

Best Practices for Supervisors - 2026

CIRES HR Team

Becca Edwards, Director of Access and Cultural Innovation (ACI)

Matthew Dawson, Associate Director, Center for Education, Evaluation and Engagement (CEEE)



University of Colorado Boulder



CIERSDS

Cooperative Institute for Earth Systems
Research and Data Science

Best Practices for Supervisors 2026

Presented by the CIRES HR TEAM



Angela Knight, HR Director



LuAnn Line, Payroll Liaison



Janet Garcia, International Employee Specialist



Jimena Ugaz, Talent Acquisition and Training



Christen Cousins, HR Coordinator,
Recruiting & Campus Onboarding



Jazmin Surface, HR Generalist, Student/Temp
Hiring, Campus Recruiting, CIRES Career Track



Lucia Harrop, Office Manager and Liaison to
NOAA, Annual Summary of Accomplishments



Emily Hinga, Sr. HR Generalist, Student
Hiring, Temp Hiring, CIRES Visiting Fellows

Upcoming Trainings

[Performance Management](#), CU Central HR and CIRES HR, March 30

Please join members of the CU Boulder HR team for a virtual training on performance management best practices, including progressive discipline, documentation, and evaluation. This is relevant for employees, supervisors, and science advisors. Session will be recorded and shared [here](#).

[2025-2026 Annual Summary of Accomplishments overview](#), April 20

Please join Lucia Harrop, along with the CIRES HR Team, for the Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA) training and a discussion of how ASA and career track are connected.

Full training catalog with CU Boulder HR [here](#)
Most sessions are recorded and posted [here](#)



Supervisor Best Practices- Agenda

- Supervisor vs. Science Advisor (roles)
- Orientation and onboarding
- Best practices for supervision
- Performance & Talent Management
- Stay interviews and conflict resolution
- Code of conduct
- Wellness resources
- Hiring (regular, temporary employees, and students)
- Time Sheets, FAMLI, Separation & Retirement
- Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA)
- Career Track & Promotion
- Remote Work Agreements
- Visas & Immigration processes
- Access and Cultural Innovation
- Center for Education, Engagement and Evaluation: Support and Volunteering
- Q&A

The Role of the Supervisor

Supervisors:

- Must be a CU Employee
- Listed in HCM as CIRES supervisor
- May directly oversee the scientific or technical work of CIRES employees or collaborate with Science Advisor(s)
- Provide a communications channel between employees, CIRES, University, and Labs/Centers
- Technical contact between CIRES and employees:
 - Guidance for Arriving and Departing
 - Completion of timecards and documentation of leave
 - Other HR processes as they arise
- Provide advice and oversight in the Career Track promotion process
- Support Career Track promotion process through evaluation and recommendation
- Complete and sign annual employee evaluation and rating sheet

The Role of the Science Advisor

Science Advisors - General

- Hold requisite scientific and / or technical expertise to guide alignment w/ scientific mission of work
- Work with CIRES supervisors to provide scientific direction and support to the efforts of research projects, teams, and individual employees.
- Support Career Track promotion process through evaluation and recommendation related to project progress and mission alignment
- Complete and sign annual Scientific Evaluation (optional but recommended)

Science Advisors - Federal (typically @ NOAA)

In addition to the above:

- Generally are Federal Employees
- Play a critical role in establishing and preserving the collaborative atmosphere of the Boulder NOAA laboratories.
- Establish a legitimate institutional channel for NOAA scientists to provide project input, direction, and feedback for CIRES employees working in the Boulder NOAA labs.

Onboarding Your New Employee

Orientation vs. Onboarding (*definitions*)

Onboarding: Integrating into the organization, and learning the job duties, and responsibilities.

Orientation: Initial welcome into the organization.

