



The U.S. Department of Agriculture created a framework for reopening USDA facilities based on the White House guidance “[Opening America Up Again](#).” Mission Areas and Agencies will use USDA’s Reopening Playbook as they analyze, sequence, and implement decisions that enable employees to gradually, effectively, and safely return to their respective onsite functions. Changes to facility status will be communicated by Mission Areas/Agencies in advance of reopening.

## FACTORS CONSIDERED BEFORE REOPENING

- Mission Areas and Agencies will use all available information to make data-driven decisions to reopen a facility. Decisions to begin to resume operations will be informed by whether the state or community in which the facility is located has met the [federal gating criteria](#), begun phased reopening, implemented phased reopening of public and commercial activities, and lifted mandatory travel and closure restrictions.
- Mission Areas and Agencies will take into account the facility’s inventory of face coverings, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and cleaning supplies and services. Mission Areas and Agencies will analyze facility’s plans to ensure sufficient social hygiene and mitigation practices are in place to protect employees, contractors, and the public by adhering to CDC Guidance on [proper hygiene](#), [proper facility cleaning](#), utilization of the CDC [Cleaning and Disinfecting Decision tool](#), and [proper social distancing](#). Mission Areas/Agencies should plan on providing face coverings or masks to all onsite employees from Phase 1 through Phase 3. Applicable labor agreements have been reviewed to assess bargaining obligations and whether bargaining has occurred.

## PHASES OF REOPENING

**GATING PERIOD-** Agencies should continue maximum telework status.

**PHASE ONE-** Agencies should lift mandatory telework.

- **ELIGIBLE FOR RETURN TO ONSITE MISSION**
  - A USDA facility is permitted to reopen but telework should still be widely practiced.
    - Mission Areas and Agencies should prioritize the return of employees and contractors who cannot telework, are deemed mission-critical by the [DHS CISA memo](#), or are customer-facing.
  - Telework should be maintained for employees who have self-certified to their higher risk for COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines and are receiving telework as an accommodation.
  - Employees who are at a higher risk for COVID-19 who are receiving weather and safety leave, can continue to receive weather and safety through Phase 2.
  - Mission Areas/Agencies may take an employee’s caregiving responsibilities into consideration when assessing telework status.
- **ONSITE PRACTICES AND CONSIDERATIONS**
  - The number and on-site positioning of employees and contractors returning to work can be determined based on the ability to follow all Social Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols, including the use of appropriate PPE.
  - Common areas and break areas should be closed.
  - Staggering of employee schedules to promote social distancing and/or creating rotating groups of employees who alternate schedules, etc.
  - No commercial food service or retail vendors are allowed on-site. Vending machines may be available and restocked and must be cleaned regularly.
- **VISITOR CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Visitors are strongly discouraged.
  - Where mission delivery requires visitors onsite:
    - Restrict visitors to essential, time-sensitive, scheduled visits only.
    - Escort visitors and limit their access to non-essential areas.
    - Screen visitors using USDA’s visitor screening process prior to their arrival.
    - Visitors must adhere to the community PPE, hygiene, and social distancing guidelines. Visitors may be required to wear their own masks and follow on-site safety procedures.
- **TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Only mission essential, time sensitive business travel will be considered. Any local requirements for quarantining upon return from travel should be followed.



## PHASE TWO- Agencies should lift maximum telework.

- **ELIGIBLE FOR RETURN TO ONSITE MISSION**
  - Additional employees and contractors who have a practical and operational need to be onsite to ensure customer service and delivery of USDA's mission should return.
  - Telework should be maintained for employees who have self-certified to their higher risk for COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines and are receiving telework as an accommodation.
  - Employees who are at a higher risk for COVID-19 who are receiving weather and safety leave, can continue to receive weather and safety through Phase 2.
  - Mission Areas/Agencies may take an employee's caregiving responsibilities into consideration when assessing telework status.
- **ONSITE PRACTICES AND CONSIDERATIONS**
  - The number and on-site positioning of employees and contractors returning to work must be determined based on the ability to follow all Social Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols and the ability to provide PPE.
  - Common areas and break areas remain closed.
  - Grab & Go food service and no-contact retail vendors may operate on-site at USDA controlled facilities.
- **VISITOR CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Restrict visitors to essential, time-sensitive, scheduled visits only.
  - Escort visitors and limit their access to non-essential areas.
  - Screen visitors using USDA's visitor screening process prior to their arrival.
  - Visitors must adhere to the community PPE, hygiene, and social distancing guidelines. Visitors may be required to wear their own face covering and follow on-site safety procedures.
- **TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Same as Phase One.

## PHASE THREE- Operational Optimization with up to 100% of employees returning onsite.

- **ELIGIBLE FOR RETURN TO THE FACILITY**
  - Facilities can reopen with *up to 100%* of their employees and contractors returning.
    - Telework may be permitted for employees and contractors who are telework capable and can perform their duties and meet mission needs from home.
  - Telework may be maintained for employees who have provided medical documentation demonstrating they are at higher risk for COVID-19, and Mission Areas/Agencies may take an employee's caregiving responsibilities into consideration when assessing telework status.
- **ONSITE PRACTICES**
  - The number and on-site positioning of employees and contractors returning to work must be determined based on the ability to follow all Social Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols and the ability to provide PPE.
  - Common areas and break areas may reopen if proper social distancing can be ensured.
  - Grab & Go food service, vending machines, and no-contact retail vendors may operate on-site.
- **VISITOR CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Scheduled, precleared visitors may be allowed.
  - Escort visitors and limit their access to non-essential areas.
  - Screen visitors using USDA's visitor screening process prior to their arrival.
  - Visitors must adhere to the community PPE, hygiene, and social distancing guidelines. Visitors may be required to wear their own face covering and follow on-site safety procedures.
- **TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Same as Phase One.

*Prior to moving to the next phase, a facility must generally operate in the previous phase for at least 14 consecutive days with no new cases of COVID-19 onsite; assess the capacity of local public transportation & status of public schools & day care where applicable; & coordinate with the Mission Area/Agency. A facility may return to a previous phase if the aforementioned criteria cannot be met for any reason. Mission Areas/Agencies will determine whether they deem a facility eligible to return fully to normal operations.*