

# CONVERSATION GUIDES: VAX UP & GET DOWN TO BUSINESS



**EMPOWERING NEIGHBORHOOD  
BUSINESSES TO FAST-TRACK  
RECOVERY & STOP THE SPREAD  
THROUGH COVID-19 VACCINATION**

**ALIVE &  
IN COLOR**

# 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.

- **Locations** - Along with many local pharmacies, grocery stores, and other community locations, free vaccines are available through Fulton County. [Schedule an appointment](#), [walk up](#), or [find a mobile location](#) 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.





## [Resuming Business Toolkit](#)

In work settings, even after employees receive a COVID-19 vaccine, they may still need to take steps to [protect themselves and others](#) in many situations. It is important to conduct a thorough assessment of the workplace to identify potential workplace hazards related to COVID-19. Widespread vaccination of employees can be one consideration for restarting operations and returning to the workplace. Other considerations for returning to the workplace include:

1. The necessity for employees to physically return to the workplace and whether telework options can be continued
2. 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)
3. The ability of employees to practice social distancing and other prevention measures, like wearing masks, when in the workplace
4. Local or state mandates for business closure restrictions

# REACHING HERD IMMUNITY TO FAST-TRACK RECOVERY & STOP THE SPREAD



## THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IMMUNITY

*The virus continues to spread from person to person and has a higher likelihood of mutating into more deadly and more transmissible variants.... you probably heard about the Delta variant, which is now more easily transmissible, becoming dominant in new cases and is actually more deadly to younger people, who've never been invincible, but are even less so, when it comes to some of these variants.*

**- Gail Brooks, Principal Strategist, The BLK+Cross**

## The Impending Threat of Mutation

Viral mutations, also referred to as variants, can become an ongoing threat to communities. As viruses spread and replicate, there are more mutations in their genetic code, and at times, these mutations are more transmissible, and more deadly. With COVID-19, or SARS-CoV-2, the more people who get infected by the virus, the greater the chance of it producing more dangerous variants.

For example, the Delta variant has become very concerning, showing higher incidence of severe infection it is causing - particularly in young people. As these variants continue to spread they increase the likelihood of even more deadly mutations to emerge.

## The Role of Community Immunity on Our Path to Recovery

*Herd immunity makes it possible to protect our most vulnerable, including those who can't be vaccinated, such as newborns or those with compromised immune systems, preconditions. Herd immunity will happen when... 70% of the population becomes immune to COVID through vaccination, making the spread from person to person a lot less likely.*

**- Gail Brooks, Principal Strategist, The BLK+Cross**

<sup>1</sup> The Centers for Disease, Control and Prevention, [SARS-CoV-2 Variant Classifications and Definitions](#)

Community immunity also known as population/ community immunity is when enough people within a community are protected from getting a disease because the majority of the population has been vaccinated. Through this type of immunity, it is more difficult for the disease to spread from one person to another, including those who are unable to get vaccinated. In order to reach community immunity, the goal is to get 70% of the population vaccinated.

When enough people in a population have immunity that disease can't spread



## THE BENEFITS OF VACCINATION TO SMALL BUSINESSES & THEIR EMPLOYEES

*I can't tell you how many businesses in 2020 that I visited, where they were closed, most likely due to an employee being infected and then they had to shut down all of their operations. So that's particularly a problem with small businesses...The result in preventing illness from COVID-19 for employees and that in turn obviously has an impact for the families, because if you're not getting sick at work, then it's less likely you're going to take it home to your loved ones.*

**- Lanna R. Hill, HR Policy Advisor, Fulton County Government**

**By providing information about COVID-19 vaccination and establishing supportive policies and practices, employers can help increase vaccine uptake among workers, and help us reach herd immunity. The benefit is clear to both employers and employees:**

### Potential Benefits to Employers

- Keep the workforce healthy by preventing employees from getting COVID-19
- Reduce absences due to illness
- Improve productivity
- Improve morale

### Potential Benefits to Employees

- Prevent COVID-19 illness
- Reduce absences and doctor visits due to illness
- Improve morale

*One of the restaurants that's very active with our organization just went out on Facebook and said that all of their employees have been vaccinated now. And so we've suggested to people, "Use that as a marketing point for your restaurant and then as well, that's going to influence other workers and other restaurants to make the decision and give the choices to their workers to do that.*

**- Karen Bremer, President, Georgia Restaurant Association**

# THE COVID-19 VACCINE EQUITY GAP: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN VACCINE AWARENESS, ACCESS, & ACCEPTANCE ARE A BARRIER TO HERD IMMUNITY



## **The Vax Equity Gap**

The COVID-19 Vax Equity Gap in communities of color occurs across three measures:

- Awareness & understanding of vaccines/ The COVID-19 vaccine
- Access to the COVID-19 vaccine
- Acceptance or voluntary COVID-19 vaccination

## **The Vax Acceptance Gap**

*I've been hearing a lot of people ...in those communities...feeling like other people get to feel how they finally feel as far as... they're scared to go outside now. That's how I've been feeling my whole life so why should I rush to get the virus?*

**- Melvin Bell, CEO, Answer The Bell LLC**

Vaccine Acceptance can be categorized in two ways - hesitancy and apathy.

