

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 and the Impact on GEO's 2022 National Conference

As of May 3, 2022

Is GEO proceeding with an in-person conference?

GEO is proceeding with our in-person conference in Chicago with a variety of protocols, including limited capacity to allow for social distancing throughout the conference venue. After years of being separated due to the pandemic, we believe it's important to gather our community together in accordance with applicable law and while promoting conditions that are designed to protect the health and safety of the GEO community and the broader Chicago community. In-person attendees can expect an intimate experience where they can engage with peers across the sector, discussing the pressing topics and issues that matter most to our work.

Will GEO provide a virtual conference option?

Yes, for those who are not in a position to attend our 2022 National Conference in-person in Chicago, we will be offering a virtual conference component featuring livestreamed plenaries and short talks on May 16 - 18, 2022 as well as a virtual program of select interactive breakout sessions on May 24 - 25, 2022. Virtual attendees can expect opportunities to submit questions to our speakers during the livestreamed plenaries and short talks, as well as interactive virtual breakout sessions the week after our in-person gathering.

Why are you only livestreaming select sessions rather than livestream all conference sessions?

A "true hybrid" conference featuring livestreaming of all sessions would be cost-prohibitive and was not feasible given GEO's commitment to high quality, interactive sessions.

Do I need to be fully vaccinated to attend?

All participants, speakers, vendors, and GEO staff are required to have up-to-date vaccination for COVID-19 to register for and attend the conference. If you need an accommodation for medical or religious exemptions, please contact Nichole Hoeflich at hoeflich@geofunders.org or 202-355-9542, prior to arriving at the conference. [Visit the CDC's Vaccines.gov website](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) to learn more about COVID-19 vaccinations and to find vaccination sites near you.

How can I submit my proof of vaccine to meet the vaccine requirement?

GEO is partnering with [CVENT Health Check \(powered by ID.me\)](#) to securely verify vaccination records and participants health status. For a faster and smoother check-in process, we encourage all participants to complete their CVENT Health Check before arriving at the conference. [Follow this link](#) to create an account and complete your vaccine verification. For support in completing your CVENT Health Check with ID.me, check out our [Health Check Guide here](#).

How are you defining up-to-date vaccination?

GEO uses the Centers for Disease and Prevention Control's definition of "up-to-date vaccines" for purposes of its protocols, which may be [found here](#). This means for those who received their vaccine more than 5 months before the conference, will also be required to demonstrate proof of a booster shot.

Will GEO require wearing masks during the conference?

Yes, in alignment with the CDC recommendation for large indoor gatherings and our commitment to protect the most vulnerable, we will have a mask mandate at the conference. You are encouraged to bring your own mask and GEO will provide masks for all conference participants who need them.

Acceptable masks include N95, KN95, surgical or cloth masks that cover your nose and mouth. Gaters, neck guards and vented masks are not permitted.

Will GEO provide accommodations for individuals with medical or religious exemptions to the COVID-19 vaccine?

If you need an accommodation for medical or religious exemptions, please reach out to Nichole Hoeflich prior to registering for the conference. You can contact Nichole at hoeflich@geofunders.org or at 202-355-9542.

It is a few days before the conference or the conference is ongoing and I am experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, have tested positive for COVID-19, am waiting for a test result, or become aware that I had close contact with a person who has tested positive for or who has symptoms of COVID-19. What should I do?

You must monitor your daily health prior to entering the conference facilities and stay home or isolate yourself, and seek medical attention, in such situations.

Contact GEO staff to let them know you will be unable to attend the conference or, if the conference has started, that you are not able to continue attending in-person. If we receive notice before 9AM Central Time on Monday May 16, 2022, we will be happy to issue you a full refund, or you can transfer your registration to another person in your organization or

transfer your registration format to the virtual conference and receive a partial refund of the difference in registration costs. You must inform GEO staff by emailing registration@geofunders.org before 9 AM CT on Monday, May 16, 2022, in order to receive a full or partial refund or registration transfer.

If I would like to get tested while at the conference, where can I get tested near the conference venue?

GEO will have rapid COVID tests available for conference participants. You can request a test at the registration desk.

If you would like a PCR test, there are a few testing sites close to the conference hotel: Loop Medical Center - Streeterville is located 0.6 miles from our conference hotel, the Marriott Chicago Downtown Magnificent Mile, at 432 E Grand Ave, Suite B. You can book a COVID-19 test on their website or via phone at (312) 414-1088. Conference attendees are responsible for booking and paying for all COVID-19 tests. GEO will not be covering testing costs or making testing arrangements for any conference participants.

The closest COVID-19 testing site to our hotel is Northwestern Memorial Hospital, located 0.3 miles from our hotel at 259 East Erie Street. Because Northwestern Memorial Hospital currently requires a Northwestern Medicine physician's order for all COVID-19 tests at the hospital, this may not be the best option. You can call them directly at 312-926-2000. There are also multiple CVS and Walgreens that offer COVID-19 testing within walking distance of our conference hotel.

Are there any additional protocols being observed by the conference venue hotel or the city of Chicago?

As of May 3, 2022, Chicago has no capacity restrictions, mask mandate or vaccine requirement, in following local and state guidance. For more information regarding Chicago's latest COVID-19 policies, visit <https://www.choosechicago.com/plan-your-trip/covid-19/>.

Please note that while Chicago is not currently requiring masks or vaccines to enjoy public spaces, the GEO conference is maintaining a requirement for proof of a vaccination to attend the conference and is asking all participants to wear a mask (unless eating or drinking) throughout the conference event space.

The Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile is following local policies set by the city of Chicago. For more information about the hotel's COVID-19 protocols and policies, please visit <https://whattoexpect.marriott.com/chidt>.