

## Information Item

**Date:** December 14, 2021

**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

**From:** Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager  
Dr. Marquis H. Barnett, Human Resources Director

**Subject:**  
Update on the City's Response to COVID-19 and Vaccination Numbers

**Strategic Focus Area:** Service Excellence

**Strategic Objective:** No

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** N/A

**Key Work Item:** N/A



The City of Winston-Salem COVID-19 Vaccination Policy became effective on Monday, October 25, 2021. Under this policy, City employees who present proof of full vaccination status as of Sunday, December 5, 2021 will be eligible for a financial incentive (\$1,000 for Full-Time Employees and \$500 for Part-Time Employees). Employees who elect to become vaccinated after December 5th will be eligible for a reduced vaccination incentive, per the policy.

During the October 18 regular meeting of the City Council, staff advised that they would return to the Council for further guidance at the close of the incentive period to provide a status update. As of December 14, 2021, 1,897 employees have provided proof of full vaccination status. This is reflective of 82 percent of the City's workforce. Effective December 6, 2021, those employees who remain unvaccinated (414) will be required to submit to weekly COVID-19 testing. This period will be open for an additional four weeks and is scheduled to end on Sunday January 2, 2021. The estimated weekly cost of this testing is approximately \$35,000 which will be charged to the City's health insurance reserve fund. The mandatory testing period will be open for an additional four weeks and is scheduled to end on Friday, December 31, 2021.

The City's policy was adopted prior to and independent of the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS), which, as expected, is the subject of several legal challenges. The City is not precluded from moving forward with its policy because of the legal challenges to the ETS. Vaccine Mandate.

Based on information shared with City staff, it appears that the North Carolina cities that are requiring unvaccinated employees to submit to COVID-19 testing are moving forward with their respective testing policies, until their testing periods expire. They will determine whether to proceed with additional testing or the disciplinary process set forth in some of their policies. Again, cities are not precluded from moving forward with their policies because of the legal challenges to the ETS.

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The estimated financial impact of the COVID-19 vaccination incentive is \$1.8 million across all classifications and job types. The COVID-19 vaccination policy is attached for review. City staff will provide an update regarding the vaccination numbers and seek additional guidance regarding next steps at the December 14th meeting of the Community Development/Housing/General Government Committee.