

# CONVERSATION GUIDES: COVID-19 VACCINE FAQS FOR EMPLOYERS



# GET A FREE COVID-19 VACCINE



Getting a COVID-19 vaccine means taking care of yourself so that you, your family, and others are protected from getting severely ill. Getting vaccinated is the gateway to getting back to who and what we love.

- **Eligibility**

- The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and free for [anyone who is eligible](#).
- Youth between the ages of 12 – 17 must be accompanied by a parent **OR** have a [consent form](#) signed by a parent.
- Insurance is not required.

- **At The Site**

- Bring any identification with their name (College or student ID, passport, consular ID, driver's license, social security card).
- If insured, bring the insurance card.
- Mention to the vaccination provider before getting the vaccine:
  - have any allergies
  - have a fever
  - have a bleeding disorder or are on a blood thinner
  - are immunocompromised or are on a medicine that affects your immune system
  - are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
  - are breastfeeding
  - have received another COVID-19 vaccine
  - have ever fainted in association with an injection
- Community health personnel will be available on site to answer any questions around reactions, care, etc.

- **VAX Locations** - Along with many local pharmacies, grocery stores, and other community locations, [free vaccines are available through Fulton County](#). Mobile and pop-up locations are updated daily. [Find a Vax Site near you today.](#)

- **Free Rides To Vax Sites**

- **FREE Rides for Seniors** - Any Fulton County senior who has a confirmed vaccination appointment can call the Senior Services STARline at 404-613-6000 to schedule transportation.
- **FREE Lyft Rides to Vaccine Appointments - From now until June 30, 2022**  
The Vaccine Access Program is a partnership between Lyft and United Way 2-1-1 to help ensure that transportation gaps do not prevent Georgians from being able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Anyone in need of vaccine transportation can contact United Way 2-1-1 of Greater Atlanta to receive a free ride from Lyft! If your organization is having a vaccine event, or you know of someone in need of a Lyft, please let them know to contact United Way 2-1-1 to schedule a free ride to vaccine appointments. [How to reach United Way 2-1-1:](#)
  - In the Metropolitan Atlanta area, dial 2-1-1.
  - Outside the Metropolitan Atlanta area, dial 404-614-1000, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Friday, to speak to a Community Connection Specialist and schedule a vaccine ride through Lyft.

- **Homebound Residents** - Georgia residents who are currently homebound due to an ongoing physical or mental disability and are unable to travel to a COVID-19 vaccination site can request to receive the vaccination at their home by phone or email. To leave a voicemail request, please call 888-572-0112 and someone will return the call to obtain additional information. To request services by email please email [HVS@dph.ga.gov](mailto:HVS@dph.ga.gov) with the following information for the person who requires at-home vaccination:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- City
- County
- Contact phone number
- The contact phone number will be used to obtain additional information and schedule the vaccination.

- **What To Know After Vaccination**

- **KEEP YOUR VACCINATION CARD** When you get your first dose (if Pfizer or Moderna), you will get a vaccination card to show you when to return for your second dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine. Remember to bring your card when you return.

# COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs FOR EMPLOYERS



## COVID-19 VACCINE

### **1. Can we require employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Employers are advised to offer vaccines to their employees on a voluntary basis instead of making it mandatory. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has specific guidelines for the COVID-19 vaccine, stating employers can require their employees to get vaccinated. In their "Pandemic Preparedness for the Workplace" guidance they state employers must consider reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities or who have religious beliefs conflicts with getting vaccinated.

### **2. Can we ask an employee if he or she has received the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Employers can ask their employees if they have been vaccinated as long as their medical conditions are not questioned. Getting a simple 'Yes' or 'No' answer is good enough and employees should be told they should not provide any information regarding why or why not they are not vaccinated. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA), requires employers to keep any medical information provided by their employee such as COVID-19 vaccine documentation confidential.

### **3. What should we do if an employee refuses to comply with our mandatory vaccine policy?**

Employers can consider options such as allowing leave of absence, transfer to another position, telework or other modifications. Terminating their job may not be the first option.

### **4. Do we need to have a policy in place if we are requiring or encouraging employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. A policy that outlines requirements or any COVID-19 vaccination related recommendations should be developed by employers.