- Helpful Information: [CU Boulder onboarding](#) and [NOAA onboarding](#)
- Keep in mind that in general it takes 1 year to transition into a position
- Have a Plan for the first day, first week, month, 6-months and year goals

CU's Orientation: The Quick Start Program (QSP)

- New at CU Quick Start, what is it? Campus orientation for new employees to complete important tasks and get information on available campus programs

THE QUICK START PROGRAM [schedule](#): 1st day of the month and most Mondays (remotely by zoom)

ORIENTATION THROUGH CENTRAL HUMAN RESOURCES: 9:00-10:30 AM MT

New employees link <https://www.colorado.edu/hr/new-employees>

- Orientation will cover:

Benefits information

I-9 step 2 verification (*w/ reciprocal office for remote starters*)

MyCU Info portal & My leave

Mandatory training (*Discrimination & Sexual Harassment, CU IT*)

Parking passes

CU Buff ONE Card/RTD Pass

Onboarding NOAA Labs Vs. CU Based Employee

All new hires have an orientation with a CIRES HR Rep: CU Based Employees meet with Christen Cousins, NOAA Embedded employees meet with Lucia Harrop.

- The approx. one- hour orientation includes a check in after the QSP, introductions and space for asking questions and providing resources for benefits, retirement, I-9, etc. Also included: MyLeave walk through, Access and Cultural Innovation, CEEE opportunities, Early Career Resources, Childcare, Ergonomics, InsideCIRES Data Hub, Calendars, Personnel database updates and links to the [CIRES Onboarding Website](#).

- NOAA Employees specifically get:

*What is CIRES and how does it fit with NOAA, Physical Tours and NOAA campus logistics, Security, Site Closure Guidance, Email rules

One month check in verify: First time sheet has been submitted, completion of all administrative onboarding for benefits, and make sure no administrative processes are stuck

- Introduction to CIRES Members Council Representative(s).
- 6-Month New hire Meet Up: Reminder of early career resources, Education and Outreach, communications, publications, Career Track, ASA, CIRES Mentoring Program, CMC and other employee perks

For full NOAA onboarding process orientation overview, please see this [link](#).



Best practices for supervision

- Use the position description (new employees) and the prior ASA as a starting point.
- Establish clear and reasonable objectives (timeline).
- Discuss schedule and format of meetings.
- Agree on effective communication (platform and frequency).
- Check on your supervisees' overall wellbeing; make sure they take vacation and sick time when they are sick.
- Don't avoid discussing mistakes, delayed deliverables, accountability issues or misunderstandings (timely and direct feedback).
- Document and revisit (both milestones and concerns).

*Professional Development (Fall 2025 training)

Skill building in all areas:

- Technical
- Managerial (Leadership training through CU, LinkedIn Learning)
- Grant-writing, publishing and communication

*Weekly emails and Admin blogs from the Message Center will announce most trainings.

*Demand active involvement and accountability from employees in their own professional development.

Coaching and Mentoring:

- Help your employee understand the team's and the institute's functions, and engage them in the broader profession.
- Recommend employee joins the Mentoring Program as mentor or mentee

Performance & Talent Management

Performance Management

- Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA) is CIRES's internal performance management tool.
- Includes discussing future goals and a path forward.
- It calls supervisors to check in on progress, give feedback, and recognition.
- It requires that supervisors document performance issues and involve CIRES HR.
- In extreme cases, performance must be addressed through progressive discipline with the support of Central CU HR.

Talent Management

- Hiring and onboarding
- Developing, engaging and promoting
- Aligning project goals with interest and skill
- Succession planning

Stay interviews

A stay interview is an easy-to-use tool to uncover, anticipate, and resolve issues and concerns with employees to prevent them from leaving the organization. Stay Interviews do three things that exit surveys do not:

- they deliver information that can be used today
- they provide time to adjust
- they provide managers with a reliable process for developing individual stay plans.

If you don't have 30 minutes now to conduct a stay interview, you don't have the time to interview and hire a replacement!

- [Stay Interviews: The proactive strategy for retaining employees](#) online training is on April 21 offered by CU Boulder HR.

