

Program for the International Assessment of
Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Cycle II
2022 Field Test

Appendix E

COVID-19 MITIGATION PROTOCOLS
(Interviewer Procedures Manual)

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Submitted by
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This document was prepared by Westat for their own in-house use across several projects. Although the PIAAC Operational Field Test does not include household visits and will instead invite people into Westat facilities to participate in the field test, much of this material will still be used to train those who will be administering the field test. It is included as a reference that will help describe to OMB and interested readers the kind of precautions that Westat is preparing interviewers to take during data collection; see Part B for more detailed descriptions of how these protocols will be implemented.

This document will not be included in respondent contact materials.

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Appendix F. COVID-19 MITIGATION PROTOCOLS.....	F-5
Purpose of Document.....	F-5
1. Following Household Study Protocols.....	F-5
1.1 COVID-19 Daily Checklist.....	F-5
1.2 Monitoring Conditions in the Primary Sampling Unit (PSU).....	F-6
2. Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Important Safety Guidelines.....	F-7
2.1 Face Masks.....	F-8
2.2 Hand Hygiene.....	F-10
2.3 Disposable Gloves.....	F-10
2.4 Data Collection Safety Protocols.....	F-11
3. Reporting Positive COVID-19 Test Results and/or Daily Checklist Failure.....	F-15
3.2 Protocol for When a Field Interviewer Reports Positive COVID-19 Test Results.....	F-17
3.3 Protocol for When a Field Interviewer Does Not Successfully Pass the Daily Checklist.....	F-17
4. Field Deployment and Westat’s COVID-19 Dashboard.....	F-17

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Appendix E

COVID-19 MITIGATION PROTOCOLS

Purpose of Document

This document defines the basic protocol Westat follows in household-based studies. It will provide input into project-specific field procedures, manuals, and other training/support materials. To the extent federal and/or applicable state and/or local orders or guidance conflict with these protocols, such orders and guidance will govern.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these mitigation protocols, please contact your supervisor. If you require an accommodation related to protocols described below, please contact Laurie O’Neal with Westat’s Field HR (LaurieOneal@westat.com) or the ADA Coordinator (WorkplaceAccommodations@westat.com).

1. Following Household Study Protocols

1.1 COVID-19 Daily Checklist

Protecting the health and safety of our employees, as well as our survey participants, is a top priority for Westat. Based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health authorities, we require staff to monitor their health while working on their assignments. This checklist is intended for the COVID-19 screening of employees prior to the start of the workday. It is not intended for employees who have been confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19. If you have been notified by your healthcare provider that you are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, you may not work and should contact your supervisor who will provide you with further instructions. Until further notice, you must self-

assess using this COVID-19 checklist each day that you will collect data in-person for your project or will otherwise be performing job duties outside your personal residence (or if on business travel, outside your lodging accommodations). The COVID-19 Daily Checklist is a self-screening tool and staff are not required to fill out the Checklist and submit to Westat.

COVID-19 Daily Checklist

Since your last day of work,

1. Do you have a new fever of 100.4 or higher or a sense of having a fever?
2. Do you have a new cough that isn't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
3. Do you have new shortness of breath that isn't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
4. Have you lost your sense of taste or smell?
5. Do you have a new headache that isn't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
6. Do you have a new sore throat that isn't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
7. Do you have new muscle aches that aren't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19 or a specific activity (such as physical exercise)?
8. Do you have new chills that aren't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
9. Have you had an episode of vomiting or diarrhea that isn't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
10. Have you had any other negative change in your health that isn't attributable to a health condition other than COVID-19?
11. Have you had close contact with or are caring for someone who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19?

If you answer "yes" to any question above, you should not collect data in-person for your project or otherwise perform job duties outside your personal residence (or if on business travel, outside your lodging accommodations) and must inform your supervisor. If you proceed to collect data or otherwise perform job duties outside your personal residence (or if on business travel, outside your lodging accommodations), you are affirming that you have answered "no" to all of the questions above.

If you have any other health concern that could affect your ability to work, you should contact your supervisor before starting work.

1.2 Monitoring Conditions in the Primary Sampling Unit (PSU)

Westat is conducting ongoing, in-house research of the status of all PIAAC PSUs and counties via state and local health departments. You should also monitor conditions in your area and report any hot spots or increased number of COVID-19 cases to your Supervisor. Delays or suspensions of certain PSUs may occur if conditions are not safe.

