

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

PURPOSE: In accordance with the Seattle Housing Authority's responsibility to provide and maintain a safe workplace, SHA is instating a COVID-19 vaccination requirement to safeguard the health of our employees and their families; our clients; residents; guests; and the community at large. The context for this policy is a deadly surge in the transmission and contraction of COVID-19, primarily by and among unvaccinated individuals, and the implementation of vaccination requirements by Washington State, King County and the City of Seattle.

SHA acknowledges that some staff may have concerns about the vaccine, especially individuals who are members of communities historically and currently discriminated against. We offer opportunities and resources to support fact-based decision-making. The COVID-19 vaccines have been scientifically proven to be safe and highly effective at reducing serious illness and death within the workplace and the greater community. Staff are encouraged to speak with their medical provider or trusted medical and scientific experts for questions or concerns. Useful information about the vaccine can be found on the [Public Health – Seattle & King County website](#).

We respect those staff seeking medical or religious exemptions, and those who fully qualify for such exemptions shall continue employment with SHA and follow all COVID-19 operational protocols.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) employees and temporary hires and temporary workers assigned to SHA from employment agencies or labor partners.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Human Resources and Office of the General Counsel will be responsible for administering this policy and the exemption process.

Employees are responsible for reporting their vaccination status to Human Resources as described in the Reporting Requirement section of the policy by the November 1, 2021 deadline.

POLICY: As a condition of employment, all current and future SHA employees, both regular and temporary, and other workers as mentioned above, must have completed a full vaccination cycle with a U.S. FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine and provide documentation proving their fully vaccinated status to SHA by November 1, 2021, if hired on or before that date. Employees are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Employees must present an original or copy of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) vaccination card or similar documentation to establish vaccine status. This requirement includes keeping up to date with booster vaccinations as recommended by public health agencies, once boosters are available locally and you qualify, and complying with additional safety measures and protocols in the future as needed.

As of August 10, 2021, SHA will allow one day of paid leave, per dose, to employees with a vaccine appointment scheduled during their normal work hours. This benefit will expire on October 18, 2021.

New hires and temporary workers hired after August 10 must submit their proof of vaccination to Human Resources after an employment offer/assignment and before their first day of employment. Absent a qualifying religious or medical exemption, SHA will rescind any employment offers or placements if we do not receive proof of fully vaccinated status at the time employment is scheduled to begin.

Unvaccinated workers who are on an approved leave of absence before November 1, 2021, will be required to show proof of fully vaccinated status before returning to work. If they need more time to complete the cycle, they will need to use their accrued leave or take leave without pay.

Timeline: On August 10, 2021, SHA informed staff of the intent to institute this policy. This policy will remain in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic or until it is determined that it is no longer needed based on the threat of the virus and public health guidance.

The Seattle Housing Authority will continue to follow applicable laws and public health guidance, and staff must continue to adhere to SHA's COVID-19 protocols and policies as required.

PROCEDURE:

I. Reporting Requirement:

Human Resources is the agency's coordinating unit for COVID-19 vaccination reporting and tracking. Individuals must demonstrate full vaccination by providing the following information to the designated Human Resources team members by November 1, 2021:

1. A copy/picture of their official CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card; or
2. A copy of their vaccination record (find your record at the State's website: [MyIR.net](https://myir.net))

Human Resources will not maintain copies of an individual's medical records. The documentation will be reviewed, recorded, and discarded.

II. Exemptions from COVID-19 Vaccination

Individuals may request an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine requirement as a reasonable accommodation, without employment consequence, for the following:

- a. Medical Exemption as advised by a licensed healthcare provider;
- b. Religious Exemption for a sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice that prevents an individual from receiving the vaccine. A religious belief need not be one held by a formal religious organization (theistic) but can be a non-theistic, strongly held moral or ethical belief. Every request for a religious exemption will be carefully reviewed, but in general, belief based on social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not considered religious beliefs under federal law.

Requests for exemptions must be sent to Human Resources and will be reviewed by a representative from HR and the Legal Department as part of the accommodation process. The exemption requests will be processed as quickly as possible; interested staff should submit their request as early as possible. To ensure all exemption requests can be resolved before November 1, 2021, please submit your application no later than October 1, 2021.

For new hires after August 10, 2021, they must inform SHA's Human Resources department as soon as possible if they intend to apply for an exemption. They will not be able to start employment until and unless an exemption is approved.

Staff will be notified if the request meets the exemption criteria, and, if so, whether the exemption is permanent or provisional. Human Resources will outline expectations for continued safety measures including wearing face coverings, social distancing, daily self-screening, work and or workplace modifications, and the procedure for promptly reporting COVID-19 symptoms. Employees who are unvaccinated by an approved exemption must strictly follow all stated expectations.

III. Compliance

Barring a qualifying medical or religious exemption, regular and project benefit eligible employees who fail to provide the required documentation by November 1, 2021, will be placed on paid administrative leave for thirty (30) calendar days. SHA will separate employment at the end of the thirty-day period. Employment separation will be non-disciplinary and affected employees will be deemed eligible for a competitive rehire if they 1) otherwise left in good standing and 2) provide proof they meet the vaccination requirement. The Human Resources department will notify separating employees of options for continuation of healthcare or other benefits.

Regular and project benefit eligible employees who choose to voluntarily separate employment sooner than November 1, 2021, due to the vaccine requirement will also be eligible for thirty days of paid administrative leave. Employees must include vaccination as the reason for separation in their notice of intent to separate.

Trainees and temporary employees are not eligible for paid leave and will be separated from employment on November 1 if they do not meet the vaccination requirement.

More Information

See the [SHA COVID-19 Vaccine Policy FAQs](#). SHA staff should also regularly check their emails and hard copy postings for staff without regular access to email for follow-up communications about the implementation of the policy and requirements. The Seattle Housing Authority reserves the right to modify, add, or waive requirements as the COVID-19 situation changes.