Office replies and updated signature block.

6 Health, Cleaning and Safety

A Potential COVID Exposure and Vaccine Information

Please refer to the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Standard Operating Procedures](#) for link to exposure response matrix and vaccine information.

- For more information on vaccines, please visit [FPAC COVID-19 Information](#) -

- If you think you might have been exposed to COVID-19, are experiencing symptoms, are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or have tested positive, please notify your supervisor. You can also report any of these situations using the [FPAC COVID Self-Reporting Tool](#) .

B Office Cleaning & Maintenance

Please refer to the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Operation Procedures](#) for FPAC cleaning requirements.

C Janitorial Services & Renovations

- Any new costs that will be incurred due to modifications to the cleaning schedule will have to be approved by a FPAC Business Center Real Property Leasing Officer (RPLO) or Contracting Officer. Work cannot proceed until the proper approvals are obtained.

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- Work with your janitorial service or building management as needed, but janitorial services should be restricted to after-hours only.
 - If it can't be performed after hours, staff should leave the office while it's being cleaned.
- Any renovations/repairs should be postponed, with the exception of emergency services. Otherwise, discuss cleaning procedure and supply procurement with your immediate supervisor.

7 Physical Safety Barriers

A Human Contact Barriers at FSA Work Sites

If desired, local and state leaders are authorized to purchase and/or arrange for the installation of human contact barriers at FSA customer service counters or workstations. Use of barriers is not mandatory; local decision making is approved. Below are several considerations for local decision making.

B Barrier Size and Specifications

- Since office sizes and configurations vary across the nation, each office would determine its own needs for barriers based on counter or workspace configuration, proximity to workspaces, and the amount of space available for customers and staff to maneuver and interact.
- Barrier dimensions (length, height, gauge): Length and height will vary by office. Each office would evaluate physical attributes/limitations or risk levels that, in combination with the counter configuration, should be considered when selecting barrier size and location. As with length and height, there is no specific requirement or recommendation for the barrier's gauge (thickness).
- Amount of space requiring barrier: Each office would determine its own need for barriers based on the office space available to interact with the public.

C Purchase and Installation Standards

- It is recommended, but not required, that barriers be anchored at the installation location. A barrier could be fashioned to hang from the ceiling or mounted to the counter and/or wall. Based on the office configuration, each office would determine its own best installation method. If determined sufficient, staff can "place" a barrier that does not require installation in the designated area (e.g., a free-standing tabletop barrier).
- Installation of a barrier must be done in such a way to ensure safe ingress and egress in case of an emergency.
- Contact barriers are considered personal property like a bulletin board, dry erase board, or other item that can be temporarily hung or affixed to a building, furniture, or counter. Barriers may be purchased and installed using a purchase card, within applicable purchase limits and rules. Amendment of the lease contract is not required or advisable for contact barriers.

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- The lessor or a contractor is authorized to install the barrier(s). It is recommended the local office consult with the landlord before installing a barrier that modifies the office interior.
- Local offices should also use a purchase card, within applicable purchase limits and rules, to obtain and install other personal property that can contribute to safety of staff and customers. For instance, a drop box can be purchased and installed to limit human contact and the need for customers to enter the facility. Amendment of the lease contract is not required or advisable for these types of items.
- **Note:** Offices may use a purchase card for purchases of Human Contact Barriers. Funding for barriers will be absorbed within their current Budget Allotment. For budget concerns, COFs shall contact their STO, STOs shall contact Kara Napier and Kim Floehr in DAFO.
- Offices should use the COVID-19 accounting code as outlined in FPAC-N-2100-006.

D Other Considerations

Maintaining barriers:

- Barriers would be cleaned like any other surface as required in each lease contract.

Duration of the barrier's presence:

- Considering community and employee risk levels, each office would determine how long their barrier remains in place.

Section 2: Human Resources

8 Status of Temporary PTs

A Temporary Program Technicians Providing Integral Office Coverage

If your temporary Program Technician (PT) is an integral part of your office coverage, has a tentative or final job offer pending, or is a good potential candidate for a current permanent vacancy in your state, you may wish to maintain that employee in their current status.

