

Gov. Pritzker Announces New Package Of Incentives For Vaccinated Frontline State Employees

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SPRINGFIELD – As Illinois continues to lead the Midwest in vaccinating its residents, Governor Pritzker announced a new pilot program offering a range of incentives to state employees who work in direct care facilities and receive at least one dose of the vaccine. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA), the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) announced the drawings to eligible employees in late June and will announce winners on July 19.

Dozens of frontline employees will be chosen in drawings conducted by the Illinois Lottery. Lucky winners will receive:

- **Cash bonuses:** ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000
- **State prizes:** a choice among lifetime hunting and fishing licenses, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum passes or memberships, and State Fair admissions and concert passes
- **Airline vouchers:** first-class tickets to any domestic U.S. destination or coach tickets to any international destination on American Airlines
- **Sports tickets:** home game tickets to cheer on the Chicago Bears, Chicago Cubs, Chicago Fire FC and St. Louis Cardinals

“Our state employees have worked tirelessly on the frontlines throughout the pandemic and I’m thrilled to announce this new opportunity to encourage them to get vaccinated,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “By further increasing state employee vaccination rates, we’re not just protecting our staff, we’re protecting our vulnerable residents in state facilities and our surrounding communities. Getting vaccinated is truly how we protect ourselves from new variants and put this pandemic behind us.”

“While our vaccination rates in Illinois are good, we cannot let our guard down,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Across Illinois, we are seeing COVID-19 variants that spread more easily and quickly, and are more dangerous. Right now, the vaccines available have proven to be effective against these variants. However, if the virus is allowed to further circulate, it can and will mutate further. Getting vaccinated now can help stop the spread and mutation of the virus, and protect you and those around you.”

From the onset of the pandemic, frontline state employees have protected Illinois’ most vulnerable residents from IDHS developmental centers and psychiatric hospitals to IDVA veterans’ homes to IDJJ and IDOC facilities. To recognize their ongoing service to the state, employees who have taken at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose by July 12, 2021, will be entered into the free drawing. State agencies announced the drawings to eligible employees in late June.

“Increasing levels of vaccination rates is the only way that we can win the battle against COVID-19 and return to a sense of normalcy, said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou. “We want to make sure that every one of our health care workers who wants a vaccine can get one, and I hope that this latest effort inspires an even greater level of participation from our heroic staff.”

“Our IDVA employees have shown tremendous courage during this pandemic to care for our veterans, and I could not be any prouder,” said IDVA Acting Director Terry Prince. “I’m excited about this opportunity to reward them for protecting themselves and our veterans by getting vaccinated.”

“I am excited to participate in this pilot program that recognizes our amazing employees who have been vaccinated and gives our workers additional incentive to choose vaccination,” said IDJJ Director Heidi Meuller. “At IDJJ we are aware that vaccination is the best tool we have to protect all Illinoisans—including our state employees and the people they care for—against this deadly pandemic. IDJJ is grateful for the ongoing diligence and creativity of the Illinois Department of Public Health, as well as this administration, in their efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain the health and public safety of the citizens of Illinois.”

“IDOC staff have demonstrated extraordinary courage, dedication and resiliency throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” said IDOC Director Rob Jeffreys. “We implemented a robust vaccination plan within our correctional facilities and thousands of employees took part. I am pleased they will have the opportunity to be rewarded for their selflessness and commitment to protecting the health and safety of their colleagues, incarcerated individuals, families and communities.”

“American Airlines is proud to play a role in this effort by Governor Pritzker to boost vaccination rates in the state of Illinois,” said Nate Gatten, Senior Vice President of Global Government Affairs for American Airlines. “We know vaccines are key to beating the virus and getting back to activities like visiting loved ones and traveling for leisure and business. We commend and appreciate all those who’ve worked on the frontlines during the pandemic, and our team welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the important work happening at the local, state and federal level to defeat COVID-19.”

“We’re happy to assist Governor Pritzker’s efforts in encouraging state employees who work at direct care facilities to be vaccinated,” said Ted Phillips, Chicago Bears President and CEO. “Public and private entities working together allows us to continue the progress we’ve made against the virus and its impact on our communities.”

“The Chicago Cubs are happy to be part of this collaborative public-private effort to increase the State's vaccination rates and protect frontline workers who are essential to

providing services to Illinois citizens,” said Julian Green, senior vice president, Communications, Chicago Cubs. “We know the power of baseball brings families and friends together and hope many employees who are looking for opportunities to have an enjoyable and safe summer take advantage of this special offer.”

“It will be an honor to host state employees who work at direct care facilities,” said Chicago Fire FC President Ishwara Glassman Chrein. “There’s nothing like a soccer match on a beautiful summer night on the lakefront. In fact, we would like to invite all Illinoisans to experience a Chicago Fire game this year. Our players are so appreciative that fans and supporters are back at Soldier Field, cheering them on for the entire 90 minutes.”

“We’re honored to support Governor Pritzker’s efforts to encourage state frontline employees to get vaccinated,” said Cesar Vargas, Chief External Affairs Officer of Anheuser-Busch, which donated the Cardinals tickets. “As a leading American manufacturer and the country’s largest brewer, our people and our communities are at the center of everything we do, and that includes encouraging vaccinations so that we can all come together safely again. We’re proud to play a role in the safe and strong reopening of our country, including supporting national vaccine efforts, helping our hospitality sector recover, and investing \$1 billion in our operations over the next two years to support the more than 2 million U.S. jobs created by the beer industry. Thank you to Gov. Pritzker for your work to help end the pandemic and for including Anheuser-Busch in your efforts.”

Prizes may be transferable, at the discretion of the awarding agency, and cash awards will be considered taxable income. Those who can attest they would take the vaccine, but have a documented medical or religious exemption, may also be entered into the drawing.

More than 7.1 million Illinois adults (72.2 percent) have received at least one dose of the vaccine — surpassing President Joe Biden’s goal of vaccinating 70 percent of adults before the Fourth of July.

This initiative builds upon ongoing efforts to encourage Illinoisans to get vaccinated. Last month, Gov. Pritzker introduced a new \$10 million ‘All In for the Win’ promotion that rewards all vaccinated Illinoisans by automatically entering them into a series of cash and scholarship lotteries with prizes — up to \$1 million. To learn more about All In for the Win, visit allin.illinois.gov. And in May, Gov. Pritzker announced 50,000 Six Flags tickets – valued at \$4 million – and targets at the World Shooting Complex as free incentives for residents to get the shot.

Vaccines are widely available at no cost to residents. To find the nearest provider, visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your zip code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-0233.