

To: All Assessor's Office Employees
RE: Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy
Date: Effective October 15, 2021
From: Cook County Assessor's Office Human Resource Department

I. Overview

Consistent with the Cook County Assessor's Office ("CCAO") duty to provide and maintain a work place that is free of known hazards, the CCAO has adopted this mandatory SARS-CoV-2 ("COVID-19") vaccination policy to safeguard the health of CCAO employees and the public. Public health authorities have determined that unvaccinated individuals are more likely to contract, transmit, and experience more severe symptoms of COVID-19 than individuals who are vaccinated. Those who are vaccinated are less likely to contract and transmit COVID-19. This policy is intended to comply with all existing applicable laws and is based on relevant public health guidance. All employees must continue to comply with any applicable safety requirements related to COVID-19.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and to mitigate the impact of the disease by increasing the percentage of vaccinated employees in the workplace.

III. Intent

This policy is intended to be interpreted consistent with and subject to applicable law. It supersedes all previous policies and/or memoranda that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this policy. This policy is not intended to supersede or limit the CCAO from enforcing programs or provisions in any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Should any provision in this policy conflict with a specific provision in the Personnel Rules, or Employee Handbook, the provision(s) in this policy shall take precedence.

Nothing herein is either intended to or shall be construed to provide a private right of action against the CCAO or any of its employees. Furthermore, no part of this policy shall be construed to create contractual or other rights, obligations, or expectations.

VI. Severability

If any section or provision of this document should be held invalid by operation of law, none of the remainder shall be affected.

VII. Jurisdiction

The CCAO is authorized to develop and issue policies for the effective management of CCAO employees pursuant to 35 ILCS 200/1-1, *et seq.*, and the Code of Ordinances of Cook County, Illinois.

VIII. Areas Affected

This Policy applies to all CCAO employees, as well as volunteers, interns, consultants, contract personnel, independent contractors, and personnel working on CCAO premises who are employed by temporary agencies and any other persons or firms doing business for or with Departments covered under this policy.

IX. Nondiscrimination and Non-Retaliation

CCAO prohibits the discriminatory application, implementation, or enforcement of any provision of this policy on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, source of income, gender identity, housing status, or any other protected category established by law, statute, or ordinance.

The CCAO also prohibits retaliation against any employee for reporting violations of this policy or any other health and safety concern and/or otherwise exercising the rights guaranteed to them by law.

IV. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms shall be given the following meanings as set forth below:

Fully Vaccinated – Two weeks after the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or two weeks after one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

PCR Test – A polymerase chain reaction (“PCR”) test detects genetic material from a specific organism, such as a virus. The test detects the presence of a virus if a person is infected at the time of the test. The PCR test is the “gold standard” test for diagnosing COVID-19.

V. Policy and Procedures

All CCAO employees must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Active employees as of the effective date of this policy must be fully vaccinated on or before **November 26, 2021**. New employees who start after the effective date of this policy must be either fully vaccinated or submit a request for reasonable accommodation prior to onboarding.

Employees who are in inactive status will be required to be fully vaccinated or request a reasonable accommodation within eight weeks of returning to active status.

A. Employee Attestation and Proof of Vaccination

Employees must attest to their vaccination status on or before November 26, 2021 and provide proof of vaccination to the Human Resource Department of CCAO by submitting their CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card.

An employee, who is no longer in possession of a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, may utilize the Illinois Resident Immunization Portal¹ for proof of vaccination, or submit documentation from their vaccination provider. The documentation should include the following information:

- Full Name
- Date of Birth
- Vaccine Manufacturer (i.e., Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, etc.)
- Lot Number
- Date of Vaccination
- Site Location or Signature of Vaccine Administrator

B. Reasonable Accommodations/ Exemptions

CCAO's vaccine mandate is critical for the health of employees and a requirement to maintain safe in-person operations. Employees may request exemptions from the requirement for medical or religious reasons only. Anyone requesting an exemption must access, complete, and submit a medical or religious accommodation request form to Human Resources to allow for evaluation and determination **prior to November 26, 2021**.

Those whose requests for reasonable accommodation are granted must submit to PCR-based tests **on a weekly basis**.

¹ [Home \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov)

X. Penalties

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment. Violations of this policy, including but not limited to, non-compliance or providing false or misleading information about vaccination status, test results, or the need for an accommodation, may subject an employee to progressive and/or corrective disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, consistent with the parties' collective bargaining agreement and/or the CCAO Employee Handbook. In the event that there is a concern about the authenticity of a vaccination record card, employees will be asked to provide verification through the State of Illinois resource at <https://idphportal.illinois.gov>.

Employees who are found to be in violation** of this policy may be subject to the following steps:

- 1st Occurrence – Counseling
- 2nd Occurrence – Verbal Reprimand
- 3rd Occurrence – Written Reprimand
- 4th Occurrence – 1-Day Suspension
- 5th Occurrence – 3-Day Suspension
- 6th Occurrence – 5-Day Suspension
- 7th Occurrence – 7-Day Suspension
- 8th Occurrence – 10-Day Suspension
- 9th Occurrence – 15-Day Suspension
- 10th Occurrence – 21-Day Suspension
- 11th Occurrence – 29-Day Suspension
- 12th Occurrence – 29-Day Suspension
- 13th Occurrence – Discharge

****Note that these steps shall not be applicable to occurrences where an employee has provided false or misleading information.**

XI. Policy Modification

Public health guidance, restrictions and industry best practices regarding COVID-19 and related vaccines are changing rapidly as new information becomes available, further research is conducted, and additional vaccines are approved. The CCAO reserves the right to modify this policy at any time in its sole discretion to adapt to changing circumstances and business needs, consistent with its commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Should guidance be updated to require additional vaccinations, boosters, or

treatments, the deadline for obtaining such vaccinations, boosters, or treatments shall be communicated to employees at least thirty (30) days prior to the compliance deadline. Upon submitting proof of receipt for any additional vaccinations or booster required by the CCAO, the employee will receive two (2) hours of compensatory time. Failure to obtain required additional vaccinations, boosters, or treatments shall be considered a violation of this policy and subject employees to discipline action up to and including termination as otherwise specified herein.

XII. Confidentiality

Documentation or other confirmation of vaccination is considered confidential medical information. All information received in connection with the mandatory vaccination process will be treated confidentially and only disclosed to the extent required by applicable law. Records pertaining to an employee's vaccination status shall be maintained separately from the employee's personnel files.

XIII. Vaccination Encouragement

The CCAO and the Union agree to encourage and support employee vaccination.