If you previously terminated or converted a temporary to intermittent status and now have a need to bring that temporary back into regular office coverage you may do so.

B Temporary Program Technicians Not Working Regular Hours

If your temporary PT will not be working regular hours due to COVID-19, you should consider the following options:

- Provide 5-day written notification of termination of temporary employment due to lack of work in accordance with Handbook 22-PM, Paragraph 461A. HR has confirmed that these individuals may later be non-competitively reappointed per Par. 330I of Handbook 27-PM once normal office operations resume.
- Offer to convert the individual's temporary employment to intermittent employment. Written 5-day notification must still be provided to the employee. This would allow the Agency to only pay for hours actually worked. Some considerations:
 - Because intermittent employees only receive pay for hours worked, they may not have enough wages to cover their FEHB premiums. When pay is insufficient to cover the premium, employees must terminate their enrollment or continue their enrollment and agree to pay the premium. A letter must be provided to the employee explaining these options. See "FEHB Insufficient Pay Sample Letter".
 - Employees who are converted to intermittent status can either have annual leave paid out to them or they can leave the balance in a pending status until they either return to a leave-earning work schedule or terminate their employment.
 - Some state governments are providing unemployment insurance benefits for reduced hours due to COVID-19. In other states, this may not be the case. Employees are encouraged to review the impact of reduced hours on their unemployment benefits.

9 Hiring & GS Onboarding

A Status of Hiring Temporary and Permanent Employees

Permanent Employees:

- Offices should continue to move forward in hiring actions.
- Do not delay onboarding new permanent employees.

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- The FPAC Business Center has provided interim guidance below for onboarding new employees.

Temporary Employees:

- Offices may proceed with hiring temporary CO program technicians as needed to handle CFAP workload or office administrative functions.
- Due to hiring needs related to COVID-19, the minimum 5-day announcement period is being waived.
- Offices should utilize the GovDelivery template and ensure that minority groups are notified of vacancies.

B FPAC BC-HRD Interim Guidance for Onboarding New GS Employees

To initiate the onboarding process for new hires who are scheduled to begin employment within the FPAC Mission Area during the COVID-19 disease pandemic, there are some forms that will need to be reviewed and acknowledged via alternative methods other than the physical witness of documents and signature. Until the pandemic is over, the following actions will be taken to limit exposure for all current and potential employees:

- 1) The following forms will be completed electronically and/or through the USAStaffing employee portal by the new hire: SF-256, SF-181, SF-144, W-4, AD-349, SF-1199, TSP-1, State Tax Form.
- 2) The following forms will be submitted by the new hire to the servicing HR Specialist via email within three (3) business days of the new hire entering on duty: SF-2817, SF-2809, SF-1152, OF-306*. Originals will be forwarded to the servicing HR Specialist as soon as practicable where originals are required. * The OF-306 may be initiated through the USAStaffing employee portal but a wet signature is required.
- 3) The SF-61 from the new hire will need to be witnessed by a notary or an appointment will need to be made between the HR Specialist and the new hire via a live event (facetime, Teams, etc.) to witness signature for this form. This form must be signed in front of the HR Specialist(s) on the date the new hire enters on duty. For this function, any HR Specialist may witness the signature for this document.
- 4) For the I-9, the new hire may upload and scan a copy of the documentation used to support their citizenship when submitting the form via email. The HR onboarding POC(s) must physically examine one document from List A OR a combination of one document from List B and one document from List C as listed on the "Lists of Acceptable Documents." The new hire should include a statement that the documents submitted are true and accurate copies of the original document and sign the statement. This must be completed within three (3) days of the new hire beginning employment.

These interim procedures will be used until otherwise notified. Questions regarding these instructions can be addressed to:

- Leslie Violette, Branch Chief, Quality Assurance and Workforce Policy
 - Leslie.Violette@usda.gov or 202-720-3042
- Elizabeth Petrus, Section Chief, Workforce Policy
 - Elizabeth.Petrus@usda.gov or 202-690-0066.

