



Employer Guidance for Vaccinating North Carolinians (October 1, 2021)

The most important tool we have to slow the spread of COVID-19 is get more North Carolinians vaccinated. This document provides guidance on how employers can encourage their staff to get vaccinated and implement policies that improve vaccination rates among their employees.

How Employers can Support Vaccination in their Workforce

1. **Share information about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine:** One of the key actions employers can take to promote vaccination among their staff is to share information that the vaccine is safe and effective. NCDHHS has several flyers, fact sheets, and graphics from our Vaccine Communications Toolkit ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)) that can be posted in the workplace or electronically distributed to employees that share information about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

Employers can also talk to their employees about the importance of the vaccine for their own health and the health of their families and communities. Vaccine information should be given to employees in their [native languages](#), whenever possible, using clear language and trusted means of communication.

Employers can combat misinformation about the vaccine by ensuring the information that employees receive comes from reliable sources. Leaders and employees in your company can attend a vaccine 101 presentation so that they can help direct employees to trusted sources of information. Please submit a request using [NCDHHS's form](#) if your company/organization is interested in helping to organize a vaccine 101 presentation led by NCDHHS presenters.

See **Appendix 1** for more examples and resources to share with employees.

2. **Identify vaccination sites and/or host a vaccination event for employees:** Employers can also share information about where their employees can get vaccinated in the community. [Find My Spot](#) is an easy tool employers can share with their staff to identify nearby vaccination sites.

Booster vaccines are available at most vaccine locations. To find a COVID-19 Pfizer booster, visit [Find My Spot](#) and check "Pfizer-BioNTech (age 12+)" to search locations and ensure Pfizer is available.

Additionally, our vaccine providers are working very hard to vaccinate as many North Carolinians as possible, so some vaccine providers may be looking to work with major employers in their jurisdiction to facilitate or host a vaccination events for employees. Hosting vaccination events at the workplace can remove many of the barriers to employees accessing vaccines.

See **Appendix 2** for more information about how to coordinate with local vaccine providers

3. **Consider what type of vaccination model would work best for the organization and the employees.** There are several ways that employers can help their employees get vaccinated. Below are potential vaccination models that employers can discuss with their local vaccine provider(s) to determine what model will work best for their staff and local context.

MODELS TO VACCINATE WORKERS

Employer most involved				Employer least involved
Employers with Occupational Health	Employers Host Onsite Vaccine Event	Vaccine Provider Hosts Special Vaccine Event (e.g., "Teacher Day")	Employer Assists Employees	Employee Independently Vaccinated
Employers with occupational health are enrolled in CVMS and allocated vaccine to vaccinate their employees.	Employer partners with local vaccine provider for on-site vaccine event. Employer can support vaccinations by helping employees locate their vaccination record, filling appointment slots, supporting staffing	Employer partners with local vaccine provider who hosts special event at their clinic or other community location. Employer can support vaccinations by helping employees locate vaccination record, filling appointment slots, supporting staffing	Employer shares information with employees, assists employees with identifying vaccination record and a vaccination location; employer provides or connects employees with transportation resources.	An employee seeks vaccination independently of their employer at any enrolled provider

4. **Offer reminders and assistance to your employees to get vaccinated.**
 - a. **Transportation** - If vaccinations are not available at the work site, providing transportation resources to employees can decrease barriers to accessing vaccines. Employers can assist with transportation for employees in the following ways:
 - i. Employers can offer employees transportation to and from vaccine sites.
 - ii. Employers can also share information about local transit authorities that can assist people needing transportation to a vaccination site. Local transit agencies are receiving \$2.5 million in funds to help pay for rides for individuals who need transportation assistance to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. People who need transportation assistance to a COVID-19 vaccine should reach out to their local transit agency (a list of local transit agencies can be found at the [NC DOT website](#)).
 - b. **Leave** - Offer paid time off or sick leave to allow employees to get vaccinated, or to take their children to get vaccinated, and if they have temporary reactions after the vaccine (e.g. fatigue, headache, fever) that makes it hard to work for 24-48 hours after a vaccination. Consider a staggered schedule to avoid multiple employees experiencing temporary reactions at the same time.
 - c. **Assistance in scheduling** – Help with the registration process or on-line scheduling (access to Wi-Fi, assistance with translation) to help employees make appointments for vaccinations.

5. **Set clear workplace policies that promote vaccinations:** As many employees return to the workplace, it is important to establish vaccination policies that will protect workers and consumers. NCDHHS strongly recommends the following workplace policies to help slow the spread of COVID-19:
 1. Require employees to report their vaccination status.

- a. Employers may legally require their employees to be vaccinated or report their COVID-19 vaccination status.
2. Require employees who are unvaccinated or who do not report their vaccination status to participate in regular screening/testing programs.

Additionally, employers may consider offering incentives to employees like gift cards to help encourage individuals to get vaccinated.

For more information about implementing this policy and different forms of proof of vaccination, please see **Appendix 3**.

