

## NIH COVID-19 In-Person Meeting/Event Safety Plan Template and Instructions

Meeting/event planners or hosts should complete the form below prior to informing participants that the event will be in-person or entering into contractual agreements for the space (if non-government space). This process must be followed whether the event is held in NIH/HHS facilities or non-government facilities.

For information on how to use this form and when it is required to be submitted, please review the requirements for meetings in the [NIH COVID-19 Safety Guidance](#) document. Contact the Division of Occupational Health and Safety (DOHS) or your [Safety Specialist](#) if you have any questions. All locations and sites should follow recommendations for community levels. There are no differences in recommendations if you are in a healthcare location.

<a href="#">Community Risk Levels</a>	<b>&lt; 10 participants</b>	<b>11-49 participants</b>	<b>50+ participants</b>
<b>Low</b>	Use recommended by event organizer	Use recommended by event organizer	Submit form to the <a href="#">DOHS Director</a> , with Subject Line <b>IN-PERSON EVENT REQUEST 50+ - {NIH IC} – {Meeting Name}</b>
<b>Approval Authority</b>	N/A	N/A	Notification required, but no approval required.
<b>Medium</b>	Use recommended by event organizer	Use recommended by event organizer, safety measures to be communicated to participants. DOHS consult available and recommended.	Submit form to the <a href="#">DOHS Director</a> , with Subject Line <b>IN-PERSON EVENT REQUEST 50+ - {NIH IC} – {Meeting Name}</b>
<b>Approval Authority</b>	N/A	N/A	DOHS approval required.
<b>High*</b> In person events are not recommended.	Follow NIH safety guidance for masking and <a href="#">density</a> , including any additional ICO specific requirements.	Follow NIH Safety Guidance (below), and any ICO specific requirements, safety measures to be communicated to participants. DOHS consult available.	Submit form to the <a href="#">DOHS Director</a> , with Subject Line <b>IN-PERSON EVENT REQUEST 50+ - {NIH IC} – {Meeting Name}</b>
<b>Approval Authority</b>	N/A	Executive Officer	DOHS approvals required

\*If the location moves into the high-risk level, only mission critical in-person events will be approved, and approval must be received as outlined above. Lab meetings, and other scientific events are deemed mission critical. The event planner should have a contingency to move to a virtual-only setting if community levels change to high-risk levels. All meetings should have a virtual option in the event a participant has symptoms or is on isolation.

**NOTE: Any student-led, in-person meeting must receive approval from OITE. Students should email**

[OITE@nih.gov](mailto:OITE@nih.gov) to request permission to lead an in-person meeting.

**Reminder:** This approval process for 50+ in-person events is separate from the Efficient Spending Policy (ESP). If your event is subject to the ESP, then you should obtain the needed approval(s) at the appropriate ESP threshold levels.

**Important items related to the approval process for 50+ events:**

- A sketch or floor plan of the meeting layout (locations of tables, chairs, panels, etc.) with room dimensions, and the proposed agenda and schedule for the event are required to be submitted with this form.
- DOHS will contact the event coordinator listed on the form with the final decision at “Medium” and “High” community levels.

All NIH sponsored meetings, whether held in an NIH building, a leased building, or an off-site facility, must abide by the following safety measures as determined by community levels. Outdoor meetings are lower risk, but not without risk, and are encouraged, especially for larger gatherings.

**Low:**

- Control in-person attendance. Know how many people will attend in person. This will allow you to select a proper room size for the attendance.
- Virtual option offered: Remote participation options should be offered, and attendees should not be required to attend in-person unless necessary.
- Assess the space you are meeting in. Check the size of your room. The square footage is very important, but not the only factor. Rooms with high ceilings are better than those with low or standard height ceilings. More importantly, make certain your room has good ventilation. If the room you are proposing does not have a supply air vent, it may not be adequate.
- Cleaning and Hand Hygiene: High touch surfaces and common areas should be cleaned at the beginning and end of each day. Disinfectant must be available for shared areas, and common items disinfected between uses. [EPA approved disinfectants](#) effective against coronavirus should be used. Hand sanitizer stations/bottles should be available, and their use encouraged throughout the event.
- Keep meetings small. Only necessary attendees should be at meetings in-person.
- Keep meetings brief. Limit the time spent gathering to the shortest time needed to accomplish the meeting objectives. Start and end the meeting on time. If the meeting business is concluded early, end the meeting and minimize socializing.
- Symptom Screening and Positive Case Reporting: Attendees should perform daily self-assessments for COVID-19 symptoms and be informed how to report them and/or a positive test result in the meeting announcement or invite. Persons with symptoms, no matter how mild, must not attend in-person gatherings, no matter the size or community risk level. Symptoms should be reported, and attendee tested in accordance with CDC guidelines. Only positive cases affecting NIH staff working in healthcare facilities and Tier 1 should be reported to OMS.
- Contact Tracing: The NIH conducts contact tracing for all COVID-19 exposures that happen at work. If you test positive within five days after the event, or official government travel, contact OMS for guidance on notifying meeting participants.
- Food service: Shared food and beverage services are not recommended. Individually packaged items are preferred. *NOTE: All prohibitions on use of appropriated funds for provision of food remain unchanged.*

**Medium: Low level requirements plus --**

- Physical Distancing: Seats must be spaced to ensure 6-foot distancing between attendees. Spacing must also be adjusted at tables during meals to provide ample distancing. Floor markers or signage directing flow of traffic must be used to assist in directional flow, as well as reminders for distancing at gathering spaces, i.e. Registration desks, break areas/time, and in any vendor site.
- Masks: Although not required, it is recommended that a well-fitted face covering be worn as outlined in the current version of the [NIH COVID-19 Safety Plan](#).

**High: Medium level requirements plus --**

- Masks: A well-fitted face covering must be worn as outlined in the current version of the [NIH COVID-19 Safety Plan](#).
- Density: Density limits match that of the local case rates as outlined in the [NIH Safety Guidance/ COVID-19 Plan](#). Density limits can change and need to be reassessed the week of the meeting to ensure adjustments are made in compliance with our safety plan. Food Service: When in high, food may still be served, as mentioned in the Low section, and a controlled setting may be advisable to all attendees freely going to the community.