



State of Illinois  
Circuit Court of Cook County

Chambers of  
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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Office of the Chief Judge mandates COVID-19 vaccines for employees**

CHICAGO (December 28) – In recent weeks, the nation has seen a surge in coronavirus cases due, in large part, to the emergence of the highly contagious omicron variant. Because of this surge, and following discussions with public health experts and union representatives throughout the pandemic, the Office of the Chief Judge has determined that vaccination against COVID-19 will be mandated for all of its approximately 2,600 employees, with limited exceptions for those who receive accommodations for medical conditions or sincerely held religious beliefs.

“Public health experts have determined that unvaccinated individuals are more likely to contract and transmit the virus and to experience more serious symptoms of COVID-19 than those who are vaccinated,” said Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans. “This step is being taken to ensure the safest possible workplace for our employees,

and to protect employees of our justice partners, court services patrons, residents of the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, and the general public.”

Chief Judge Evans said he expects to distribute the full policy by the end of this week to all employees and judges, as well as to the unions representing the office’s employees, and anticipates discussions with those unions will commence shortly thereafter. Highlights of the policy include:

- Unvaccinated employees must comply with the mandate within 21 days, meaning they must receive the first shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine must be received as soon as practicable after receiving the first.
- Employees may request exemptions from the requirement for medical or religious reasons. Anyone requesting an exemption must submit a medical or religious accommodation request form to Human Resources by January 17, 2022, to allow for evaluation and determination.
- Failure to follow this policy may subject an employee to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

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