6. **Keep employees updated on latest treatment options:** While vaccines provide the best protection, treatment options such as monoclonal antibodies are available for people who have been exposed to COVID-19 or have had symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days or less. If taken early, monoclonal antibodies can reduce the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Visit the [Monoclonal Antibodies for Treatment of COVID-19](#) page to learn more about monoclonal antibodies and resources to share.
7. **Share new information about booster shots:** The FDA and CDC have authorized and recommended “booster” vaccine shots that strengthen and extend protections against severe illness from COVID-19. There is an ample supply of boosters across the state. For now, boosters are only available for those that have had the Pfizer vaccine, but more information will be coming soon about Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Employees can get the booster if it has been 6 months since their second Pfizer shot and at least one of the following is true:

- You are 65 or older
- You are 18 or older and:
 - You live or work in a nursing home or other long-term care facility.
 - You have a medical condition that puts you at high risk for severe illness, such as obesity, asthma, heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes.
 - You work in a high-risk profession, meaning you come into contact with a lot of people, and you don’t know their vaccination status, for example, health care workers, first responders, teachers, food processing workers, retail and restaurant workers, and public transportation workers.
 - You live or work in a place where many people live together, for example, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, migrant farm housing, dormitories or other group living settings in colleges or universities.

These are just examples and not meant to be a complete list. If employees have questions about whether they fall into one of these groups, encourage them to speak to a doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. Employees can self-attest that they are in one of these groups; proof is not needed.

For more information, visit [NCDHHS COVID-19 Booster Website](#).

SUMMARY OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Employers**
 - Encourage eligible employees to get the booster shot
 - Initiate employee outreach steps (see Appendix 1 for more examples)
 - Share information about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine
 - Talk to employees about protecting their own health and the health of their families and community
 - Prevent the spread of misinformation by sharing resources from trusted sources
 - Share information about where to find vaccination sites and take steps to coordinate with local vaccine providers (see details in **Appendix 2**) and consider what vaccination model would work best for your situation
 - Offer assistance and resources to help your employees get vaccinated
 - Establish workplace policies that encourage vaccinations
 - Share the most up-to-date COVID-19 treatment options
- **Employees**
 - Talk to your organization’s leadership about how they are planning to vaccinate staff
 - Use online tools to contact your local vaccine provider to get an appointment
 - NC COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center: 1-877-490-6642. It’s a free call.
 - [Find My Spot](#): Easy to use online tool to help individuals find their spot to get a vaccination in NC, including vaccine provider locations and contact information. North Carolinians enter their ZIP code or current location to find nearby vaccine providers. The Find a Vaccine Location tool will be updated regularly with the latest available data. Users should contact vaccine providers directly to confirm availability and schedule appointments.
- **Vaccine Providers**
 - Reach out to employers in your community to develop partnerships and identify which model to implement.

Appendix 1. Informational Resources and Templates Employee Communication

Share information and resources with your employees on how they can find their spot to take their shot.

- [Find My Spot](#): Easy to use online tool to help individuals find their spot to get a vaccination in NC, including vaccine provider locations and contact information. North Carolinians enter their ZIP code or current location to find nearby vaccine providers. The Find a Vaccine Location tool will be updated regularly with the latest available data. Users should contact vaccine providers directly to confirm availability and schedule appointments.
- NC COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center: 1-877-490-6642. It’s a free call.

Potential ways to educate your employees about the COVID-19 vaccine:

- Send employee letters, text messages or email blasts (see template responses at the end of the document below)
- Schedule meetings with team members that share a common native language to learn about the vaccine plan
- Display posters and other printed materials in places where most workers frequent

- Post vaccine information on your company’s social media or worksite television monitors
- Partner with trusted community leaders to promote getting your vaccine when it’s your turn

Additional resources to share with your employees about the COVID-19 vaccine:

- NCDHHS COVID-19 vaccination [Website](#)
- Flyers, fact sheets, social graphics from our Vaccine Communications Toolkit ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
- Frequently Asked Questions ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
- Presentation COVID-Vaccination 101 ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
- PSA Videos on COVID-19 Vaccine ([YouTube](#))
- CDC’s COVID-19 Vaccine [Website](#)

Template Email to Employees:

Dear <NAME>,

COVID-19 vaccines are now widely available in North Carolina. We strongly recommend that you get the vaccine. For your information, we have included some more information about the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccinations that are currently available in the US:

- Scientists had a head start. The vaccines were built upon years of work to develop vaccines for similar viruses.
- The vaccines are tested, safe and effective. Vaccines were found to help prevent COVID-19 and are effective in preventing hospitalization and death, with no serious safety concerns noted in the clinical trials.
- You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. You may have temporary reactions like a sore arm, headache, or feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.
- Take your shot at no cost. The COVID-19 vaccine is available for free, whether or not you have insurance.

