

Milwaukee County: Nears 100 percent compliance with employee COVID-19 vaccine mandate

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MILWAUKEE — As of Sunday, December 12, 2021, 96 percent of Milwaukee County employees subject to the County's COVID-19 vaccination mandate are vaccinated against COVID-19 or have received an exemption.

Overview of Key Metrics

96 percent (3,366) of Milwaukee County employees subject to the County's COVID-19 vaccination mandate have submitted proof of vaccination or have received / are in the process of receiving an exemption (public safety union employees are not currently subject to the COVID-19 mandate).

- 87 percent (3,055) of employees subject to the mandate have submitted proof of vaccination;
- 9 percent (311) of employees subject to the mandate have received or are in the process of receiving an exemption;

- 1 percent (35) of employees subject to the mandate have had vaccine form or exemption forms denied and are being encouraged to resubmit; and
- 3 percent (104) of employees who are subject to the mandate have not yet submitted proof of vaccination or an exemption request.

Approximately 15 percent of staff who submitted proof of vaccination received their first dose after the mandate was put in place on September 3, 2021.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, County leaders have prioritized policies that reinforce our vision to become the healthiest County in Wisconsin,” said County Executive David Crowley. “Milwaukee County’s employee vaccination rate is encouraging and should be a signal to the broader community about how seriously we take the health and wellbeing of our employees and those we serve.”

Racial equity was a key consideration throughout the development of the County’s vaccine mandate. Consequences of COVID-19 infection have an inequitable impact on vulnerable groups, including black and brown people who tend to be more at risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. Preventing further harm to these communities was a primary consideration in establishing the vaccination mandate.

“Milwaukee County is committed to providing a workplace that is safe for all people – including the individuals Milwaukee County employees serve,” said Crowley. “Simply put, increasing the vaccination rate among employees helps keep everyone safe.”

Milwaukee County’s [COVID-19 vaccination mandate](#) for staff was issued in September and went into effect on October 1, 2021. The [mandate](#) requires all current employees to demonstrate verification of their COVID-19 vaccination or receive an approved exemption in order to avoid consequences. To encourage vaccinations, the County is offering a number of incentives to compliant employees through the end of the year, including additional paid time off and cash bonuses.

“Vaccine mandates work. COVID-19 vaccination is the key to strengthening the health of our community and moving us out of the pandemic,” said Dr. Ben Weston, Chief Health Policy Advisor for Milwaukee County. “Milwaukee County employees are doing their part to protect themselves, their colleagues, their families and our community.”

The high compliance is a well-received catalyst for hope as COVID-19 variants, including Delta and the newly identified Omicron, continue to cause concern nationally. The County is recommending that eligible employees receive their booster and continue to prioritize the health and safety of themselves and others.

“While we are celebrating this achievement, our work is not done,” said Crowley. “We continue to provide information and resources to remaining employees to encourage them to get vaccinated and we are also working to encourage eligible employees to get a booster.”

As outlined in the [administrative order](#), the terms and conditions of the vaccine mandate do not currently apply to employee-members of the Milwaukee County public safety unions. Additionally, Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) employees are not subject to the County mandate, as they are not County employees. However, Milwaukee County strongly encourages both groups to promote the vaccination of their workforce.