



## **Trump Administration Strips Disability Accommodations at National Science Foundation, Threatening Exodus of Scientific and Administrative Talent**

*[AFGE Local 3403](#) Warns of Crisis at National Science Foundation*

**Washington, DC** — In a sudden move with no clear rationale, the Trump Administration is canceling and denying reasonable accommodations for disabled and medically vulnerable employees at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 3403 warns that this policy change, coupled with the loss of a third of the staff, threatens to dramatically increase the unprecedented brain drain that is already crippling the agency's ability to lead global scientific innovation.

Along with the potential loss of institutional knowledge, Union leaders are concerned that this move sets a dangerous precedent that could destabilize disability rights across the entire country.

"If the federal government decides that civil rights laws are optional, the private sector will undoubtedly follow suit," AFGE National President Everett Kelley said. "When the nation's largest employer starts treating disability rights like an administrative burden rather than the law of the land, every American worker with a medical need is in jeopardy."

NSF leadership is attempting to justify the rollback by citing the agency's upcoming relocation to a new headquarters (which is a few hundred yards from the previous headquarters now taken over by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)). Management is insisting that employees must first experience the new office space without their established accommodations, arguing that the necessity of these medical adjustments in a new environment has not yet been "tested."

"Management's logic is a dangerous absurdity," said AFGE Local 3403 Union representatives. "It's like telling a non-swimmer they can't use a life jacket in the ocean because they haven't yet drowned in salt water. You don't test a safety net by removing it before the fall."

The new NSF building is not ready for full occupancy, and the majority of employees have been asked to work from alternative duty stations. The NSF has already been heavily strained by a shrinking workforce. Stripping legal, hard-won protections under the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) puts many remaining specialized staff at risk of being forced out of their careers.

"NSF has already lost more than a third of its workforce," AFGE Union officials stated. "To watch brilliant, dedicated scientists and administrators get pushed out the door because agency leaders refuse to follow basic labor laws isn't just a tragedy, it's a self-inflicted wound to American innovation, and opens the door to strategic competitors like China."

The loss of these specialized professionals carries severe consequences for the nation. NSF staff are highly trained experts responsible for evaluating complex research proposals, managing billions in federal awards responsibly to avoid fraud, waste and abuse, and guiding the scientific breakthroughs that keep the United States competitive on the global stage.

AFGE Local 3403 is calling on Congressional leaders to intervene immediately, exercise oversight, and compel the Trump Administration to uphold federal law and preserve essential reasonable accommodations.

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**About AFGE Local 3403:** The American Federation of Government Employees Local 3403 represents most researchers, scientists and administrative employees at NSF. The union advocates for the communities they serve and fundamental, curiosity-driven research to drive the progress of science, development and innovation.