Conflict resolution

- Supervisors should be available and work to resolve conflict.
- It is important to involve the right people and follow through.
- Please reach out to CIRES HR for guidance on how to approach professional concerns or employee relations.
- CIRES HR will involve CU HR if appropriate.
- Supervisor as Mandatory Reporter (Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC))- [Employee Management and Compliance](#)

[Essentials](#)

CIRES Code of Conduct

CIRES has a [code of conduct](#). Supervisors should be familiar with this document and share it with their direct reports.

“As a research institute, campus, and community leader, we recognize the important responsibility to act with integrity. This CIRES Code of Conduct reflects this commitment and upholds the CU System Code of Conduct. Further, the CIRES Code of Conduct produces the framework in which CIRES employees strive to achieve the goals of the CIRES Strategic Plan, to create a culture of excellence and integrity.”

- CIRES values are aligned with the CU core competencies: **integrity, innovation, collaboration, inclusive excellence and communication**. Examples are shared that align with a scientific institute.
- There are specific unacceptable behaviors described (workplace bullying and harassment) along with information on reporting unacceptable behavior and the resulting consequences.

Wellness resources

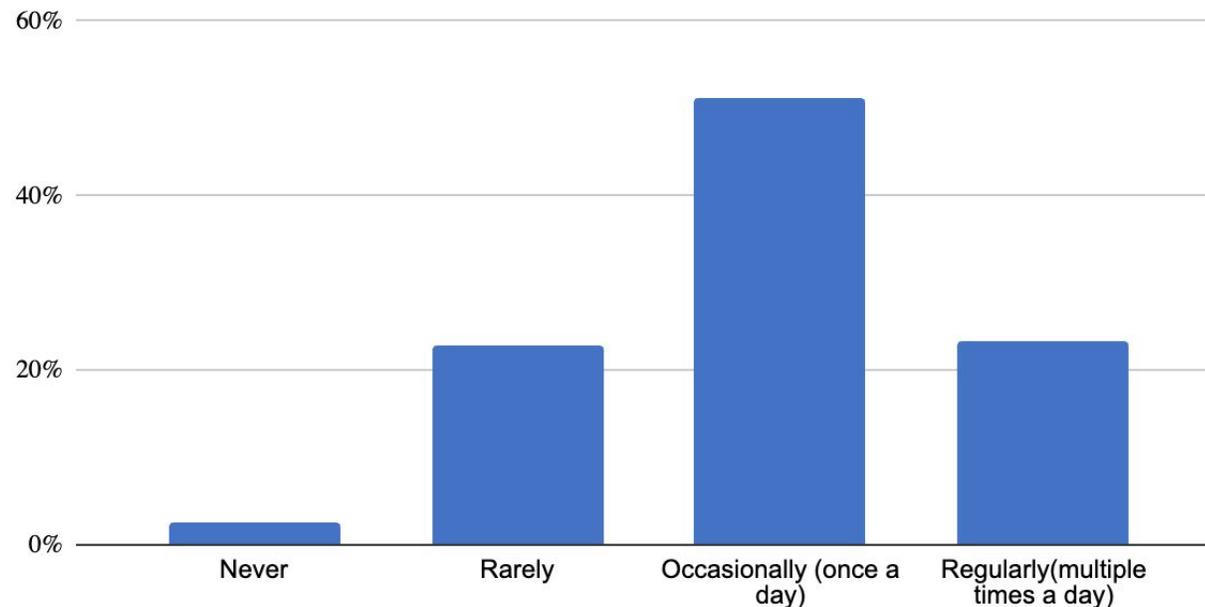
As part of our focus on wellness at CIRES, we asked this question at the February Town Hall.

We included an article about taking a break during the workday in our CIRES Connect page. Please share with your employees!

By highlighting these resources, you are helping to build a culture of employee wellness at CIRES.

