

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE
ADMINISTRATION

Mary W. Jackson Building NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



May 2, 2023

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the
H2M Summit 2023 and surrounding events on May 16-18, 2023

On May 16-18, 2023, the Explore Mars, Inc., a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host the Human to Mars Summit 2023 at the National Academy of Sciences Building in Washington, DC, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Explore Mars is in control of the plans and invitations for the Summit program events unless otherwise indicated. The purpose of the event is to bring experts from around the world together to provide a forum for discussions on the technical, scientific, and policy challenges of sending humans to Mars in the upcoming decades. Attendees will include representatives from the legislative branch, industry, government agencies, media, entertainment community, non-profit organizations, STEM educators, and academia. An award will be given to the Technical Director, Wade Holler, Explore Mars.

Approximately 400 – 500 people are expected to attend the event. The program will include three breakfasts, three coffee break snacks, one lunch, and one reception.

May 16th: Breakfast estimated cost of the breakfast \$15.00 per person each day. Coffee and snacks estimated cost of the coffee break and snacks \$15.00 per person each day. The program will include a light reception (paid separately, not included with registration) estimated cost is \$45 per person.

May 17th: Breakfast estimated cost of the breakfast \$15.00 per person each day. Coffee and snacks estimated cost of the coffee break and snacks \$15.00 per person each day. The program will include a lunch (paid separately, not included with registration) estimated cost is \$65 per person.

May 18th: Breakfast estimated cost of the breakfast \$15.00 per person each day. Coffee and snacks estimated cost of the coffee break and snacks \$15.00 per person each day.

Attendance at these events will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA program.

I find that these events meet the requirements of a “widely attended gathering” as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g). I further determine that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend these events because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA’s policies, programs and operations. Accordingly, NASA employees—including non-career employees subject to Executive Order 13989—who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of Explore Mars may accept an invitation for free attendance to the events where complimentary invitations have been issued. In those circumstances, I find that the Agency’s interest in attendance outweighs any concern that the individual may be, or may appear to be, improperly influenced in the performance of their duties.

However, NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of Explore Mars, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, should seek a separate determination from their local ethics counselor as to whether they may accept the invitation of free attendance to the event. Attendees are reminded to exercise any COVID-19 precautions appropriate to their individual situation.

Adam F. Greenstone