10 Onboarding CO Employees

A DAFO CO Onboarding Guidance

Options for onboarding new FSA CO hires, given current COVID-19 in-person restrictions.

To initiate the onboarding process for FSA CO new hires who are scheduled to begin employment within the FPAC Mission Area during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are two options:

- If the new hire reports to their official duty station on Day One, follow USA Staffing Onboarding guidance.
- If the new hire does NOT report to the official duty station for Day One Onboarding, the following two forms will need to be reviewed and acknowledged via alternative methods other than the traditional physical witnessing of the documents.

1. Form FSA-586: Oath of Office

The Hiring Manager should coordinate with the new hire to have them take the Oath of Office via a live event (Teams, video, FaceTime, etc.)

- Once the oath has been administered, the new hire needs to digitally sign the FSA-586 through Onboarding in USA Staffing; then, they will need to save this document as a .pdf and email it to the Hiring Manager who will need to sign as the witness.
- Once witnessed, the Hiring Manager will need to email this document to the State Office who will add this form to the employee's record and confirm receipt of this through Onboarding in USA Staffing.

2. Form I-9: Employment Eligibility Verification

The New Hire will still need to complete the Questionnaire in Onboarding through USA Staffing.

- Once that is done, they will digitally sign the I-9 through Onboarding in USA Staffing, save this document as a .pdf, and email it to the Hiring Manager with the required supporting documentation.
- The new hire shall include a statement that the documents submitted are true and accurate copies of the original document(s) and then sign the statement.
- The Hiring Manager will NOT have to physically view the original documents at this time; however, they will need to inspect and retain copies of the document(s) emailed to them.
- The Hiring Manager will complete Section 2, being sure to enter "Reason for physical inspection delay: COVID-19" as the reason for the Physical Inspection delay in the Additional Information section.
- At this point, the I-9 and supporting documentation must be emailed to the State Office so they can process the I-9 through eVerify within 3 business days as well as enter the information in the Onboarding system.

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- Once normal operations resume, all employees who were onboarded using remote verification must report to their Hiring Manager and within three business days provide the original documents for physical inspection.
 - Once this happens, the Hiring Manager needs to add a notation in the Additional Information portion of Section 2 of the I-9 which states: “Documents Physically Examined (date)”. A copy of the I-9 with this additional information must be forwarded to the State Office for uploading into the Onboarding system.

Note: These interim procedures will be used until otherwise notified.

11 Work Schedule Considerations

A Workplace Flexibilities

As long as it falls within the guidelines of the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Operation Procedures](#), supervisors are encouraged to be flexible.

Supervisors are encouraged to review current work schedules with their employees to see if temporary modifications would better fit the current needs of the agency while offering employees needed flexibility at this time.

While supervisors are encouraged to offer flexibility to their employees, the normal rules regarding work schedules still apply. For example:

- Employees on fixed work schedules cannot earn credit hours.
- Employees on maxi-flex work schedules may earn credit hours with prior supervisory approval. Credit hours cannot be earned on a holiday or non-scheduled workday.
- Employees may still earn premium pay (compensatory time and overtime) with prior supervisory approval.
- If you have a collective bargaining agreement, refer to any applicable terms.

With more employees now teleworking, supervisors need to ensure clear communications on whether premium pay may be earned while teleworking. Supervisors should take some precautionary measures to ensure that they do not “suffer and permit” work during unauthorized time periods which would lead to overtime pay.

Modifications to official work schedules generally should occur prior to the start of the pay period. However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible for a work-schedule change to be completed mid-pay period for the remaining days of the pay period. WebTA will allow for this as long as the timesheet is not validated and certified.

Options: Several options and considerations when reviewing work schedules are detailed in Section 2, Paragraph 4, Sub-paragraphs [B](#) and [C](#). This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list.

B Keep an Employee's Schedule As-Is

A supervisor may decide that employees' official work schedules do not need modification.

Supervisors are nonetheless encouraged to offer flexibility within the OPM guidelines while maintaining office coverage. For example, if an employee is on a maxi-flex schedule, the supervisor could allow the employee to earn credit time and use credit leave.