Vaccines are being offered at <insert name of hospital/health system, local health department, community health center that is an enrolled vaccine provider>. Here are your next steps for getting vaccinated:

[Work with your local vaccine provider to determine which of the following options are available to your employees]:

- Go to <insert website> and call one of the local vaccine providers on the list; OR
- Respond to this message indicating your interest in being vaccinated against COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccination team will contact you about when and where you can get vaccinated; OR
- Schedule a vaccination appointment by calling <insert phone number>; OR
- Schedule a vaccination appointment by taking the following steps in your electronic chart <insert instructions>; OR
- Attend walk-in hours at the following times and locations: <insert information>
 - *Note: Plan ahead and be careful when using this option due to the potential for crowded vaccination events or prolonged wait time for elderly patients*

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact <<insert contact person>> with questions or concerns.

Appendix 2. Steps to Coordinate with Local Providers

Employers that are working with vaccine provider(s) in their area to implement models 1 or 2 may be able to take the following additional steps. **Before taking any of these steps below, talk to your vaccine provider(s) about what this will look like in your community.**

Coordinate with Vaccine Providers	
Notify employees of reserved appointments and help schedule when possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your local vaccine provider is able to set aside appointments specifically for your employees, work with them to fill those slots by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alerting employees of times/dates of appointments/events that are available to them and how they can sign up ○ Providing assistance for registration process or on-line scheduling (access to Wi-Fi, assistance with translation, email set-up) ○ Sending reminders to staff about upcoming vaccine events <p>NOTE: When helping to schedule appointments, consider that you may need to stagger employees on different days</p>
Provide transportation for employees to vaccination events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer employees transportation to and from vaccine sites • Share information about local transit authorities that can assist people needing transportation to a vaccination site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People who need transportation assistance to a COVID- 19 vaccine should reach out to their local transit agency (a list of local transit agencies can be found at the NC DOT website).
Organize vaccine event logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with your local vaccine provider to determine whether a vaccine event for your employees is the right model for vaccinating your staff. If so, you can help identify a facility that has basic amenities or features, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Running water, electricity, heat/air conditioning ○ Toilet and handwashing facilities ○ Reliable cell phone service ○ Wireless internet (this is particularly important for vaccine providers to be able to register people in CVMS and do data entry) ○ Tables and chairs ○ Basic beverage and food provision for vaccinators and volunteers ○ Heavy-duty tents for shelter (if outdoor) ○ ADA accessibility • Consider using your facilities or office spaces • Consider partnering with organizations (e.g., faith organizations, community centers) that have available space for vaccine events

Support vaccination event staffing

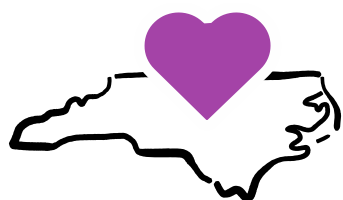
- Work with your local vaccine provider to determine whether a vaccine event is the right model for your staff. If so, you can support vaccine events for your employees (e.g., offering volunteers who can support check-in and check-out, parking/traffic control).
- Identify volunteers who can support with the following types of tasks at a vaccine event:
 - Scheduling vaccine appointments for your event
 - Calling and confirming appointments
 - Greeting, temperature checks, symptom screening
 - Parking and traffic control
 - Check-in table and confirmation of appointment
 - Check-out and second dose scheduling
 - Interpreters
- Please note: In most cases, vaccine providers (NOT community organizations) should plan to staff the following components of vaccine events: registration in CVMS, vaccine storage and handling, vaccine administration, post-vaccination monitoring, and data entry. Vaccine providers may also guide/support other activities as needed.

Appendix 3. Proof of Vaccination

Individuals may demonstrate proof of vaccination in several ways. Employers that are requesting employees provide proof of vaccination are encouraged to accept any of the following forms of proof of vaccination:

1. An original or copy of a COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card issued on the form provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”). Individuals may contact their vaccine provider with questions about this record.
2. A note or receipt signed by an individual’s health care provider, including a licensed nurse, physician, pharmacist, or physician’s assistant, or another healthcare provider or a representative of a health care provider. This note or receipt must show at least:
 - The employee’s name
 - The name of the health care provider administering the vaccine
 - Date(s) of vaccination
 - Place of vaccination
 - Vaccine product name (i.e., Moderna, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson)
3. A printout of the employee’s vaccination record from the provider who administered the vaccine – for example, a pharmacy participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program like Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, and grocery store pharmacies.
4. A record from the NC Immunization Registry (NCIR)
5. A printout of the employee’s record from North Carolina’s COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS) Portal. People can visit covid-vaccine-portal.ncdhhs.gov to access their vaccine record if they got their shot from a North Carolina provider (such as a local health department, primary care provider or at a local community event) and gave an email address. Note that people who received their vaccine through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program as noted above or from another federal vaccine provider such as the U.S. Department of Defense will not have their information available in CVMS. For information about accessing CVMS and to register, people may visit covid-vaccine-portal.ncdhhs.gov (Spanish page: [Vacunate.nc.gov/registro](https://vacunate.nc.gov/registro))

Didn’t use email when you got your vaccine? Need additional help or need to make corrections to your record in CVMS? Contact the COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center at (888) 675-4567 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.



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Protect your family and neighbors.**

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