

## Want to convince workers to get a COVID-19 vaccine? Try money

Certain incentives could boost vaccination rates, new data finds.

By: Kathryn Mayer (<https://hrexecutive.com/author/kathryn-mayer/>) | February 4, 2021 · 3 min read

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As many employers consider their [COVID-19 vaccination](#) (<https://hrexecutive.com/category/coronavirus/covid19-vaccines/>) plans and mull how they'll get reluctant employees to buy into the vaccines, new data points to one effective strategy: money.

A new survey from Blackhawk Network, a payments provider, finds that although some 40% of respondents are either unsure about getting the vaccine or do not plan to get it, certain incentives could boost vaccination rates. For as little as \$100, one-third of employees will agree to get vaccinated against COVID-19, the survey of 1,105 employees finds.

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“Incentives are powerful tools for driving desired behaviors, and the key for government agencies and businesses looking to increase vaccination rates and support public health will be ensuring they are offering incentives their target audiences find most valuable and attractive,” says Jeff Haughton, senior vice president of incentives, corporate development and strategy of Blackhawk Network.



When asked their preferred vaccine incentive, money was the top choice among survey respondents. More than two-thirds said they would accept a monetary incentive ranging from as little as \$10 to as much as \$1,000 or more—one-third of the total respondents would complete the vaccination process for a \$100 incentive or less. The remaining third of respondents said money would not influence their willingness to get the vaccine. Paid time off was a distant second choice.

**Related:** [HR's next big job: Convincing employees to get COVID vaccines](https://hrexecutive.com/hrs-next-big-job-convincing-employees-to-get-covid-vaccines/) (<https://hrexecutive.com/hrs-next-big-job-convincing-employees-to-get-covid-vaccines/>).

Additionally, half of the respondents say that if they got a COVID-19 vaccine due to an employer incentive, they would urge their family members to get vaccinated as well, the survey finds.

The findings come as employers are considering their vaccination plans, including the use of incentives. Dollar General (<https://hrexecutive.com/this-retailer-will-pay-workers-to-get-a-covid-19-vaccine/>), announced it is offering workers an extra four hours of pay for getting the vaccine. And food company Chobani (<https://hrexecutive.com/chobani-offering-workers-paid-time-off-to-get-covid-19-vaccine/>), says it will offer workers paid time off to get vaccinated, an early indication of a strategy some employers may take to encourage workers to get inoculated. The yogurt maker, which has roughly 2,200 U.S. workers, says it will cover up to six hours of time for Chobani employees to get vaccinated—three hours for each of the two COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Meanwhile, a recent survey of 211 business and talent leaders from human capital research firm i4cp found that 68% of organizations plan to encourage employees to receive a COVID-19 vaccine once they become widely available to the public, while another 19% say they are discussing the possibility but haven't yet decided. Other employers are deciding whether they will mandate COVID-19 vaccination for their employees.

**Related:** Employers can legally require COVID vaccines—but will they? (<https://hrexecutive.com/employers-can-legally-require-covid-vaccines-but-will-they/>).

Employment expert Rob Wilson, president of employment firm Employco USA, says that offering cash rewards for employees who get vaccinated can be a wise strategy for organizations “because if the majority of your staff is vaccinated, the risk of transmission and exposure in your workplace will be greatly reduced.”

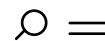
**Read all of HRE's COVID-19 vaccine coverage here** (<https://hrexecutive.com/category/coronavirus/covid19-vaccines/>).

“It might sound unusual at first, but the reality is that employers have long rewarded employees with incentives like extra cash and time off in exchange for making healthy choices,” he says. “So just as companies are able to offer cash incentives to workers who stop smoking or who exercise on a regular basis, it falls within the scope of an employers' rights to offer a reward to workers who get the COVID-19 vaccination.”

Experts say that employers play a big role in the success of the vaccines and should encourage employees to get vaccinated (<https://hrexecutive.com/hrs-next-big-job-convincing-employees-to-get-covid-vaccines/>).

“Anything employers can do to encourage their staff to get the vaccine, or at least consider the vaccine and do more research into it before saying ‘no’ right away, will be incredibly beneficial not only for the company's bottom line but more importantly for saving countless lives,” Wilson says.

Kathryn Mayer is *HRE's* benefits editor and chair of the Health & Benefits Leadership Conference. She has covered benefits for the better part of a decade, and her stories have won multiple awards, including a Jesse H. Neal Award and honors from the American Society of Business Publication Editors and the National Federation of Press Women. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Denver. She can be reached at [kmayer@lrp.com](mailto:kmayer@lrp.com).



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