

Nearly 2,100 State Workers Covered Under Vaccination Agreements With Unions After State Reaches Fifth Agreement

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SPRINGFIELD — Nearly 2,100 state workers are now covered under union agreements requiring vaccines after Governor JB Pritzker announced the fifth such agreement with the Teamsters today.

This agreement will ensure maintenance equipment operators and maintenance workers at the Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs are protected with the COVID-19 vaccines. The October 26 deadline for all

employees covered under these agreements remains, and negotiations are ongoing with AFSCME representatives to protect thousands of more state workers and their families from COVID-19.

State employees who remain unvaccinated pose a significant risk to individuals in Illinois' congregate facilities. Therefore, if employees do not receive the vaccine or an exemption by the dates identified, progressive disciplinary measures will be implemented, which may ultimately lead to discharge. The agreement includes a process whereby employees can seek an exemption based on medical contraindications or sincerely held religious beliefs.

“I’m proud to reach our fifth union agreement to ensure our progress on vaccinations carries forward within the facilities we operate to care for our most vulnerable residents,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Vaccinating as many Illinois residents as possible will help protect those at the most risk, including immunocompromised individuals and children who are ineligible to get the life-saving shot.”

Following Gov. Pritzker’s announcement that all state workers who work in state-run congregate facilities would be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the agreements covering 2,090 workers have been made:

- **VR-704:** 260 supervisory employees at the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Agreement announced on September 20, 2021.
- **Illinois Nurses Association:** approximately 1,100 nurses working in 24/7 facilities like McFarland Mental Health Facility, Quincy Veterans' Home, and Jacksonville Correctional Center. Agreement announced on October 7, 2021.
- **Illinois Federation of Public Employees:** approximately 160 employees working in Human Services and Veterans' Affairs. Agreement announced on October 7, 2021.
- **Illinois Trade Unions:** approximately 470 employees working in 24/7 facilities such as Menard Corrections Center, Shapiro Developmental Center, and Quincy Veteran’s Home. Agreement announced on October 18, 2021.
- **Teamsters:** approximately 100 maintenance equipment operators and maintenance workers at the Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

To further encourage vaccinations under the agreements with the unions, employees will receive an additional personal day. If the vaccine administration is not available during an employee's regularly scheduled shift, the employee may be compensated at their regular pay for the time taken to receive the vaccine. In addition, vaccinated employees will receive paid "COVID time," so that if a vaccinated employee gets COVID-19 they will receive a period of paid time off without using their benefit time.

The administration has taken extensive measures to make the COVID-19 vaccine equitable and accessible. The Pritzker administration established 25 mass vaccination sites. The Illinois National Guard supported more than 800 mobile vaccination clinics on top of an additional 1,705 state-supported mobile sites that focused on communities hardest hit by the pandemic, young residents, and rural communities. The COVID-19 vaccine has been available for healthcare and nursing home workers since December 15, 2020, and open to teachers since January 25, 2021.

Vaccination is the key to ending the COVID-19 pandemic and returning to normal life. All Illinois residents over the age of 12 are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost and proof of immigration status is not required to receive the vaccine. To find a vaccination center near you, visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).