If you have any concerns about your safety, please reach out to your Supervisor or Field Manager. As always at Westat, safety is our top priority.

2. Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Important Safety Guidelines

Your health and safety are of primary importance and we encourage you to be mindful of this as you conduct your activities each day. Be sure to notify your supervisor promptly if you begin to run low on any required PPEs.

Westat and the study will provide you with the following supplies:

- 1 box of 50 nitrile gloves per person;
- disposable masks;
- sanitizing wipes or sanitizing spray with dry wipes (to use dry wipes and sanitizing spray, thoroughly dampen a clean dry wipe and use in same manner as sanitizing wipe); and
- hand sanitizer.

In addition, the project will reimburse you for the cost of sealable plastic bags for the carrying of clean materials such as masks and gloves as well as disposal bags for used equipment. PIAAC will also reimburse at a cost up to \$20 for a basic digital thermometer (to monitor employee health status).

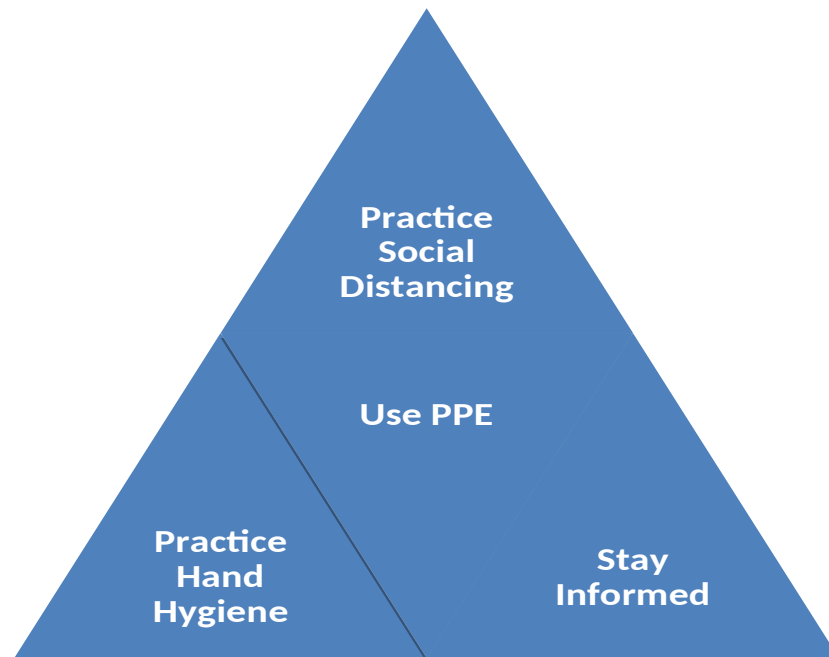
Note: Please contact PIAAC Supply if you need to reorder a PPE supply or if you need a different size gloves (if the size gloves you need is not available through PIAAC supply, you will be reimbursed for the purchase of 50-100 nitrile gloves in your size pending supervisor approval).

You must also follow the state and local COVID-19 guidelines that are in place within your PSU.

It is important that each of us use common sense in reducing potential exposure risks during this pandemic and evaluating our health condition. Gloves and masks were used by staff who prepared and boxed the materials and equipment mailed to you. We also limited the number of people who had contact with these items. **Westat requires you to wear a mask during**

data collection and when in close contact (such as traveling) with others or on public transportation (see Section 4.5 “Public Transportation Protocols”). The use of gloves, masks, sanitizing wipes (or spray and wipes), sanitizer and travel should be consistent with applicable state and local guidance and generally is recommended when using public transportation, public restrooms, stopping at gas stations, and visiting other locations where contact by multiple persons is common. Airlines also require wearing masks while traveling. You will be provided travel guidelines if you are selected for an agree to a travel trip. However, Figure 1 shows the key mitigation protocols to remember.

Figure 1. Key exposure mitigation protocols



2.1 Face Masks

You must wear a face mask when conducting in-person data collection activities.

Westat will provide you with disposable face masks for the duration of data collection. Additionally, you may elect to use your own mask as long as it meets and is cleaned in accordance with [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>).

Face masks should be handled, worn, stored, and disposed of properly.

