

Updated COVID-19 guidance for the USF community

University of South Florida

Dear USF students, faculty and staff,

The University of South Florida cares deeply about the safety and wellbeing of all members of our community as we work hard to provide a full college experience for our students. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, USF leadership has made evidence-based decisions prioritizing public health, within guidance issued by our state leaders at the Board of Governors. We received updated guidance from the Board of Governors last week and wanted to share it with you. [Read the Board of Governors' full message here.](#)

We look forward to a productive fall semester with all the complements of a full college experience, but it can only be done through compliance with the guidelines issued by state leaders and detailed in this message. **Thank you for doing your part.**

The Board of Governors and USF strongly urge all members of our community to get fully vaccinated. If an individual is fully vaccinated, the chance of developing symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection and/or spreading it to others is markedly reduced, and the individual may not need to self-isolate following COVID-19 exposure. [Vaccines are available for free for any student, faculty and staff member at USF.](#)

Given recent guidance from the CDC and Board of Governors, **we expect that all members of our community will wear a mask on campus, vaccinated or unvaccinated.** This is especially important while indoors, in crowded outdoor settings, if you have a weakened immune system or if you have an underlying medical condition. Masks will be made available to anyone who needs one.

[Free, voluntary COVID-19 testing is available on our campuses.](#) It is critically important that individuals experiencing COVID-19 symptoms do not come to campus, except to get tested for the virus. Individuals who are experiencing symptoms may report them through the [Daily Symptom Checker](#) or by emailing assessCOVID@usf.edu, which will prompt a response from USF clinical staff, who will help you schedule a test, will complete contact tracing in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health and provide guidance on any needed isolation or quarantine.

In accordance with Board of Governors' guidance, USF continues to plan for a return to in-person classes and activities in the fall. Any decisions to pivot to temporary remote course instruction will be made under direction from the Board of Governors.

USF summer commencement will take place as planned on Aug. 21-22; however, we will expand the number of ceremonies each day to accommodate fewer graduates per ceremony. We expect that all participants and guests will wear masks, and USF will provide masks for anyone who needs one before entering the arena. More details will be shared soon from the Office of Commencement.

In addition to the above mitigation measures, USF leadership will take additional steps to keep our community safe, such as:

- Working with student organizations to implement appropriate mitigation strategies for their own organizations
- Working with student leaders to promote and incentivize the vaccine using peer-to-peer outreach
- Increasing signage on campus promoting the vaccine, masks and other mitigation measures
- Providing responsive symptom screening through the Daily Symptom Checker
- Providing free testing and contact tracing through USF Health and Student Health Services, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health
- Providing free vaccines on all of our campuses through Student Health Services and USF Health
- Supporting and providing accommodations for faculty, staff and students who are immunocompromised or who have underlying medical issues
- Engaging with faculty and providing clear direction for announcing expectations in their classrooms, including that masks are expected
- Providing masks in high-traffic areas, such as our student centers and libraries and for faculty to distribute in class, if needed
- Supporting employee wellness through extension of [special leave benefits for eligible employees](#)

We will cover these topics in detail and be available to answer questions at our [USF Town Hall](#) for

faculty and staff on Aug. 13 from 10-11 a.m., featuring USF President Rhea Law, COVID-19 Task Force Chair Donna Petersen, Provost Ralph Wilcox and Chief Human Resources Officer Angie Sklenka.

Students are invited to the Student & Family COVID-19 Update on Tuesday, Aug. 10, from 7-8 pm EST. The [Microsoft Teams Live event](#) will be hosted by the Dean of Students and other campus leaders and experts.

Please continue to visit usf.edu/returningtocampus for the latest updates, and thank you for doing your part to keep the USF community safe while providing the campus experience that our students deserve.