C Temporarily Modify an Employee's Schedule

Some work schedules may not currently best fit employees' or agency needs.

In these situations, it may be determined that a temporary modification to an employee's work schedule is needed. For example:

- If an employee is currently on a **fixed work schedule**, a supervisor may implement an alternative work schedule to help the employee balance work and personal responsibilities.
 - Under many types of alternative work schedules, an employee can complete his or her biweekly work requirement in less than 10 workdays.
 - Under a maxi-flex work schedule, the employee may choose to adjust arrival and departure times to accommodate doctor appointments, childcare or eldercare issues, or other pressing issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.
- An employee who is currently on a **5/4/9 schedule** may not be able to complete 9 hours of work in one day while teleworking.
 - If their current schedule is maintained, and their supervisor concurs that no more work can be accomplished, the employee would utilize an hour of accrued leave.
 - Temporarily changing this employee's work schedule to 8-hour days may allow more work to be accomplished.
- By way of contrast to the above scenario, an employee who currently works **ten 8-hour days** in a pay period may be able to provide more work and better balance personal responsibilities if they are shifted to a 5/4/9 work schedule.

Employees' work schedules can be modified to include non-traditional hours to provide better office coverage while providing needed flexibility during the pandemic. For example:

- An employee's schedule could be modified from Monday-Friday to Tuesday-Saturday. Credit hours can be earned on Saturday if it is a scheduled workday on a maxi-flex schedule.

Note: If flexibility in work hours is provided to an employee as part of a reasonable accommodation, and that employee is permitted, but not scheduled, to work between the

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hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. in order to reach 80 hours of work in a pay period, that employee would not receive night differential pay.

- Sunday should be avoided as a regularly-scheduled workday, as hours worked would incur a 25% pay differential.

Work schedules may be adjusted to non-peak hours or to a different work schedule in the following circumstances:

- Employees who must care for dependents, including elder or child care situations.

NOTE: Actual time spent care for the dependent is not compensable as hours of work.

- Employees who have limited transportation options to their official duty station due to public transportation restrictions or challenges

D Helpful References

- FSA Handbook 32-PM
- FSA Handbook 17-PM
- OPM Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/alternative-work-schedules/>
- OPM Night Pay: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/night-pay-for-general-schedule-employees/>
- OPM Overtime: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/overtime-pay-title-5/>
- OPM Premium Pay: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/premium-pay-title-5/>

12 Telework Scenarios

A Leave Scenarios & Options

Scenario	Situation	Leave Option	Supervisor Flexibilities
100% Telework Ready Employee	Employee not high risk; Household Member not high risk. None of the situations for all employees apply.	N/A. No Weather and Safety Leave. ¹	Default to Productivity; should be on office rotation/in office. Must ensure ongoing mission continuity. Supervisor may allow enhanced telework if mission need can be met.

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<p>100% Telework Ready Employee</p>	<p>Employee not high risk; Household Member is high risk. None of the other situations for all employees apply.</p>	<p>N/A. No Weather and Safety Leave.¹</p>	<p>Must ensure ongoing mission continuity. Supervisor may grant up to full-time telework (documented via email request from employee to first-line supervisor and first-line supervisor approval or disapproval email to employee).</p>
<p>All Employees</p>	<p>Employee is/certifies as high risk.²</p>	<p>Weather and Safety Leave available only after supervisor concurs that all available assigned work is performed.</p>	<p>Must allow employees to provide self-certification to first-line supervisor that they are a high-risk individual (documented via email request from employee to first-line supervisor and first-line supervisor approval email to employee). Subsequently allow employees to telework full-time</p>
<p>All Employees</p>	<p>Employee either tests positive or is considered Presumed Positive</p>	<p>Employee can use sick leave.³</p>	<p>Employee may telework if they feel able. Employee recovers; returns to work after 14 days non-symptomatic.</p>
<p>All Employees</p>	<p>Employees have limited transportation options to their official duty station due to public transportation restrictions or other challenges</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Supervisor must ensure ongoing mission continuity. Supervisor may grant up to full-time telework (documented via email request from employee to first-line supervisor and first-line supervisor approval or disapproval email to employee).</p>