Employees may be more likely to engage with wellness practices to create balance in their work day **if they are encouraged to do so by their supervisor.**

How often do you take meaningful breaks during your workday?



<https://ciresconnect.colorado.edu/resources/wellness-resources>

Hiring: Legal practices

- Recruiting function within CIRES: Emily Hinga, Jazmin Surface, Christen Cousins & Jimena Ugaz
- If you need to post a regular position, please contact cireshr@Colorado.edu
 - Please use this [template](#) to submit a posting when your team is ready to hire.
 - CIRES HR will offer guidance on committee composition, visa sponsorship, federal clearance, career track levels, functional title, salary, & relocation.
- After posting:
 - 30 minute take-in with Jazmin Surface (campus side) or myself (DSRC-NOAA based roles)
 - Effective hiring practices
 - Interview protocols, formats, and tools
 - Offer and negotiation best practices
 - Regrets and mandatory dispositions (compliant with the law)

Hiring: Temporary Employees

Start by emailing: cireshr@colorado.edu

Temporary Employees:

- Temporary Researchers and Temporary University Staff, depending on job duties

Key Guidelines:

- Max 12 months
- Required breaks: **3 months** (after 9-month appt) / **6 months** (after 9–12 months)
- Hourly pay; no health or vacation benefits
- Formal search required to move to Research Faculty

Important Notes

- Admin-heavy roles will be Temp University Staff (may take up to 2 weeks to post; requires intake with Central HR)
- CO Equal Pay for Equal Work Act: include pay rate in postings (current minimum rate is **\$18.90/hr**)
- Use [CIRES Job Description Template](#)
- Post for **at least 3 business days**; you must review all applicants



Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER and NOAA



Hiring: Hourly Student Employees

Start by emailing: cireshr@colorado.edu

Resources

- [Student Hourly Hiring Checklist](#)
- Pay rates, job classifications, job descriptions can be found on the [CU Student Employment Website](#)
- Current minimum hourly rate for student employees is **\$16.82/hr**

Work Hours

- Up to **20 hrs/week** during the academic year
- Up to **40 hrs/week** in summer
- International students: **max 20 hrs/week total** while school is in session

Work-Study

- Federal/state covers **70%** of wages
- CIRES covers **30%**

Posting a Job

- JOBS@CIRES
- CU Boulder- [Handshake](#)

Payroll

- [Bi-Weekly Payroll Calendar](#)



Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER and NOAA



MyLeave

- **Supervisor is responsible for approving leave requests and timesheets from supervisees**

*Employees are responsible for entering vacation and sick leave as appropriate into the application in a timely manner

*Employees do not need to disclose the reason for their leave other than to indicate the leave falls into either vacation or sick leave category

- **All employees need to submit a timesheet each month even if no leave is taken.**
- **Monthly timesheets** should be **submitted** to supervisors by the **7th** of the following month and supervisors should **approve** timesheets by the **10th** of the following month.
- **Biweekly timesheets** should be **submitted by employee on the Monday following the pay period end** and **supervisors should approve timesheets by Noon on Tuesday following pay period end.**

Links for more information on MyLeave, types of leave, timesheets, etc.:

[Training Video](#) [Training Guide \(PDF\)](#)

Timesheet Approval

If a timesheet is not approved when processing timesheets begins, you will get a reminder email as shown below:

On Fri, Dec 15, 2023 at 4:16 PM <LuAnn.Line@colorado.edu> wrote:

Hello,

This is an automated email reminder that you have a pending timesheet and/or leave requests that need to be approved in order to be included in payroll processing.