Hesitancy is failure to vaccinate because of concerns related to safety, side-effects, and efficacy. Apathy is generally connected to low perceived threat of the virus, or the deprioritization of vaccination due to more pressing concerns - e.g. homelessness.

In Fulton County, the Acceptance Gap is visible across racial, generational & geographic lines. In fact, some of our most socially vulnerable neighborhoods have some of the lowest vaccination rates, and are showing rising rates of cases, hospitalizations and death.



# THE COVID-19 VACCINATION ACCEPTANCE GAP: UNDERSTANDING HESITANCY



*It's often said that public health moves at the speed of trust. And we've heard a lot about how lack of trust is at the root of hesitancy, but what we don't hear a lot about are the origins of this mistrust and why some of the misinformation being shared by our communities is, in light of our history, absolutely reasonable.*

**- Gail Brooks, Principal Strategist, The BLK+Cross**

## Barriers To Vaccination: The Top 4 Areas Of Concern

There are four main areas of concern that shape hesitancy amongst Black & Brown populations.

- Concerns about safety and side effects from COVID-19 vaccination
- Speed of the clinical development process
- Distrust in the political and economic motives of the government and corporations
- Established and novel conspiracy theories involving the vaccine

### 1. Select the top 3 barriers to vaccination you are seeing among your employees/ employees of member businesses?(Multiple Choice)

Being Mandated To Get Vaccinated	(2/3) 67%
Possibility of Serious Side-Effects	(3/3) 100%
Distrust in Safety of Vaccines	(3/3) 100%
Side-Effects That Impair Ability To Work	(0/3) 0%
Awareness of Eligibility	(0/3) 0%
Awareness of Vax Site Locations	(0/3) 0%

*I think there has been some hesitancy on some businesses not wanting to mandate something to their workers because they are having difficulty hiring workers...People now are saying, "Oh, okay, I'm going to have to go back to work. I better start looking at things and I better start investigating things."*

**- Karen Bremer, President, Georgia Restaurant Association**

2 Audience Poll Results: "Hey Young World" Town Hall, 6/17/21



# CLOSING THE COVID-19 VACCINE EQUITY GAP: SMALL BUSINESSES CAN PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN INCREASING VACCINE AWARENESS, ACCESS, & ACCEPTANCE AMONG WORKERS



*Mandating something for an adult for employees sometimes can take you down a slippery slope, there are better ways, I think, to get people to really embrace it and to ensure that they're vaccinated.... Yes, you can, small business owner...mandate it, but I would say try a different approach first. Some of the questions that you could ask or share would be really understanding what's driving it.*

**- Sheree Knowles, Founder & CEO, HR Knowledge Source**

## **GUIDELINES FOR VACCINATION AS A WORKPLACE SAFETY**

**There are policies and guidelines in place to better help businesses overcome challenges associated with keeping employees safe and providing them with the support they need to get vaccinated.**

### **Vaccine Policy Guidelines**

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

- **Inquiring About Vax Status** - Employers can ask workers to disclose their vaccination status, but that information cannot be shared.
- **Voluntary Vaccination Policies Are Preferred** - Although the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) [confirmed](#) in late May that employers can legally mandate vaccines for returning workers, employers are advised to offer vaccines to their employees on a voluntary basis instead of making it mandatory. Risks of mandating employee vaccination include:
  - Morale Issues
  - Damage to diversity and inclusion progress

## **GUIDELINES FOR INCENTIVIZING WORKER VACCINATION**

**The Federal government provides guidelines and policy for incentivizing both workers and employers to help drive vaccine uptake.**

---

3 US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)

*One option is for an employer to offer an incentive and it can be an incentive of any amount, and it can also include ... like a reward, or it can be like a penalty, but to offer employees to voluntarily provide documentation or confirmation of having received the vaccine from an independent third party.*

**- Lanna R. Hill, HR Policy Advisor, Fulton County Government**

### **Guidelines on Incentives For Employees**

- Employers **can offer financial incentives** to their employees in order for them to get the COVID-19 vaccination. Incentives are typically provided in three ways:
  - Vaccine Support Stipend
  - Freebies/Rebates or Cash Bonus
  - PTO
- Employees **can** be given incentives to provide **proof of vaccination under the ADA**, though, given that disability-related/medical information is not requested
- Employers **can not offer incentives** for **employee's other family** member(s) to get vaccinated