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All Employees	The Employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.	If employee is teleworking, Weather and Safety Leave is only available if employee is not symptomatic and supervisor concurs that all available assigned work is performed.	Allow employee to telework. If non-symptomatic and other situations do not apply, employee returns to work after quarantine or isolation order is lifted.
All Employees	The Employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.	If employee is teleworking, Weather and Safety Leave is only available if employee is not symptomatic and supervisor concurs that all available assigned work is performed.	Allow employee to telework until no longer advised to self-quarantine and asymptomatic.
All Employees	The Employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking medical diagnosis from a health care provider.	Employee may use sick leave.	Allow employee to telework if they feel able.
All Employees	Dependent care situations where the employee <u>must</u> care for dependents, including elder or childcare situations.	Actual time spent caring for the dependent is not compensable as hours of work.	Ensure ongoing mission continuity. May grant up to full-time telework (documented via email request from employee to first-line supervisor and first-line supervisor approval or disapproval email to employee).
All Employees	Employee <u>chooses</u> to keep their child at home when a school is open or the school/place of care/child-care is available	N/A	Supervisor must ensure ongoing mission continuity. As with all 100% telework ready employees, a supervisor may allow enhanced telework if mission need can be met.

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<p>All Employees</p>	<p>Employees with a Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Request that meets RA requirements, including but not limited to requests for reasonable accommodations in pre-COVID/normal operations. RA request is based on a disability that affects one or more major life functions and employee has medical documentation to support the need for a reasonable accommodation.</p>	<p>Must engage in the interactive RA process with employee to determine appropriate accommodation based on medical documentation provided. See RA Guidance https://www.usda.gov/ra</p>	
<p>0% Telework Capable Employee (either no equipment or no internet)</p>	<p>None of the other situations for all employees apply. No connectivity capacity.</p>	<p>Weather and Safety Leave only available after supervisor concurs that all available assigned work is performed.</p>	<p>Default to Productivity; should be on office rotation or in the office as long as requirements within the FPAC Safety Plan are maintained.</p>

Footnotes

- ¹ An employee must always have a sufficient amount of work to perform throughout the workday when he or she teleworks. An employee performing telework who does not have enough work must notify his or her supervisor and receive additional work or discuss leave options such as annual leave, advanced annual leave, other paid time off (e.g., earned compensatory time off, earned credit hours), or leave without pay.
- ² Individuals over 65 and those who have conditions that put them at higher risk.
- ³ An employee, who has been receiving weather and safety leave due to exposure to COVID-19, becomes symptomatic (ill), should not continue to receive weather and safety leave. Sick, or other accrued, leave would be used to cover such a period of sickness, as provided in 5 CFR 630.401(a)(2). Agencies must grant sick leave when an illness, such as COVID-19, prevents an employee from performing work. Authority to grant EPSLA leave expired on December 31, 2020.

13 WebTA & ARS Coding

A Background

The USDA Chief Financial Officer has asked all USDA Agencies to track specific costs associated with the Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. The FPAC Business Center Budget Division has created new accounting code(s) within the Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI) system for each organization to use for this purpose.

The intended use of these new accounting codes is to record any expenses incurred **solely** because of this COVID-19 outbreak such as special supplies, cleaning fees, or **employees' hours only when specifically working on COVID-19 related duties, including overtime**. The new accounting codes will still consume the respective state/organization's available funds. They are created to make reporting of this expenses available without the need for a data call.

B Example Accounting Codes

Employees should note that the first 8 characters in their normal LOA will be the exact same for the COVID-19 LOA. The COVID-19 codes all replace the ending 6 characters with COVID19.

- Example Accounting Code for GS (Fund 84)
 - Alabama State Office employee (Fund 84)
 - FY 2020 Normal LOA: 08400184000000
 - FY 2020 COVID-19 LOA: 08400184**COVID19**
- Example Accounting Code for CO (Fund 87)
 - County Office employee in Autauga County, AL
 - FY 2020 Normal LOA: 08701001000000
 - FY 2020 COVID-19 LOA: 08701001**COVID19**

C Adding the COVID19 Accounting Code

To add an Account, select **Accounts** from the Employee Main Menu in WebTA and locate the state/organization assigned accounting code from the list. Employees should consult with their timekeeper for assistance in adding this accounting code.

