

## COVID-19 Policy and Protocols for In-Person Gathering

### GOALS

- We strive to create spaces in which all fellows, staff, facilitators, contractors, and partners are able to fully participate, with priority to folks with significant health risks to themselves and/or their loved ones.
- We commit to moving with deep respect and gratitude to the communities we visit, who have agreed to partner, share, and build with us. This includes minimizing the possibility that we will bring disease to any communities we visit, especially those vulnerable to COVID-19 with limited medical resources.

***Note:** In this document, “a mask” or “a high-quality mask” refers to an N95, KN95, or KF9 – not a cloth or “medical” mask.*

### TRAVEL & TESTING

These are guidelines for participants before and during travel. We ask that you take the following steps:

- **PRE-TRAVEL**
  - **A PCR COVID-19 Test OR two rapid antigen tests** within 24-48 hours of each other with negative results within 72 hrs of travel.
    - Please note that healthcare providers may cover a PCR test for patients presenting COVID-19 symptoms, and most healthcare providers are unlikely to cover a PCR test for travel reasons alone when the patient is asymptomatic.
    - Fellows’ awards are meant to support participation in the fellowship. We ask that you assess whether your award can adequately cover PCR or rapid antigen testing as needed. If costs associated with testing are prohibitive or you need support, please contact Castanea.
  - **Minimize risk of exposure** as much as possible for 5 days before travel. Avoid spending time indoors in public places if possible.
  - **Wear a high-quality mask (N95, KN95, KF94) when indoors** with people outside of your family or “pod.”

- If you test positive for COVID-19 on a PCR or rapid test, or present any [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#), do NOT travel to an in-person gathering and inform Castanea staff right away.
- **DURING TRAVEL**
  - **Wear a high-quality mask on the airplane and in the airport**, unless actively eating or drinking.
  - **Wear a high-quality mask in shared vehicles and public spaces** including ground transportation to and from airport; open windows to increase ventilation when possible.
  - **Wash hands** or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- **ARRIVAL**
  - **Take a rapid COVID-19 self-test** (provided by Castanea) upon arrival.
- **ONGOING SCREENING**
  - **Take a rapid self-test (provided by Castanea) each morning** of a gathering, before meeting with fellows, local partner organizations, and communities.
  - If a participant is feeling unwell or experiencing any symptoms that may be related to COVID-19, we will ask that person to self-quarantine, take a rapid test and/or PCR test, and confirm a negative result before rejoining the group.
- **DEPARTURE**
  - **Take a rapid self-test (provided by Castanea) before departing** to travel home.

## **LODGING & ACCOMMODATIONS**

- **Castanea will provide:**
  - Separate, single-occupancy rooms
  - High quality masks (N95, KN95, KF94)
  - Hand sanitizer for each participant.
- **We will ask participants to agree to:**
  - Wear a mask indoors at all times unless in your own private space.
  - When using shared bathrooms (in a shared housing situation)
    - Be considerate and try to keep time in shared bathrooms to a minimum
    - Open windows to allow for air circulation as possible.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- In shared ground transportation, we ask all participants to agree to:
  - Wear a mask at all times inside the vehicle
  - Open windows for ventilation whenever possible

## **PARTICIPATION & DECISION-MAKING**

- Practice consent with each other. For example, ask before you decide to remove your mask near others. Ask for consent before hugs or other close physical contact - even when you are really excited to see each other!
- If participants would like to change these agreements, it must be done through a consensus process in which everyone consents to the new agreements. This includes Castanea staff, consultants/contractors/facilitators, and local partners.
- Participant groups, such as those in shared housing or other groups, may have a consensus decision-making process to decide how you want to pod together. ***We ask that you prioritize the wellness and access needs of folks with the highest risk.***

## **PROGRAMMING**

- Wear a mask during all indoor sessions, doing your best to minimize mask-off time such as for drinking water or snacking.
- As needed, Castanea will provide AV equipment to assist in hearing each other clearly.
- Castanea will support ventilation/air filtration, such as with open windows and/or air filters.

## **FOOD & MEALS**

- When eating together, eat outside, or indoors and unmask only when eating or drinking.
- During free time, you agree to only get take-out/delivery or eat outdoors. You agree to not eat indoors at a restaurant or otherwise spend time indoors in a public place, unmasked.
- *Please note that Castanea programming is designed carefully, taking into consideration times of year and geographic locations in which we will reasonably be able to comfortably eat outside. Please show respect for our labor by adhering to these agreements to support the health of our group and of communities we visit.*

## **IN CASE OF A POSITIVE TEST**

- If someone tests positive on a rapid antigen test, Castanea will support them in getting a PCR test ASAP, and they will be asked to quarantine directly after that.
- Everyone will mask up (regardless of other agreements) and take the highest level of precaution.
- People who test positive on either test will quarantine. This may involve:
  - In a shared housing situation, asking participants to move so that people who tested positive can isolate
  - Castanea paying for a hotel room for up to five days of isolation per CDC guidelines, and flight change if needed
  - Keeping interactions with the group to an “only if necessary” basis, with the highest level of precaution.
- Participants who test negative on PCR and antigen tests will continue with our scheduled programming. We should all plan for the possibility of renegotiating as a group regarding overall COVID-19 protocols, or revisiting agreements.
- Even one positive case of COVID-19 may impact our programming and interaction with local partners. We may have to shift plans in the moment to respect the needs and wishes of local communities.
- Resources and recommendations: [CDC - Quarantine and Isolation](#), [People's CDC](#).
- *Per our contract, you are responsible for your own medical expenses that may be incurred during Castanea activities. Beyond what is listed in this protocol document, we are unable to cover your medical care and expenses. Please plan accordingly.*

## **POTENTIAL CANCELLATION**

- Castanea Fellowship may make the decision to cancel in-person programming in the case of a surge of COVID-19 cases, whether widespread or local to the region we intend to visit. We do not take such decisions lightly and will consult with multiple stakeholders any time we consider a cancellation.
- We live in unpredictable times, with minimal leadership and guidelines at the federal level. We will continue to do our best to listen to those most impacted and center our communities’ needs as we weigh the need for travel and in-person programming.
- As COVID-19 and the recent emergence of other airborne illnesses have shown us, the world is unpredictable and we must stay flexible. We hold that select cancellations and programming pivots are to be expected as we try to move responsibly in these uncertain times.