### **Other Considerations**

- **Tax Consequences** - Employers should consider the tax consequences of such benefits
- **Coercion** - Federal discrimination law also prohibits employers from making incentives so persuasive as to be coercive
- **Comparable Benefits** - Offering incentives to receive a vaccine that some employees cannot receive due to religious or health reasons, puts employers in danger of potentially violating discrimination laws because some of their employees cannot receive that benefit. Employers should consider comparable benefits for those who cannot be vaccinated

### **PTO AS A DRIVER OF WORKER VACCINATION**

*The tax credits that they're [employers] going to get is going to take care of what they need to take care of, which is what? To get their employees paid... get them vaccinated. How do you do that? The best way, as we've been telling them, just in the last couple of days is first of all, you can provide time off to get it. You can provide time off that will also cover those that might have bad side effects from it.*

**- Dyan Mathews, President & CEO, South Fulton Chamber of Commerce, Inc.**

The American Rescue Plan provides a **refundable tax credit** for small and medium businesses (less than 500 employees) to fully cover the cost of full paid leave to get fully vaccinated and recover from any side effects.

### **Paid Leave Types (Non-Punitive Leave)**

- Time to get vaccinated
- Time to recover from side-effects

### **Case Study: CHOBANI + Walmart**

- Chobani - 3 hours of paid time off for each dose, making it 6 hours
- Walmart - 3 days paid leave for any vaccine side-effects

---

4 Legal Considerations of Employer-Provided Covid-19 Vaccine Incentives, National Law Review; April 13, 2021.

## Guidelines & Considerations

- Employees can get up to 80 hours or 10 days of emergency paid sick leave (EPSL). [Click here](#) for more information on eligibility and guidelines
- Many smaller neighborhood businesses are not in a position to offer paid leave or financial assistance to employees to get vaccinated. For these companies, Educational Opportunities such as Town Halls or facilitating more convenient vaccination via Worksite Vax Clinics can prove an effective method.

# CLOSING THE COVID-19 VACCINE ACCEPTANCE GAP: INCREASING VACCINE UPTAKE THROUGH EMPLOYER-LED AWARENESS & ACCESS



## TOP 5 BEST PRACTICES FOR INCREASING VACCINE UPTAKE THROUGH EMPLOYER-LED VACCINATION

1. **Encourage your leaders/ the vaccinated to be vaccine champions.**
  - a. Invite them to share with staff their personal reasons for getting vaccinated and remind staff why it's important to be vaccinated.
2. **Communicate transparently to all workers about vaccination.** See [Key Things to Know](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and [Myths and Facts](#) for up-to-date information.
3. **Create a communication plan.**
  - a. Share key messages with staff through posters, emails, and other channels. Emphasize the benefits of protecting themselves, their families, co-workers, and community.
  - b. Provide regular updates on topics like the [benefits](#), [safety](#), [side effects](#) and [effectiveness of vaccination](#); clearly communicate what is not known.
4. **Make visible the decision to get vaccinated and celebrate it!**
  - a. Provide [stickers](#) for workers to wear after vaccination and encourage them to post selfies on social media.
5. **Make vaccination more accessible through on-site/ near-site vaccination events.**

5 The White House, [President Biden to Call on All Employers to Provide Paid Time Off for Employees to Get Vaccinated After Meeting Goal of 200 Million Shots in the First 100 Days](#)

6 Society for Human Resources Management, [Answers to Most Common Coronavirus Questions](#)



## INCREASING VACCINE UPTAKE THROUGH EMPLOYER EDUCATION THAT BUILDS VACCINE CONFIDENCE

*Small employers, employers in general, we make assumptions about what people are aware of, and we make assumptions about why they choose to do or not do certain things. Education is critical. We've already shared a lot of stats and reasons as to why there's hesitancy, and employers can really take this information and start to educate their employees. Host town hall meetings, give people an opportunity to ask questions, invite them to forums such as this one so that they can hear it for themselves firsthand.*

**- Sheree Knowles, Founder & CEO, HR Knowledge Source**

- **Develop an education plan.** Employers and community organizations should work together to develop an education plan for the vaccination program. This plan should outline steps to educate and provide information to workers so they can make informed choices about getting the vaccine.
- **Provide opportunities for questions.** The education plan should include an opportunity for workers to be transparent and readily raise questions, share concerns, and provide input on how to best build confidence about receiving the vaccine.
- **Address workers' questions and concerns.** A qualified person should be available to listen and respond to all questions and concerns. Additionally, the person should be prepared to handle questions that are currently not known, such as the long-term effectiveness of the vaccine in protecting against COVID-19 infection. Ask organizations and individuals who are respected in employee communities to help you build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines.
- **The education plan should address key topics about the COVID-19 vaccine:**
  - How the vaccine works.
  - The training and qualifications of those administering the vaccine.
  - That it does not cause a person to be infected with SARS CoV-2.
  - It does not contain live virus.
  - Overview of vaccine safety and effectiveness.
  - Potential side effects and how they are treated.
  - Contraindications for receiving the vaccine.
  - The role of the vaccine in combatting the pandemic.
  - The importance of continuing other important protective measures, such as mask wearing, physical distancing, use of barriers, ventilation, and personal protective equipment.
  - Addressing and dispelling misinformation

### **Host a Vaccine Education Virtual Town Hall.**

Hosting a Virtual Town Hall, (or partnering on one) is a good way to educate employees as well as customers.