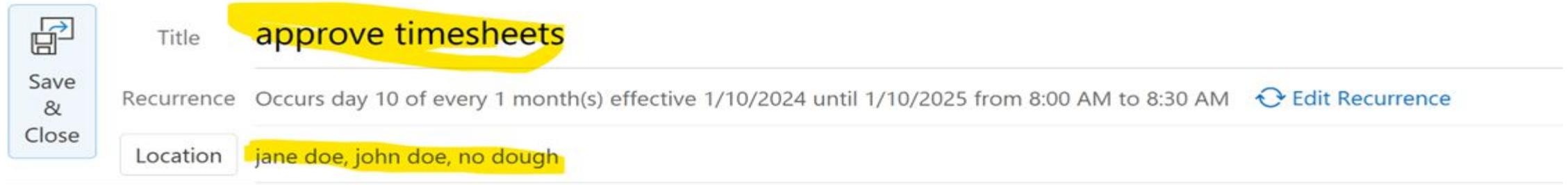
Thank you,

Department Payroll Contact

Since this is an automated email, it will not list whose timesheet you need to approve. If you have any questions on whose timesheet needs approved, please reply to the email.

Helpful Hints

Put a recurring reminder on your calendar on the 10th of the month for monthly timesheets and on Tuesday every other week for biweekly timesheets, to help you remember to approve timesheets. Consider listing your supervisees on the reminder, so you will remember which ones you have to approve.



The screenshot shows a calendar reminder form with the following fields:

- Title:** approve timesheets
- Recurrence:** Occurs day 10 of every 1 month(s) effective 1/10/2024 until 1/10/2025 from 8:00 AM to 8:30 AM. There is an "Edit Recurrence" link.
- Location:** jane doe, john doe, no dough

On the left side of the form, there is a "Save & Close" button.

If you are going to be away for an extended period of time, please set up a Proxy for MyLeave. Instructions on setting up a proxy can be found [here](#).

Please note that if an unapproved requested timesheet needs to be manually entered into CU Time, there will only be one entry for that timesheet and the hours will be charged against the employee's positions funding.

FAMLI Leave - New Program

Effective Jan. 1, 2024, eligible employees can receive up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave under CU's private FAMLI plan.

[CU's Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program](#) (FAMLI) program will provide all eligible employees a portion of their weekly salary for up to 12 weeks of leave to care for themselves or a family member, with an additional four weeks leave for complications during pregnancy or childbirth.

*It can be used by all employees who **reside in Colorado**, including faculty, staff, student employees, and graduate students on appointment.*

Reasons for FAMLI leave

- Medical leave to care for yourself
- Medical leave to care for a family member
- Military family members (exigency) leave
- Safe leave (domestic violence)

FAMLI interacts with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as well as CU's Parental Leave policies. A CU Central Leave Team has been established to assist employees in navigating all leave programs in which they are eligible (including other state leave programs).

An employee must apply for Leave on the Employee Portal. On Employee Portal go to CU Resources Home, Forms, Collaborative HR Services, CU Leave Benefits, Leave Self-Service, Request New Case.



Leaving CIRES

Supervisor's responsibilities when an employee leaves employment with CIRES either by resignation, transfer, or retirement:

Resignation:

- Accept resignation; if resignation is given verbally, ask employee to write resignation letter (email will suffice).
- Have employee complete the End of Employment form on InsideCIRES (https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/forms/cires_end_of_employment_checklist.pdf) and send to CIRESHR@colorado.edu (attach End of Employment form and resignation letter/email)
- Inform CIRES HR that the employee is resigning so that CIRES HR is aware of employee leaving and will be expecting the End of Employment form from employee.
- Make plans for the employee to finalize or transition projects they are working on.

Leaving CIRES cont.

Retirement:

- Accept retirement notice; if notice is given verbally, ask employee to put it in writing (email will suffice).
- Have employee complete the [End of Employment form](https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/forms/cires_end_of_employment_checklist.pdf) on InsideCIRES https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/forms/cires_end_of_employment_checklist.pdf and send to CIRESHR@colorado.edu (include resignation letter/email).
- Check with employee to see if they have contacted the CU Benefits office to start retirement process.
 - CU Retirement Professionals contact information, phone number 303 860 4200, x3, or toll free 1 855 216 7740, x3,
 - email benefits@cu.edu.
- Inform CIRES HR that the employee is retiring so that CIRES HR is aware of employee leaving and will be expecting the End of Employment form from employee.
- Make plans for the employee to finalize or transition projects they are working on, complete ePERS, and, if employee leaving supervises anyone, transfer the supervisor role to another employee.