2.1.1 Face Mask Do's and Don'ts

- Do wash your hands before and after handling the mask (to put it on, take it off, or adjust it) to reduce cross-contamination. See Section 2.2, “Hand Hygiene.”
- Do identify the outside and inside of the mask. Many reusable masks are blue or yellow on one side and white on the other. The blue or yellow is the outside and the white is the inside. If the mask is not color coded, place a mark (initials) on the outside so it is easily identified.
- Do keep the mask covering both your nose and mouth.
- Do store the mask in a clean place such as a paper bag when not using the mask.
- Don't store the mask in your pocket or purse.
- Don't touch the outside of the mask once you have it positioned on your face. Once the mask is on, the outside of the mask is considered dirty.
- Don't pull your mask below your chin while wearing it or leave it hanging from an ear.

2.1.2 Putting on Face Masks

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask. See Section 2.2, “Hand Hygiene.”
- Pick up the mask by the ear loops and avoid touching the front or back of the mask as much as possible. You will have to touch it slightly to obtain a good fit.

- If you are reusing a mask, confirm that the mask has not been compromised. Inspect it to confirm that there are no obvious tears or holes in the mask, that it is not wet or soiled. If it is, throw it away; repeat hand hygiene and select a new mask.
- Determine which edge of the mask is the top. Some masks have a stiff bendable edge that is meant to mold to the shape of your nose.
- Determine which side of the mask is the outside and inside.
- Loop the elastic over your ears.
- If your mask has a stiff bendable edge, fit the bridge of your nose. Pull down the bottom to cover your chin.
- Avoid touching the outside of the mask while you are wearing it.

2.1.3 Removing Face Masks

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before removing the mask.
- Remove the mask using the ear loops.
- Check the mask to confirm it can be reused. (Inspect it to confirm that there are no obvious tears or holes in the mask, that it is not wet or soiled. If it is, throw it away.)

2.1.4 Storing Face Masks

- Fold the mask in half (lengthwise or widthwise), so the outside surfaces are touching each other. Place it carefully into a clean storage bag.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. See Section 2.2 “Hand Hygiene.”
- To reapply the mask, first perform hand hygiene, then open the mask storage bag.
- Bring extra masks to switch out during the day in case the first set gets wet, sweaty, or dirty.

2.2 Hand Hygiene

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20–30 seconds especially before and after you have been in a respondent's home, after being in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol (provided hand sanitizer meets this requirement). Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

2.3 Disposable Gloves

2.3.1 Glove Protocol

- Although gloves will not be required for PIAAC, gloves will be provided for use as needed or if desired by the interviewer or respondent.

2.3.2 Putting on and Using Gloves

- Perform hand hygiene prior to putting on gloves.
- Select gloves according to hand size. Westat will provide you with one box (50 pairs) of gloves in the size you requested. You may order additional gloves from PIAAC Supply as needed.
- Minimize the surfaces touched while wearing the gloves.
- Use hand sanitizer on the gloves (while on the hands) if moving from person to person.

2.3.3 Removing and Discarding Gloves

- The outside of the gloves are considered contaminated, so grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand. Peel glove off.
- Hold the removed glove in the gloved hand. Slide the fingers of the ungloved hand under the remained glove at the wrist. Peel the second glove off over the first glove.

- Discard into an appropriate trash receptacle.

2.4 Data Collection Safety Protocols

Make sure your face mask properly covers nose and mouth before approaching a residence.

2.4.1 Screen Household Prior to Entering

Appointment Calls the Day Before the Interview

- After explaining why you are calling and gaining cooperation to conduct the interview, ask these questions
 - Is anyone in the household, including the respondent, currently ill or having flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms (including exhibiting respiratory symptoms or a fever of 100.4 or higher) or has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been ill or had such symptoms in the past 14 days?
 - Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been informed by a healthcare provider that they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?
 - Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been told by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure?
 - Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been in close contact with a non-household member who has been informed by a healthcare provider that they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 or who has exhibited flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms?
 - Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, traveled internationally within the past 14 days?
 - IF yes to any of these questions above, schedule a time to call back after the 14 day period or conduct a telephone interview.

Prepare for Conducting In-Person Interview Work - Ensure You Have All Necessary PPE

- Face masks.
- Sanitizing wipes (or sanitizing spray and wipes).
- Disposable gloves.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Disposal bag.