Note: Please note that there is an exception in the case of new employees who are using the Fund 95 codes. These employees will be using the COVID-19 code for Fund 84 or Fund 87 associated with their State or County office.

14 WebTA Matrix

A Using the COVID19 Accounting Code

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Employees shall only use the COVID19 code when performing work for COVID-19 (e.g. Daily Conference Calls, planning meetings, etc.) and will be coded to **ARS Program** and **Activity to Non Program – Emergency Preparation and Management**.

Employees working from a service center should follow this example of recording time spent on COVID-19 related work.

New Timesheet Entry

Transaction:	01 - Reg Time-TeleWork - Other	▼
Account:	08400184COVID19 (COVID19)	▼
Program:	NP - Non Program (0099)	▼
Activity:	Emergency Preparations & Management (94)	▼

B Using Employees' Normal Accounting Codes

Employees who are continuing to perform their regular duties while in telework status should use their normal accounting codes and record time in WebTA using Transaction code “**01 – Reg Time-TeleWork – Other**”. They should not use the new accounting codes.

Below are the 3 primary Transaction Codes employees will be using during the flexible office coverage. Note: Employees can still take annual, sick, etc. leave.

There is no change in the Employee’s Accounting Code and the Employee will select the **Program** and **Activity** according to the work items they are performing.

C Regular In-Office Work

Employees working from a service center should use traditional base pay coding, with transaction code **01 – Regular Base Pay**:

New Timesheet Entry

Transaction:	01 - Regular Base Pay	▼
Account:	08417484000000 (FY 2020 DAFO PRMD)	▼
Program:		▼
Activity:		▼

D Telework

Employees teleworking outside of the Service Center due to the pandemic should use transaction code **01 - Reg Time-TeleWork – Other**:

New Timesheet Entry

Transaction:	01 - Reg Time-TeleWork - Other
Account:	08417484000000 (FY 2020 DAFO PRMD)
Program:	
Activity:	

E Weather & Safety Leave

Employees granted Administrative Leave due to the pandemic should use transaction code **66 – Weather and Safety Leave**:

New Timesheet Entry

Transaction:	66 - Weather and Safety Leave
Account:	08417584000000 (FY 2020 DAFO-BAMSD)
Program:	Leave (0096)
Activity:	Leave (90)

F Accounting Codes for Travel or Other Activities

Please refer to the [FPAC COVID Workplace Safety Plan Standard Operating Procedures](#). for travel additional guidance.

If additional codes are needed for travel or other activities, please enter a Budget support ticket for a “New FMMI WBS/Shorthand code” in the myFPAC.gov ServiceNow portal available at: https://usdafpacbc.service-now.com/fpac?id=bu_intake&sys_id=4a766a40db946700b34efb0e0f961901.

Section 2: Human Resources

If you have any questions on this information, please contact:

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15 WebTA and ARS FAQs

A FSA Employee WebTA Guidance Matrix

FSA Employee WebTA Guidance Matrix Effective PP 07 Beginning March 29, 2020¹

FSA Employee Status	Fields in WebTA			
	Transaction	Account (LOA) ²	Program	Activity
On-site Service Center	01-Reg Base Pay	Regular LOA	ARS Program	ARS Activity
		COVID19 LOA	NP	Em. Prep. & Mgmt.
	Unless specifically tied to one ARS program			
Unscheduled Telework	01-Reg Time Telework-Other	Regular LOA	ARS Program	ARS Activity
		COVID19 LOA	NP	Em. Prep. & Mgmt.
	Unless specifically tied to one ARS program			
Scheduled Telework	01-Reg Telework	Regular LOA	ARS Program	ARS Activity
		COVID19 LOA	NP	Em. Prep. & Mgmt.
	Unless specifically tied to one ARS program			

Unable to complete FSA work (ex. no equip or internet)	66 -Weather & Safety	COVID19 LOA	Leave	Leave
Accrued Leave	Appropriate Leave Code (AL, SL, TOA, etc.)	Regular LOA	Leave	Leave
Overtime	Credit Hours, Comp Time, etc.	Regular LOA	ARS Program	ARS Activity
		COVID19 LOA	NP	Em. Prep. & Mgmt.

