



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Date: February 10, 2021

From: Kevin Shea, Acting Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture *Kevin Shea*

To: Mission Area Leadership, Agency Administrators, Staff Office Directors, and
USDA Human Resources Directors

Re: Interim USDA Guidance on Administrative Leave for COVID-19 Vaccinations

As my message of last week emphasized, ending the pandemic is the overriding demand of our time and we must do everything in our power to defeat it. Ensuring USDA staff are vaccinated as soon as possible is essential and we should do everything we can to reduce barriers to vaccination.

To that end, this memorandum provides interim guidance on the use of administrative leave for COVID-19 vaccinations for USDA employees. COVID-19 vaccinations are an important tool in helping us protect our workforce. All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19 and may also keep individuals from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19. Getting vaccinated may also protect others, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

To support employees in getting vaccinated when it is their turn, managers may authorize up to 4 hours of administrative leave/excused absence for each vaccination appointment, which includes travel time to and from the vaccination site. A manager may increase the amount of administrative leave/excused absence authorized above the 4 hours per appointment for compelling reasons, such as distance to vaccination site or length of lines. The use of administrative leave/excused absence for COVID-19 vaccination is authorized regardless of whether an employee is performing work on site or in a telework status.

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact Douglas Follansbee, USDA Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, at douglas.follansbee@usda.gov or (202) 720-4477.