### **5. Do employers need to pay for the COVID-19 vaccination for their employees?**

COVID-19 vaccines are provided for free for everyone living in the United States by the US Government regardless of immigration status and health insurance status.

Though, if vaccines are mandated by the employer, they might have to pay employees for time spent to get vaccinated.



## **6. Can we fire an employee for refusing to get a COVID-19 vaccination?**

Employers can fire employees who do not comply with COVID-19 vaccination conditions of employment put in place by the employer. Though it is advised that employers are very careful taking this route and to seek legal counsel before.

## **7. May we offer an incentive to employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes, employers can offer incentives to their employees in order for them to get the COVID-19 vaccination. Federal discrimination law also prohibits employers from making incentives so persuasive as to be coercive.

## **8. If I do not provide paid sick leave to my employees. What should I do?**

Non-punitive “emergency sick leave” policies can be created. It is important that these policies are flexible, consistent, follow public health guidelines and employees know about them and understand them.

The ARPA allows for employers to voluntarily provide their employees paid-leave for up to 10 days from April 1st 2021 through September 30th 2021, in which they receive an employer tax credit for. This paid-leave is for specific reasons related to COVID-19.

# **FROM FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT TO THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT**

## **1. What tax credits are available for employers that offer coronavirus-related paid leave under the ARPA?**

Employers choosing to provide paid leave during the Extended Period through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), may be able to get tax credits. If an employer decides to voluntarily provide employees with paid leave in the ARPA extended period they can claim tax credit.

- Employees can get up to 80 hours or 10 days of emergency paid sick leave (EPSL). More information on COVID-19 related Tax Credits for Paid Leave

## **2. Under the ARPA, can we offer to extend just EPSL or EFMLA or must both be offered to be eligible for the tax credit?**

There has not been any guidance from the Department of Labor. At the moment there is no requirement to offer both types. Though if employees want to take maximum allowable EPSL or EFMLA, the employer must allow this.

## **3. Must we offer the full allotment of EPSL or EFMLA to qualify for the ARPA tax credit or may we offer fewer days? Can we end it before Sept. 30, 2021?**

Yes, the employer must offer the full allotment of EPSL or EFMLA to their employees and make it available for ALL of them. Failure to do so may result in the employer losing their tax eligibility.

## **4. Under the ARPA, does each employee eligible for voluntary EFMLA leave get a new bank of 12 weeks of paid leave? Does it count towards traditional FMLA time?**

Yes, it must be available to EACH employee and the employees are allowed an additional ten days with the ARPA.

**5. Can I require an employee to use his or her accrued paid time off and still claim the tax credit?**

No paid leave under the FFCRA was in addition to the employee's original leave entitlements.

**6. If we choose to continue to offer FFCRA-like leave in 2021, do absences related to caring for a child whose school or child care provider is closed count toward an employee's 12 weeks of FMLA leave?**

**Employees are eligible for EPSL or FEMLA if;**

- Employee is getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Employee is recovering from an illness, injury or condition related to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Employee is waiting or seeking results of a diagnostic/medical test, or diagnosis of COVID-19 OR their employer has asked for said test/diagnosis.
- Employees are subject to federal, state or local quarantine/isolation because of COVID-19.
- Employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine because of COVID-19.
- Employee is feeling symptoms of COVID-19 and is getting a medical diagnosis.
- Employee is taking care of someone who is quarantined/isolated because of COVID-19.
- **Employees are taking care of their child (IF the child's school or place of care has been closed or is unavailable) because of COVID-19.**
- Employees are experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Secretaries of Treasury and Labor.

**7. How does the ARPA impact COBRA benefits?**

ARPA creates a 100% subsidy for premiums for COBRA coverage between April 1, 2021 through September 30th, 2021. It also allows for individuals to enroll in COBRA coverage if they previously declined coverage or their enrollment period has ended.

- Mini-COBRA is a state continuation of coverage programs which is available for employers who have a small number of employees (less than 20).

