

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE
ADMINISTRATION

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



May 6, 2024

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 2024 and surrounding events on May 7-8, 2024

On May 7-8, 2024, the Explore Mars, Inc., a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host the Human to Mars Summit 2024 at the Jack Morton Auditorium at George Washington University, 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 for a forum to discuss technical, scientific, and policy challenges of sending humans to Mars. 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 student winner of the Mars Innovation Challenge.

Approximately 300 – 350 people are expected to attend the event. The program will include two continental breakfasts, two coffee breaks, and two receptions.

May 7th: Continental breakfast (included with conference registration) estimated cost of the breakfast \$15.00 per person each day. Coffee break (included with conference registration) estimated cost of the coffee break \$15.00 per person each day. The program will include an offsite reception (paid separately, not included with registration) estimated cost is \$85 per person.

May 8th: Continental breakfast (included with conference registration) estimated cost of the breakfast \$15.00 per person each day. Coffee break (included with conference registration) estimated cost of the coffee break \$15.00 per person each day. The program will include an onsite reception (paid separately, not included with registration) estimated cost is \$30 per person.

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

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.

Adam F. Greenstone