

HHS UPDATE

NTEU National Treasury Employees Union

NTEU to Raise Employee Concerns on Returning to Work

NTEU has requested a briefing on HHS's [Return to Normal Operations Implementation Guidance](#). To help prepare for the briefing, chapters are currently compiling a list of employee questions and concerns on returning to the workplace that NTEU will raise with management.

The guidance outlines a phased, three-step return to normal operations with a health and safety checklist for buildings that includes policies on cleaning, communications, social distancing, use of masks and visitors. The guidance also provides for special considerations for extended telework for employees who commute to work on public transit or who have ongoing child care needs.

NTEU continues to press for maximum telework policies and health and safety conditions that must be met before federal employees are required to return to the workplace.

HHS Refusal to Agree on a Remedy Continues a Hostile Pattern

In the last days of 2019, an arbitrator issued a decision clearly stating that HHS had no legal right to impose a partial collective bargaining agreement. In sustaining NTEU's grievance, an arbitrator found that HHS illegally imposed a Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) order while contract negotiations were ongoing.

The arbitrator ordered the parties to "meet, discuss and negotiate" over the harm the agency caused by prematurely implementing the articles. Those articles include alternative work schedules and hours of work, as well as the procedure employees use to challenge unfair actions by the agency. If NTEU and HHS could not reach an agreement, the arbitrator retained jurisdiction to hear additional evidence on a remedy and issue a decision.

NTEU and HHS recently convened that meeting, and management continued its hostile stance toward employees. HHS refused to agree to any remedy, instead asserting it will appeal the arbitrator's remedial decision--which has yet to be made--and seek to have the Federal Labor Relations Authority overrule it and deny NTEU's grievance. In response, NTEU will proceed with a hearing on the remedy.

As HHS continues to go out of its way to disregard your right to fairly bargain a contract, NTEU will keep standing its ground.

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"...to ensure that every federal employee is treated with dignity and respect."