



# TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

## RESOLUTION 2021-11-10 (3)

**Date:** November 10, 2021  
**To:** THA Board of Commissioners  
**From:** April Black  
Executive Director  
**Re:** COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

*This resolution would authorize Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA) Executive Director to implement the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.*

### Background and Recommendations

Federal and State regulations require our agency to create and maintain a safe work environment. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages, THA has taken measures to keep staff and their families safe during this difficult time. Our overall goal is to be able to allow our employees to return to the offices and worksites to perform their duties. After consultation with the Tacoma -Pierce County health Department, the Leadership team determined that requiring COVID-19 vaccinations would greatly improve the safety of our employees when they return from full-time teleworking.

While COVID-19 vaccines were developed rapidly, all steps have been taken to ensure their safety and effectiveness. They went through all the required stages of clinical trials. Extensive testing and monitoring have shown that these vaccines are safe and effective.

COVID-19 vaccines are effective and were developed using science that has been around for decades. They can keep employees from getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines have received and continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.

COVID-19 vaccines also help keep our employees from getting seriously ill even if they do contract COVID-19.

Our employees do important work. We need them performing their jobs and feeling safe when they need to come into the office. Getting vaccinated will help everyone protect people around them, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19

**Recommendation**

Authorize THA's Executive Director to implement the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.



# TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

## **RESOLUTION 2021-11-10 (3) (COVID-19 Vaccination Policy)**

**WHEREAS**, during the pandemic, following state guidelines and for the safety of all employees, the agency has required many employees to telework. The agency now wants to give our employees the safest environment to return to the offices when the offices and worksites re-open; and

**WHEREAS**, the policy and accompanying documents have been shared and negotiated with both unions who support the mandatory vaccination; now, therefore, be it

***Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City Of Tacoma, Washington, that:***

THA's Executive Director is authorized to implement the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for all employees, Commissioners, and contractors on our sites.

**Approved: November 10, 2021**

  
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Stanley Rumbaugh, Chair



## **COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

**Effective Date: November 15, 2021**

### **1. Purpose**

In accordance with Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA) responsibility to provide and maintain a safe workplace, THA 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 the Federal government, Washington State, and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

THA acknowledges that some staff may have concerns about the vaccine. 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 Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department website.

We respect those staff seeking medical or religious exemptions, and those who have been determined to qualify for such exemptions shall continue employment with THA. Regardless of exemption status, absent individual circumstances supporting a specific reasonable accommodation, no unvaccinated employee may report to a THA worksite after the Required Vaccination Date set in this policy.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all Tacoma Housing Authority employees, Board members, temporary hires and temporary workers assigned to THA from employment agencies or labor partners.

This policy also applies to all THA contracts where workers are required to be on a THA property.

This policy does not apply to THA tenants or customers.

### **3. Responsibility**

3.1. *Human Resources* will be responsible for administering this policy and the exemption process.

3.2. *Employees* are responsible for reporting their vaccination status to Human Resources as described in the Reporting Requirement section of the policy by the January 14, 2022 Required Vaccination Date deadline.

### **4. Policy Details**

On August 27, 2021, THA 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. Any policy updates will be shared, in advance, with any labor union representing THA employees. The Tacoma Housing Authority will continue to follow applicable laws and public health guidance, and staff must continue to adhere to THA's COVID-19 protocols and policies as required.

All staff must be fully vaccinated or have approved accommodation exemption by January 14, 2022 (the "Required Vaccination Date").

#### **4.1. Definition of "vaccinated"**

As a condition of employment, all current and future THA employees, both regular and temporary, and other workers and Board members as mentioned above, must have completed a full vaccination cycle with a U.S. FDA-authorized<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 vaccine and provide documentation proving their fully vaccinated status to THA by January 14, 2022, if hired on or before that date. For those hired after January 14, 2022, they must provide documentation proving their fully vaccinated status on their first day of employment.

Employees are considered fully vaccinated using the following standards:

- Two weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, OR
- Two weeks after the single the dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

If an employee does not meet these requirements, that employee is NOT fully vaccinated in accordance with this policy.

COVID-19 testing is not an allowed alternative.

Antibody testing is not an allowed alternative.

#### **4.2. Time Away from Work for Vaccination(s)**

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. As of October 1, 2021, THA 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 January 14, 2022. If an employee demonstrates that they used THA paid leave to receive their vaccination, they will be credited any leave used for such purpose. If FFCRA leave was used to obtain a vaccination, no credit will be available.

#### **4.3. Time Off for Reactions to Vaccine(s)**

If an employee has an adverse reaction to a vaccination, they will be allowed 1 day of paid leave. If additional leave is required, the employee may use their accrued leave or leave without pay. If an employee demonstrates that they used THA paid leave following receiving their vaccination due to an adverse reaction, they will be credited with any leave used for such purpose (up to one work shift). If FFCRA leave was used while recovering from an adverse reaction, no credit will be available.

#### **4.4. Documentation**

Acceptable proof of vaccination includes one of the following:

- CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or photo of the card.
- Documentation of vaccination from a health care provider or electronic health record.
- State Immunization Information System record.
- WA State Certificate of COVID-19 Vaccination from MyIRmobile.com

Personal attestation is not an acceptable form of verification.

If documentation submitted by an employee is later found to be false, the employee will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Employer will treat employee medical information or any such vaccination record or documentation as confidential for retention purposes and will be treated as a confidential medical record.

##### **4.4.1 New Hires**

New hires and temporary workers hired after November 15, 2021, 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, THA 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. If a new hire has had one vaccination and is scheduled for a second shot, THA may delay the start date or may rescind the offer.

#### 4.4.2 Staff on Approved Leave of Absence

Unvaccinated workers who are on an approved leave of absence before January 14, 2022, 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.

#### **4.5 Exemption and Accommodation Requests**

In accordance with all Federal, State and local rules and regulations, THA recognizes that there may be certain circumstances preventing an employee from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine consistent with this policy.

Employees, Board members, contract staff and volunteers in need of an exemption from this Policy due to a medical reason, or in consideration of a sincerely held religious belief, must submit a completed Religious or Medical Exemption Application form to Human Resources to begin the interactive accommodation process by COB Friday, December 3rd. Accommodation for medical reasons may be granted where they are required by law and do not pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others, including THA's clients.

Accommodations for religious beliefs may be granted where they do not impose an undue burden on THA, including its ability to provide a safe work environment for employees and reduce the risk to the public we serve.

THA's receipt of an accommodation request does not automatically excuse an employee from the requirements of this policy. Rather, consistent with Federal and State law, THA will consider accommodation requests on a case-by-case basis and will engage in further communications with employee, and any physicians, medical providers, and/or religious personnel as needed to fully evaluate any request.

Regardless of whether an accommodation is approved, absent unusual individual circumstances supporting a specific reasonable accommodation, no unvaccinated employee may report to a THA worksite after the Required Vaccination Date set in this policy.

#### **4.6 Consequences of Non-Compliance with this Policy**

Barring a qualifying medical or religious exemption, regular and project benefit eligible employees who fail to provide the required documentation by January 14, 2022, will be placed on paid administrative leave for thirty (30) calendar days. THA 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 January 14, 2022, 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 January 14, 2022 if they do not meet the vaccination requirement.

Employees placed on administrative leave due to non-compliance with this policy will not be eligible for reinstatement into their current position.

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<sup>1</sup> The FDA makes a distinction - Authorized for Emergency Use (EAU) (Moderna & JJ) and FDA-Approved (Pfizer).  
<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>