What’s new in this update (October 2021)? This updated guide for employers in vaccinating their workforce against COVID-19 includes:

- A new section on the value of vaccination for employees, businesses, and their communities;
- Information on COVID-19 Hotspot Advisories (and advisory removals) that use current data on cases, vaccination, and hospitalization rates to encourage and highlight the value of vaccination;
- Additional links to the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s resources on COVID-19 pandemic response; and
- Several other updates and revisions throughout.

Acronyms

LPHA  Local Public Health Agency

RIT    Regional Implementation Team

What is the purpose of this document?

This document describes options Missouri employers have to participate in the vaccination of their workforce. Missouri employers play a critical role in protecting their employees from COVID-19 workplace exposure and in making sure economic vitality continues through efforts to help employees receive access to the vaccine.

Because federal guidance on vaccine priorities and state vaccine administration recommendations change frequently, the information in this document may change over time.

For the most recent vaccine information, go to MOSstopsCOVID.com.

What is the value of vaccination for my employees, my community, and my organization?

Value to Employees and Community: Vaccination is the best way to stop the spread of COVID-19. All COVID-19 vaccines authorized or approved in the U.S. are safe and effective, and there is no cost to individuals for the vaccine, even if uninsured.

Millions of doses have been administered safely to millions of people in the U.S. under intense safety monitoring. These vaccines were authorized quickly and without ignoring safety checks by cutting ‘red tape’, not by skipping safety checks.

The vaccines reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and significantly reduce risk of severe illness, minimizing impacts on local and regional health care resources and protecting workers...
and patients. The vaccines are effective even against new variants. They help prevent or reduce outbreaks that create high absenteeism in businesses and hamper community social events. Fully vaccinated individuals are less likely to miss work, school, or social functions due to illness. If they are not symptomatic, fully vaccinated individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 are not asked to quarantine.

Social distancing, masking, handwashing, and other precautions remain important, but vaccination is the best way to prevent COVID-19.

**Value to Your Organization:** By encouraging and facilitating the vaccination of your employees, you will:

- Demonstrate a commitment to employees’ health and safety.
- Potentially reduce operational disruptions by having employees receive the vaccine at or near their workplace.
- Serve as an important community partner in public health response.

### When will my employees be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

All individuals are now eligible to receive either the initial one-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine or the initial two-dose Moderna or Pfizer vaccines. In addition, Missourians who received the Pfizer vaccine can receive a booster shot at least six months after their initial series based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance:

- People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings **should** receive a booster;
- People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** receive a booster;
- People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions **may** receive a booster; and
- People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting (e.g. frontline medical workers, teachers, and first responders) **may** receive a booster.

The list of medical conditions categorized as high-risk by the CDC is available [here](#). Missourians with an underlying medical condition are encouraged to speak with their health care provider about whether a booster shot is right for them.
How can employers encourage and/or participate in the vaccination of their employees?

Employers may assist with the state’s vaccination efforts in four important ways:

1. Communicate the importance of the vaccine to employees.
2. Consider partnering with a health care provider to vaccinate employees in the workplace or coordinating on their behalf at a specific vaccination site.
3. Help employees find a vaccine provider in their community.

How can employers communicate the importance of the vaccine to employees?

One of the most important things an employer can do is to encourage employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Employees should educate themselves on the importance of receiving the vaccine. While the COVID-19 vaccine is optional, education, convenience, and ease of access will help encourage individuals to get vaccinated. A communications toolkit can be found at MOStopsCovid.com/toolkit. The toolkit provides messaging, printable communications, and digital information employers may use as part of a communications strategy to employees.

Since July 2021, COVID-19 Hotspot Advisories have been an information resource developed for working-age individuals, business leaders, and local officials in areas of elevated disease rates to inform these groups of the current surge in cases in their local communities and the importance of vaccination. The advisories, which can be found here, include information on current disease rates, vaccination rates, and impacts on the regional health care system. The advisories also highlight the value of vaccination to the individual as well as the workplace and community. Businesses in a county with an active advisory can use the information in the advisory to communicate the importance of the vaccine to employees to address the current surge in cases there. Likewise, businesses in a county not under a current advisory can use the same information to encourage vaccination of their workforce to help prevent a surge in local cases.

Additional resources for businesses are available at Missouri Chamber of Commerce.

How can employers facilitate the vaccination of their employees?
Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs) or Regional Implementation Team (RITs) can assist employers with finding vaccinators in the community who can vaccinate their employees.

RITs were established throughout Missouri at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in part to help employers efficiently navigate the vaccination planning and administration process. The map below includes contact information for the RITs throughout Missouri.

When employers contact a LPHA or RIT, they will learn about vaccine opportunities available to employees which may include:

- LPHA and/or RIT-sponsored vaccination clinics. The MOSstopsCovid.com website includes information on local vaccination events as well as local vaccine providers.
- Local pharmacies such as Hy-Vee, CVS, Walgreens and Walmart.
- Community-sponsored vaccination events.
- The use of on-site health care providers (a dedicated provider, nurse, paramedic, etc.) or a provider with whom an organization has an existing contract/relationship who has registered with DHSS as a COVID-19 vaccinator; or
- Employees’ primary health care providers.

Depending on the size of the workforce and employees’ interest in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, it may make sense to offer vaccinations at the workplace. LPHAs may be able to conduct a private vaccination event or help connect employers with a vaccinator who is willing to hold a private vaccination clinic at their workplace. Coordinating at the local level is often the most efficient and effective means to address public health needs, including planning workforce vaccination events, and there is no cost to the employer for a LPHA to assist in providing the vaccine clinic.

Note: It is important to confirm an accurate estimate of employees who wish to be vaccinated so the employer and the LPHA or other vaccine provider can determine if a
workplace (private) vaccination event makes sense or if other vaccination options are more appropriate.

Please complete this form if you are interested in receiving vaccination assistance for your employees. The form will provide us the information we need to connect you to your RIT, LPHA, or other source to provide assistance in helping your employees receive the vaccine.

**Tip:** Develop a communication plan for employees who wish to be vaccinated, including who the point of contact at your organization will be for questions they may have, additional dose coordination, etc.

### What can I do now?

As an employer, we encourage you to continue or develop a COVID-19 testing strategy, exposure mitigation plan, and guidelines for your employees.

Additionally, please encourage your employees to maintain normal COVID-19 precautions as appropriate. These include:

- **Wash hands often.**
- **Stay at least 6 feet away from others.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.**
- **Stay home while you are sick.**
- **Wear a cloth mask, which covers your mouth and nose, when outside your home.**
- **Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.**
- **Avoid contact with people who are sick, especially if you are 60 or over or have an underlying health condition, like heart disease, diabetes, lung disease or a weakened immune system.**

### Where can employers find more information?

Thank you for your partnership in keeping all Missourians safe and healthy; we truly are Stronger Together! For more information regarding COVID-19 vaccination planning, e-mail us at RIT-Coordination@health.mo.gov or call us at 877-435-8411.

**Additional resources can be found at:**

**MOStopsCOVID Business Resources** –

- The information in this playbook and more can be found [here](#).

**Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry** –

- [Coronavirus resources for Missouri Employers](#) – With COVID-19 continuing to spread in the United States, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry urges the business community to take proactive steps to protect their workplaces and communities from Coronavirus.
- [COVID Stops Here](#) – The COVID Stops Here campaign recognizes Missouri workplaces that have achieved widespread vaccination. As your workplace vaccination rate reaches
at least 70%, we will help celebrate your achievement and use your success to encourage other employers to do the same.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information Handout (English)
COVID-19 Vaccine Information Handout (Spanish)