**8. Who is an "assistance eligible individual" (AEI) for the COBRA subsidy, and how do they elect coverage?**

**Eligibility:**

- By reason of a qualifying event that is a reduction in hours (as long as the individual remains an employee at the time that hours are reduced)
  - Reduced hours due to change in a business's hours of operations
  - Change from full-time to part-time status
  - Taking of a temporary leave of absence
  - Individual's participation in a lawful labor strike
- Involuntary termination of employment (not including a voluntary termination)
- Elects COBRA continuation coverage.

**9. Can an employer receive tax credits for the COBRA subsidy, FFCRA-like paid leave and the employee retention credit simultaneously?**

These tax credits have a no "double dipping" rule, therefore if an employer is to claim various credits, they must appropriately claim the correct amounts.

# RETURN-TO-WORK

## 1. What types of things do we need to consider before bringing employees back to work?

Though each employee's back to work plan may look different it is advised to consider;

- The necessity for employees to physically return to the workplace and whether telework options can be continued
- Transmission of SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the community (how many infections there are and how fast it's spreading)
- The ability of employees to practice social distancing and other prevention measures, like wearing masks, when in the workplace
- Local or state mandates for business closure restrictions

## 2. May we ask an employee to get tested for COVID-19 before returning to work, especially when they are showing symptoms?

Yes, if done consistently, employers can ask their employees to get tested for COVID-19 before resuming work in the workplace. Though CDC has guidelines on what steps to take if employees do not have immediate access to testing.

## 3. How can I help protect employees who may be at higher risk for severe illness?

Having conversations with employees who have concerns is very important, especially older adults and people who may have underlying conditions. Using these COVID-19 preventative strategies as recommended by the CDC, employees will be protected.

Strategies:

- Implementing telework and other social distancing practices
- Actively encouraging employees to stay home when sick
- Providing sick leave
- Promoting handwashing
- Providing supplies and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for **cleaning** and disinfecting workspaces
- Requiring all employees to wear cloth face coverings

In work environments where having remote work is not possible, employers should consider assigning high risk employees with tasks that allow them to socially distance themselves from people.

#### **4. Can an employee refuse to return to work due to fear of contracting the virus?**

As the employer, it is important to weigh the employees' health concerns and legal rights under the Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) Act, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### **5. Do we have to allow an employee to continue to work from home after we have reopened our work site?**

Remote work has shown to be very successful for some employers and are allowing teleworking to continue. Depending on their need to work based on reasonable accommodation under the ADA, employers now have to allow remote work.

#### **6. Should we conduct antibody testing on employees?**

No. According to the CDC, "Antibody test results should not be used to determine if someone can return to work." The EEOC has also released [guidance](#) stating, "the ADA at this time does not allow employers to require antibody testing before allowing employees to re-enter the workplace."

For more FAQs on information related to COVID-19 and EEOC laws [click here](#).



## COVID-19 CARE & RESOURCES



For a complete list of care and resources (including Youth Outreach, Senior Services, Household Assistance, Mental & Behavioral Health Services, and others) serving Fulton County, please visit [AliveAndInColor.com](https://www.aliveandincolor.com).

### COVID-19 VACCINATION

[Get a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine information + vaccine consent forms](#)

### COVID-19 GET TESTED

[Fulton Co. COVID-19 Testing Sites](#)

### COVID INFORMATION

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Georgia Department of Public Health](#)

[Fulton County COVID-19 Information Hub](#)

[Fulton Co Epidemiology Reports](#)

[Morehouse Healthcare Telemedicine Services](#)

***Alive & In Color* was created as a movement for the community, by the community.**

The multi-channel behavior change and outreach initiative was conceived to empower Fulton County's at-risk Black & LatinX Communities & their Advocates, with guidance and resources to halt the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact. The messages were simple but smart:

**TRAIN**

- Arm yourself with knowledge
- Be proactive with your health
- Manage Risk

**TEST:**

- Know your status - Get tested

**TREAT (Early)**

- Get treated
- Take advantage of care and resources provided by Fulton Co. & Partners

**In 2021, *Alive & In Color*** is focused on communications around vaccine equity and increasing vaccine acceptance, while encouraging Fulton County residents to continue to practice the 3W's of risk mitigation (*Wear a Mask, Wash Your Hands, Watch Your Distance - practice physical distance*).

**ALIVE** &  
IN **COLOR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [ALIVEANDINCOLOR.COM](http://ALIVEANDINCOLOR.COM)