Footnotes:

- ¹ Matrix will be updated in FSA Modified Workflow Due to COVID-19 Field Guide.
- ² Employees may use multiple LOAs to capture their daily hours recorded in WebTA.

B WebTA and ARS Frequently Asked Questions

Question: During a pandemic health crisis, can an agency require a telework-eligible employee to work from home without a telework agreement? Can agency also require an employee who has not been previously designated as telework-eligible to work from home?

Yes. OPM has explained that the regulations at 5 CFR 550.409(a) allow an agency to order one or more employees to evacuate from their worksite and perform work from their home (or an alternative location mutually agreeable to the agency and the employee as a safe haven) during a pandemic health crisis without regard to whether the agency and the employee have a telework agreement in place at the time the order to evacuate is issued. An evacuated employee at a safe haven may be assigned to perform any work considered necessary or required to be performed during the period of evacuation without regard to his or her grade, level, or title. The employee must have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the assigned work.

If an FSA employee is told not to come to the office by their supervisor because of restrictions on the number of employees allowed in the office at one time, that employee is considered to be “evacuated.”

Question: What is the proper use of Weather & Safety Leave when an employee has a child at home due to the school and day care closures?

Weather and safety leave should not be used in this situation. The employee should either be teleworking or should be using annual or other personal leave.

Question: If an employee was scheduled to be on annual leave, do they still take annual leave?

Yes.

Question: Field office employees are receiving a lot of questions regarding the CARES Act and newly announced CFAP program. How should FSA field staff code their time as it relates to CFAP?

CFAP should be considered similar to all other FSA programs. Field staff should utilize their Regular Line of Accounting and then utilize the ARS Program – CFAP and the associated ARS Activity Code to code their time. Example: When answering questions regarding CFAP, employees should code their time with their normal LOA and the ARS Program – CFAP/ ARS Activity – Outreach.

Section 3: Remote Conferencing

Section 3: Remote Conferencing

Topics covered in this section include:

- Phone and Teleworking: General information on phone and teleworking
- Teams: General User Guide: Introduction to using Teams
- Teams Audio User Guide: Overview of connecting audio or video
- Teams Meeting Setup: Setting up a meeting in Teams
- Teams Employee Joining Meeting: Joining a Teams Meeting as an employee
- Teams Producer Joining (Non-Mobile): Producer instructions to join via a desktop or laptop
- Teams Producer Joining (Mobile): Producer instructions to join via mobile phone
- Accessing Cisco Jabber: Jabber can be used with USDA-issued laptops
- Cisco VOIP User Guide: User guide to common VOIP Cisco phones

You can access the Technology Guidance Subfolder on [DAFO PPOD SharePoint](#).

Section 4: Technology & Remote Access

Section 4: Technology & Remote Access

Topics covered in this section include:

- Remote Access Overview: General information on remote access to systems
- FSA COVID-19 SharePoint: Information on resources available on the SharePoint
- Tips & Tricks: Practical tips for working away from the office
- File Encryption (Sending): How to properly prepare and send encrypted files
- File Encryption (Receiving): How to open an encrypting file from Outlook
- Connecting to VPN: Access the USDA network with a USDA laptop
- Using Citrix (On Windows): Access the USDA network with personal Windows PC
- Using Citrix (On a Mac): Access the USDA network with a personal Mac
- Importing Bookmarks: Retrieving bookmarks when using Citrix
- Accessing USDA Systems: Logging in with eAuth or LincPass
- Setting SharePoint Alerts: Learn when SharePoints have updates made to them

You can access the Technology Guidance Subfolder on [DAFO PPOD SharePoint](#).