ASA: Annual Summary of Accomplishments

Each year Lucia Harrop and CIRES HR provide a detailed training on the ASA process. All employees and supervisors should attend the ASA overview training

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their employees complete the ASA

- If you have employees with missing rating sheets both supervisor and employee are in-eligible for raises
- Supervisors are responsible for understanding what should be included in each of the different modules within the ASA - AS/RS tracks have different expectations
 - Please take time to communicate clear expectations to your employees ahead of time for what their preferred format is (i.e. bulleted lists, narrative format)
 - This is up to you/your supervisees, there is no prescribed format
- Review of the full write up - even supervisors who do not work with employees on a regular basis need to fully participate in the ASA and complete a rating sheet

ASA: Annual Summary of Accomplishments Cont.

- Consider peer review tools if needed to get full picture of performance if you do not work directly with your supervisee
 - Science advisor input - this needs to be done before supervisor finalizes their write up
 - Peer review can include coworkers, direct reports
 - Science advisor input is optional and many labs opt out - there is no penalty for missing advisor input
- Review career track timelines and goals, document this and connect employees to resources if needed to achieve career growth
 - Both employees and supervisors need to stay on top of career development goals/timelines
 - The career track section is not intended to be a yes/no, it is intended to be used to document the plan of the employee, outline a timeline and detail what is needed to achieve the next career track goal. All employees should have a 1,2,5 year plan that is reviewed each year and adjusted based on goals met, etc.

Documentation of successes, plans and career growth goals is critical to success of this process and to support career development. ASA is not an isolated process - it should reflect the total performance picture, plans for the coming year and any possible career track/training asks and any possible pain points employees may have

- Nothing in the ASA should be a surprise to supervisor or employee
- Regular check ins should be happening (monthly, quarterly, once per semester, etc. depending on how closely you work together)
- Reach out to HR if you need help with these conversations

Training to Support ASA

- [Supervisor Training Series](#) offered yearly by CIRES HR
- [Crucial Conversations](#), CU Central HR
- [Managing Hybrid Teams/Supervising in a Hybrid Environment](#)
- [Future of Hybrid Work Training Series](#)
- [Performance Management](#): March 30
- Annual Summary of Accomplishments training
- Full training catalog with CU Boulder HR [here](#)

Career Track Promotion Process

- Supervisors should be aware of their supervisees' timelines and requirements for promotion.
 - The [Career Track page](#) in InsideCIRES has detailed information about the criteria, required documents for each level of application, and an outline of the [due dates and timeline](#).
 - Time eligibility requirements and criteria vary based on level of promotion.
 - Sub-tracks for the AS and RS career tracks exist to better define and provide promotion criteria for the different roles across CIRES.
 - Review the [FAQ page](#)
- Supervisor support is required for a promotion application and a strong supervisor letter is crucial for a successful promotion.
 - It's important for supervisors to meet the reference letter deadline. If you discuss career development goals/timelines during the ASA season, you should have plenty of time to provide a detailed, thoughtful letter of support by the end of January if one of your supervisees applies.
 - If you have any concerns about your supervisee's promotion application or about submitting a supervisor letter, please reach out to CIRESHR@colorado.edu.
- While an employee is responsible for submitting their promotion application, this process is a partnership between employee and supervisor.

Work Modality (In-person, hybrid, fully remote)

CU requires all employees have a modality [agreement](#) on file. Employees should consult with their supervisor in advance of completing an agreement. Supervisors will consult with the larger team/unit or science advisor as appropriate.

- We ask that employees fill out this form two weeks in advance of any schedule change, when possible.
- Please make sure **new** employees fill out their schedule/agreement online.

