

Nearly 10,000 State Employees to Get Vaccinated After State Announces Agreement for IDVA, IDHS Employees

October 25 2021 1:36 PM



Sixth Vaccine Agreement Covers About 7,800 Employees at Departments of Human Services and Veterans' Affairs

SPRINGFIELD — Continuing Illinois' progress as the vaccination leader of the Midwest, Governor JB Pritzker announced the largest union agreement regarding vaccines for 7,800 state employees who are represented by AFSCME. Nearly 10,000 state workers are now covered under union vaccine agreements.

This agreement will ensure employees in 24/7 congregate facilities within the Illinois Departments of Human Services, and Veterans' Affairs are protected with the COVID-19 vaccines. Employees under all union vaccine agreements are required to get their first shot by October 26 and second shot by November 30.

“I’m proud to announce our sixth and largest union agreement that will protect nearly 10,000 state workers and the people under their care,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “We’ve overcome tremendous challenges during the pandemic, and I want to thank our partners in the labor movement for being a part of the solution. Each person that gets vaccinated is protecting themselves, the people around them and our state as a whole. We will continue to work through the established legal process to ensure all state employees who work with the vulnerable and incarcerated are vaccinated.”

In addition to the announced agreements, the State and AFSCME have reached an impasse at the bargaining table for employees at the Departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice. The next steps for those bargaining units are as follows:

- For roughly 10,300 security employees at the Departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice, the State and the union will submit to interest arbitration.
- For an additional 1,900 non-security employees at those two departments, the State has informed AFSCME that it will implement the following terms: employees must get their first shot by October 26 and their second shot by November 30. This is in accordance with state law.

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. The agreement includes a process whereby employees can seek an exemption based on medical contraindications or sincerely held religious beliefs.

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. Agreement announced on October 20, 2021.
- **AFSCME:** approximately 7,800 employees in 24/7 congregate facilities within the Illinois Departments of, Human Services, and 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).