Prepare for Greeting Respondent Prior to Interview

- Secure your mask and gather other PPE for use during the contact and interview.
- Remain at least six feet from the door and household members after knocking/ringing.
- If you provide materials designed for respondents to keep, such as a brochure, leave them with the respondent.
- If you share materials with a respondent that are designed to use with multiple respondents, the material should be in a plastic sleeve that you should wipe down with a sanitizing wipe (or spray a dry wipe with sanitizing spray thoroughly to dampen the wipe and wipe down) after use. Dispose of the used wipe.
 - After explaining why you are there and gaining cooperation to conduct the interview, ask these questions:
 1. Is anyone in the household, including the respondent, currently ill or having flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms (including exhibiting respiratory symptoms or a fever of 100.4 or higher) or has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been ill or had such symptoms in the past 14 days?
 2. Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been informed by a healthcare provider that they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?
 3. Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been told by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure?

4. Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, been in close contact with a non-household member who has been informed by a healthcare provider that they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 or who has exhibited flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms?
5. Has anyone in the household, including the respondent, traveled internationally within the past 14 days?

IF yes to any of these questions above, schedule a time to come back or find another location to conduct the interview (unless it is the respondent exhibiting symptoms or self-quarantining).

2.4.2 Explain Project Safety Protocols

- A mask is required for the interviewer to protect safety of public and employees. Masks are encouraged for respondents and available upon request.
- Use gloves (if requested), hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes (or sanitizing spray and wipes).
- Practice social distancing. Ask “Is there a place outside where we can conduct this interview?” If so, you should conduct the interview outside.
- If you learn someone is ill with COVID-19-like symptoms, leave immediately and call to reschedule interview after discussing with your supervisor.
- If respondent is not comfortable with social distancing and PPE use:
 - Offer a telephone interview, thank the respondent and leave the household.
 - Enter an EROC entry, providing specific details about the interaction.

2.4.3 Double-Check Inside the Residence

- It is preferable you conduct interviews outdoors if a suitable space is available. If not, ask if there is a space to conduct the interview where you may socially distance (6 feet) from the respondent and

other household members. Set up interview in area with good ventilation if possible.

- If you are not comfortable with your ability to socially distance within the residence or feel uncomfortable for any reason:
 - Offer a telephone interview, thank the respondent and leave the household.
 - Enter an EROC entry, providing specific details about the interaction.

2.4.4 Conduct the Interview

Conducting the Interview

- Set up laptop and other materials while maintaining appropriate social distance
- If interviewing outside, you can ask the respondent if it is acceptable to wipe down the chair. Be aware that bleach-based wipes could discolor fabric or clothing.
- You will provide the respondent with a disposable set of show cards to use during the interview. Instructions for which show card to reference will be provided. You should instruct the respondent to discard these papers at the end of the interview.
- All gaining cooperation materials like brochures and planners you provide the respondent should be kept by the respondent.
- Keep a supply of unused PIAAC pens and provide when necessary. Leave the pen with the respondent.
- Use sanitizing wipes to clean materials/equipment touched by respondent and/or FI
- Provide the respondent with a complementary PIAAC hand sanitizer container. The respondent may use the sanitizer now or save it for later.
- Keep PPE on until you leave the residence.
- Avoid using the restroom at the residence.

2.4.5 Clean Up After Completing the Interview

- Clean all materials/equipment with a disinfectant wipe (or a spray and wipe) including the laptop and show card binder as you pack up the equipment. To use the dry wipe and sanitizing spray, spray a clean wipe until damp with sanitizing spray and use in same manner as sanitizing wipe. You should wipe down the laptop and other materials prior to getting back into your vehicle.
- Safely dispose of used masks/wipes/gloves after you exit the household in a disposable bag.
- Place the disposal bag on the floor of car or trunk, somewhere it cannot be accidentally touched, or dispose of the bag in external trash can when available.

On a Regular Basis During the Field Period

- Take inventory of your PPE supplies and reorder as needed through PIAAC supply.
- Keep supervisor apprised of any difficulties utilizing equipment or with the quality of the items provided.
- Alert your supervisor of any interviewing situation where there was risk of exposure due to non-compliance by respondents.

3. Reporting Positive COVID-19 Test Results and/or Daily Checklist Failure

As discussed in Section 1, interviewers who test positive for COVID-19 and/or do not successfully pass the Daily Checklist must notify their supervisor before conducting in-person data collection activities.

3.1 Protocol for When a Field Interviewer Tests Positive for COVID-19, Exhibits COVID-19 Symptoms or Is Waiting for COVID-19 Test Results, and Return to Work Requirements

Employees must notify their supervisor if the results of their COVID-19 test are positive.

