

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230
OFFICE OF POLAR PROGRAMS

The National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs requires all applicants for travel to Greenland and select regions of the Arctic under the auspices of the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs to provide a complete medical history and take a comprehensive physical examination.

The medical staff at the National Science Foundation notifies all individuals who do not meet the medical standards for Arctic deployment that they are not physically qualified. Concurrently, the individuals are informed that an administrative waiver process exists. This process allows individuals, who believe they can demonstrate an ability to work in the harsh Arctic environment in spite of their medical conditions, an opportunity to make a request for consideration on a case-by-case basis for an exception to the standards.

The waiver process is administered by the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs. You may direct your inquiries to Ms. Gwendolyn M. Adams at 703-292-7438 or you may send a fax to 703-292-9001. You may also contact Ms. Adams via email at gadams@nsf.gov.

.....
EMPLOYER STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR WAIVER REQUEST

On behalf of the National Science Foundation, the NSF Medical Director notified _____ that he/she does not meet the NSF's medical standards for Arctic deployment. _____ informed me of his/her medical condition and the reason for the disqualification. He/She also informed me that the National Science Foundation will only consider an administrative waiver if the applicant obtains the employing organization's support.

_____ and I discussed the Arctic's extreme climate and remoteness. We also discussed the NSF's determination that if _____ deploys to the Arctic he/she is placing him/herself at a higher risk than those individuals who meet the medical standards. The National Science Foundation informed us that there is limited medical care available at the Arctic research field camps. If _____ requires any sophisticated diagnostic procedures or treatment, they would not be available at the Arctic research site. We both understand that medical evacuations are extremely costly and require a great deal of logistic coordination which may take hours and sometimes days or longer, depending on the weather to accomplish. We recognize that all the concerns mentioned above make it necessary for NSF to impose stringent medical and dental criteria for "fitness for Arctic duty" determinations. We further discussed the potential impacts that this deployment may have on our organization. For example, there may be a potential impact on the employee's ability to perform his or her job while in the Arctic. This issue affects both the individual and the Organization. We acknowledge NSF's determination that the employing organization must endorse all requests for waivers before consideration is given. Finally, both _____ and I recognize that the NSF's approval of waiver requests in no way suggests that the medical problem does not exist; but, rather indicates a recognition that the individual may be able to perform his or her duties, despite the limitations of the medical condition, at a level of acceptable risk.

This organization understands that if the National Science Foundation has to evacuate _____ to a tertiary care facility, the NSF shall incur no additional expense beyond that required to evacuate the individual to that facility. As an authorized representative of the Organization and on its behalf, I acknowledge the potential increased risk to _____ of deploying to the Arctic with his/her medical condition and I support his/her request for an administrative waiver from the National Science Foundation.

Print Name

Signature and date

Print Title

Print Name of Organization