Please visit this CIRES Blog Post for more information, including approval process and required signatures depending on type of work modality:

<https://ciresblogs.colorado.edu/cires-admin/2022/08/24/work-modality-agreements/>

Work Modality continued

- Entering your modality agreement: [Work Modality Agreement page on InsideCIRES](#)
- Blog post with full instructions [here](#).
- CU resources page on work modalities (university policies and resources):
 - <https://www.colorado.edu/hr/work-modalities-schedules>
- Fully Remote Request process varies between campuses.
 - **CU Boulder** - Employee enters fully remote request ⇒ supervisor approves ⇒ HR reviews and then sends to CIRES Director and Vice Chancellor for research signatures
 - **NOAA Based** - Employee enters fully remote request ⇒ supervisor approves ⇒ agreement goes to HR for review before being sent further for signatures. Each lab has a federal concurrence process
- NOAA expects employees to annotate their work location on Google Calendar (and possibly other team specific calendars in addition to the CIRES modality agreement).

International Employees: International Employee Specialist's Role

- Work closely with HR team members on HR processes
- Serve as the liaison to International Student and Scholar Services
- Guide supervisors and employees on visa/immigration procedures
- Provide information to international employees and their supervisors

International Employees: Presentation

“Hiring and Supervising Foreign Nationals,”

recording available [here](#).

Presentation Topics:

- Basic overview of visa statuses
- Main visa statuses at CIRES
- Visa matters in selection and hiring
- Visa matters for current employees
- Export controls and Limited Unescorted Access (LUA) at NOAA

Upcoming Workshop

Bridging Borders: Supporting International Employees & Embracing Global Perspectives

Presentation Topics:

- Navigating culture shock
- Communication differences
- Hidden curriculum
- Bringing an asset-minded perspective
- Supporting international employees

Invitations will be sent to international employees and their supervisors.

Tuesday, March 24 from 2-3:30pm (CASE E390)

Thursday, March 26 from 2-3:30pm (virtual)

Group Support/ Resources for (New) Employees

[CU New employee page](#)

[The New Employee Welcome Experience](#)

[International Student and Scholar Services](#)

[CIRES Members Council](#)

[CIRES Mentoring Program](#)

[Office of Post-Doctoral Affairs \(OPA\)](#)

[CECA: CIRES Early Career Assembly](#)



Resources for Supervisors & Employees

Supervisor Resources page in InsideCIRES:

<https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/supervisorResources.html>

Campus Resources for Employees:

<https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/support-resources/cu-boulder-resources>

Access and Cultural Innovation (ACI) resources

- Please review our Neurodiversity in the Workplace handout. It was created by a team of CIRES employees. You can also sign up to be on a waitlist for the “Neurodiversity for Supervisors” training in Fall 2026.
- The ACI Director, Becca Edwards, offers a training on group norms, that allow your team to clarify values and practices regarding meetings, communication streams, and more. An information session will be held on **April 8, from 2-3pm.**
- Supervisors in a unit can also request a “Effective Feedback Skills” group training, run by Becca Edwards and Emily Hinga.

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOUR WORK?