If an employee has a positive COVID-19 test result, but has had no COVID-19 symptoms and continues to have no symptoms, the employee can return to work or perform work outside of his/her personal residence:

- After 10 days have passed since the positive viral test; or
- As specified by the employee's health care provider.

If an employee has a positive COVID-19 test result or believes they have COVID-19 and had COVID-19 symptoms, the employee can return to work or perform work outside of his/her personal residence:

- After 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and 10 days since symptoms first appeared and COVID-19 symptoms have improved

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>); or

- If the employee's healthcare provider recommends testing, the employee should follow their healthcare provider's guidance on when they are able to return to work based on the test results.

If an employee has had close contact

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>) **with someone with COVID-19, the employee can return to work or perform work outside of his or her personal residence:**

- 14 days after their last exposure to that person. If the employee develops COVID-19 symptoms following exposure, the protocol "If an employee has a positive COVID-19 test result or believes they have COVID-19 *and* had COVID-19 symptoms" above should be followed.

An employee who was severely ill with COVID-19 may need to stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appeared. The employee should follow their healthcare provider's guidance on whether they should be tested and when they are able to return to work.

If an employee collected data in-person for a project or performed work outside of his/her personal residence and subsequently tests positive for COVID-19, the following must take place:

- Employee may not collect data in-person for a project or perform work outside of his/her personal residence until the return to work requirements set forth above are met.
- Employee must provide the project and/or Field HR with information and cooperation for contact tracing purposes.

Under no circumstances can an employee collect data in-person for a project or perform work outside of his/her personal residence if any of the following apply:

- A health care provider has advised the employee to take a COVID-19 test.

- The employee has taken a COVID-19 test and is waiting for the results.
- The employee has tested positive for COVID-19, and has not met the return to work requirements set forth above.

3.2 Protocol for When a Field Interviewer Reports Positive COVID-19 Test Results

The supervisor will notify the home office. Home office management will:

1. Identify other employees exposed in the prior 14 days.
2. Identify respondents possibly exposed in prior 14 days using (Mobile Field Operations System (mFOS) and project Electronic Record of Calls (EROCs) to document recent movements of the interviewer.
3. Direct the supervisor to arrange for the interviewer to conduct interviews by telephone if able or arrange another interviewer to cover the appointment/call the respondent to reschedule, if the field interviewer has interview appointment(s).

If an employee reports positive COVID-19 results, Westat will inform other employees and third parties, as applicable, of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and will maintain confidentiality as required by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

PIAAC field interviewers should not contact PIAAC households directly in this situation. Westat has a corporate process for identifying and notifying respondents with possible exposure.

3.3 Protocol for When a Field Interviewer Does Not Successfully Pass the Daily Checklist

Any field staff who do not successfully pass the Daily Checklist will be required, prior to collecting data in person for their project or otherwise performing job duties outside their personal residence (or if on business

travel, outside their lodging accommodations) must meet the return to work requirements as outlined in Section 3.1.

4. Field Deployment and Westat's COVID-19 Dashboard

Westat developed the COVID-19 Dashboard to visualize and manage the COVID risk levels of in-person interviewing in each county across the country. This gives Westat and project management clear and consistent information about COVID risk levels to assist in decision-making.

Westat's COVID-19 dashboard uses datasets of population, daily cases, and deaths at the county level distributed by the not-for-profit civic initiative USAFacts. The information provided by USAFacts is compiled from different sources, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state- and local-level public health agencies. A detailed methodology with sources and the method to compile the original data is provided by USAFacts at <https://usafacts.org/articles/detailed-methodology-covid-19-data/>.

Westat collects these publicly available datasets daily and uses them to compute the metrics and risk-level measures suggested by the Harvard Global Health Institute in their COVID Risk Level map and COVID suppression guidance. In particular, Westat uses the average of new daily cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people over the last 7 days to classify counties in green (less than one case), yellow (between 1 and 9 cases), orange (between 10 and 24 cases), and red (more than 24 cases) risk levels.

Using these data, the dashboard displays a risk level map that indicates if a county has a green, yellow, orange or red risk level, as designated above.

Westat ONLY considers counties with a green or yellow risk safe to conduct in-person interviewing. That is, counties with an average of LESS

THAN ten (10) new daily cases of COVID-19 per 100,000. Field Staff that live in orange or red risk counties are not allowed to work outside their homes.