



**August 5, 2021**

Attention SHORE UP! Inc. Employees:

In preparation for the reopening of some agency facilities, it will now be **mandatory** for select employees to either show proof of vaccination or submit to weekly testing for COVID-19, effective Monday, August 9, 2021. **This mandate is for employees in:** Head Start and Early Head Start (classroom staff only), Food Services, Transportation and Shady Pines.

Employees in these areas must provide sensitive services to customers, whether changing a diaper, administering medication or assisting an individual onto one of our vans. In all of these departments, staff are also working with vulnerable populations, including children who have not yet reached the age permissible for vaccinations, and the elderly. Research shows the elderly are highly susceptible to COVID-19.

Proof of vaccination must be provided to Human Resources Director, Keith Davis. Please note that there are two exemptions to not receiving a vaccine, including medical conditions and religious belief. Some individuals may be at risk of an adverse reaction to one of the vaccine components or have a medical condition preventing them from receiving the vaccine. If an exemption applies, you must provide weekly test results to Keith Davis.

According to the Maryland Department of Health, “a private employer may require a COVID-19 vaccination.” The employee providing proof of vaccination is also not considered to be a HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) violation. However, the employer may not request any medical information as a part of that proof and may not ask why an individual did not receive a vaccination, which could elicit information about a disability.

Visit [covidvax.maryland.gov](https://covidvax.maryland.gov) to find a vaccination clinic near you. For no-cost COVID testing locations, visit <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites/index.html>. If you have misplaced your vaccination card, visit <https://md.myir.net/rorl?next=/>.

Thank you for your cooperation. We believe that mandatory vaccination or weekly testing is the most effective way to protect staff and clients against the spread of COVID-19. Additional mandates may be implemented at a later date.

Sincerely,  
Freddy L. Mitchell, Executive Director

*Self-Help On Rural Economics and Urban Problems*

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