Broaden Impact
of your Science

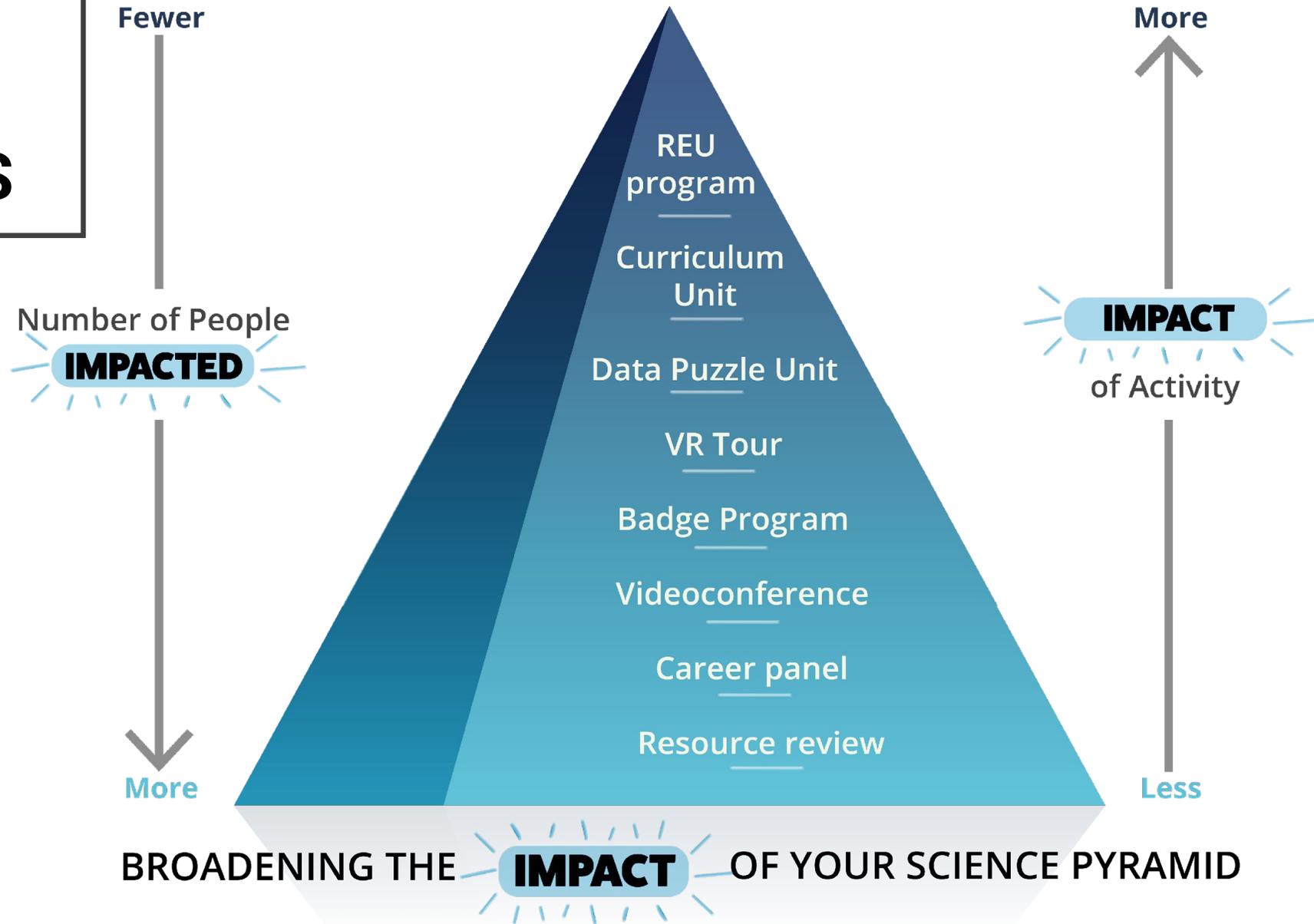
Early Career
Scientist Support

Engagement &
Outreach
Opportunities

Evaluation &
Education Research
Services

Course
Transformation,
Teaching

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Engage with

CIRES Center for Education, Engagement and Evaluation

1. Attend an upcoming [CEEE event](#).
2. Sign up for [CEEE newsletters](#).
3. Follow us on social media:
4. Contact us about collaborating:
ceee@colorado.edu



Thank you for your Participation & Partnership!

Please complete this brief *anonymous* [survey](#) so that we can improve!

This session recording will be posted on the [Supervisor Resources](#) page within following the conclusion of the live session.

Please contact cireshr@colorado.edu with questions, concerns & suggestions

Thank you!

Questions?



University of Colorado Boulder



CIERSDS

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