For more information, register to become an Advocate at [www.aliveandincolor.com](http://www.aliveandincolor.com) and download our **Vaccinated: Now We Gather in Service** one-sheet.

---

<sup>3</sup> US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)

## INCREASING VACCINE UPTAKE THROUGH EMPLOYER-LED VACCINATION

*There was a survey of employees that was published in April of this year by McKinsey & Company. They found that 83% of those surveyed said that offering an onsite vaccination would increase the likelihood that they actually get the vaccine. There are a lot of options for both onsite and offsite, vax, providing access. Employers can partner, foreign partnerships to run temporary vaccination clinics, such as those that may be offered by... insurance providers like Humana, Kaiser, sometimes healthcare systems like Emory or pharmacies, you can partner with those to run onsite vaccination clinics.*

**- Lanna R. Hill, HR Policy Advisor, Fulton County Government**

**When considering ways to provide employees with convenient options for vaccination, employers should consider both onsite and offsite vaccination events:**

### **On Site at the Workplace**

- Employer/Partner-run temporary vaccination clinics such as those offered by provider programs (Humana Health Care)
- Mobile vaccination clinics brought to the workplace
- Fulton County Vaccination Events - Partner with other businesses and organizations in your community to host a vaccination event for at least 50 people. For more information, register to become an Advocate at [www.aliveandincolor.com](http://www.aliveandincolor.com) and email us at [aliveandincolor@theblkcross.co](mailto:aliveandincolor@theblkcross.co).
  - Mobile units (minimum of 50 people)

### **Off Site in the Community**

- Mobile/temporary vaccination clinics set up at community locations (closed or open to the public)
  - [AIC Vax Tracker](#)

### **Guidelines & Considerations**

- **Provide Multiple Opportunities For Vaccination** - Employers with an onsite clinic should offer more than one opportunity for vaccination. Mobile clinics can return to a worksite multiple times on a rotating schedule.
- **Keep Employee Vax Records** - Employers offering vaccination to workers should keep a record of the offer to vaccinate and the employee's decision to [accept or decline vaccination](#)
- **Provide Supportive Policies** - Employers using community locations can provide supportive policies (e.g., paid leave, transportation support) for an extended period of time.

## PROVIDING "REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION" FOR WORKERS WHO WON'T GET VACCINATED OR HAVE EXEMPTION

*There could be legitimate reasons why people are unable to get vaccinated and that could have to do with disabilities. It could have to do with compromised immune systems. It could be related to religious preferences and reasons. And so having a blanket, across-the-board policy that everyone must be vaccinated without the additional conversation, I think would take employers down what I would call a slippery slope.*

**- Sheree Knowles, Founder & CEO, HR Knowledge Source**

**Some employees may not participate in a vaccine incentive program offered by the employer because of religious beliefs, disability, or other characteristics protected by federal or state law. For employers covered under the American Disabilities Act, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, "once an employer receives notice that an employee's medical condition or sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance prevents him from taking the COVID-19 vaccine, the employer must provide a reasonable accommodation unless it would pose an undue hardship."**

- **Comparable Benefits** - For employees who do not participate in a vaccine incentive program offered by the employer because of religious beliefs, disability, or other characteristics protected by federal or state law, employers must ensure that comparable benefits are available for those employees
- **Accommodations For Unvaccinated Workers In The Workplace**
  - **Employees must be allowed to wear masks** and/or observe other safety requirements
- **Accommodations For Unvaccinated Workers Who Cannot Return To The Workplace**

*If you're going to offer incentive programs to other employees, you also need to be able to offer an opportunity to those who can't get the vaccine because of a disability or a sincerely held religious belief to earn the incentive in some other way. That could be that you offer them a safety training or safety workshop, or some kind of course, where they learn about how to prevent or mitigate the spread of COVID-19. It could be reviewing CDC literature on mitigating the spread of COVID-19. You just need to be able to provide those individuals with another alternative for earning the incentive so that you don't run a foul of either the Americans with Disabilities Act or Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

**- Lanna R. Hill, HR Policy Advisor, Fulton County Government**



***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)