COVID-19 VOLUNTARY VACCINATION POLICY
FOR CITY OF MILWAUKEE EMPLOYEES

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
Effective January 12, 2021; February 5, 2021; Revised February 17, 2021

PURPOSE
In accordance with the City of Milwaukee’s duty to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of known hazards, this policy is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of City employees and their families and the community we serve, from COVID-19 through an effective vaccination program. The City of Milwaukee strongly encourages employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible based upon the availability of the vaccine and vaccination prioritization guidelines. This policy complies with applicable laws and is based on guidance from state and federal agencies as applicable.

SCOPE
This Policy applies to all general city employees. It is recommended that the Fire and Police Commission develop a policy for sworn members and civilian employees of the Fire and Police departments.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
Participation in the City of Milwaukee’s vaccine program is completely voluntary for all employees. Due to the limited availability of the vaccine as well as the staggered approach for distribution, all employees are required to comply with the City’s face covering policy and other safety measures such as social distancing, washing hands, working remotely (if their job allows), staying home when sick and other COVID-19 safety measures for the foreseeable future or until the vaccine is widely available for all employees. In addition, employees are required to comply with the City’s COVID-19 policy and administrative guidelines until further notice.

VACCINATION PROCEDURE
The City of Milwaukee is providing free COVID-19 vaccinations through the Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) to City of Milwaukee employees. Due to the limited supply of the vaccine, the City is following a vaccination distribution schedule outlined by the CDC as well as state and local health authorities. Initial phases will focus on those are higher risk of getting COVID-19 including frontline health care personnel, long term care facilities, emergency responders (fire and police) and individuals who are 65 and older. Subsequent phases include other frontline essential workers and employees at very high risk for hospitalization or death from COVID-19 following guidance from the CDC. As the vaccine distribution increases, employees identified in lower priority groups will be notified of their opportunity to receive the vaccine as it becomes available.

The City of Milwaukee through the MHD will host COVID-19 vaccination clinics where employees may receive the vaccinations. Per the City’s COVID-19 vaccination protocol, employees will receive information and be invited to schedule a vaccination appointment once there is enough supply for the category under which their position has been designated. Newly hired employees will be vaccinated according to the priority group of their hired position/job title.
Employees will be asked screening questions before receiving the vaccination and may be advised not to receive the vaccine based on their responses. Employees will be required to sign both a vaccine consent form and an employee acknowledgment waiver. Information collected on the forms will be used to document employee authorization for receipt of vaccines. The consent information will be shared through the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) and with other health care providers directly involved with the employee to assure completion of the vaccine schedule. The MHD will not disclose employee vaccine records to the Department of Employee Relations or to any other City department/person/entity absent a valid authorization or as otherwise permitted by federal and state medical privacy laws.

The availability and/or receipt of a COVID-19 vaccination may necessitate review of a high-risk employee’s ongoing need for a reasonable accommodation. Each employee’s situation will be evaluated independently in light of that employee’s specific circumstances. For more information on the accommodation process, see the City’s COVID-19 Policy and Administrative Guidelines: www.milwaukee.gov/COVID-19GUIDELINES.

There will be no cost to the employee to receive the vaccination. The cost of the vaccination will be covered by the City of Milwaukee if the City is administering the vaccine or it will be covered at 100% for employees enrolled in the City of Milwaukee’s health insurance plan through Unitedhealthcare.

Employees who participate in the City of Milwaukee’s Wellness Healthy Rewards program will earn Healthy Rewards points for receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

Employees are permitted to receive the vaccination while on paid work time and departments must provide flexibility in scheduling to allow employees to receive the vaccination during their scheduled work hours. General city employees should use Miscellaneous Unapplied Time (069) when scheduling their vaccination appointment during work time. If an employee has a bad reaction to the vaccination beyond the time constraints allowed under Chapter 350-37-1-b and is unable to work, the employee is required to use their own sick leave. Employees experiencing side effects from the vaccine should reference the City’s COVID-19 Policy and Administrative Guidelines: www.milwaukee.gov/COVID-19GUIDELINES for guidance on returning to work.

Employees are eligible to get the vaccine regardless of previous infection status and whether or not they have had COVID-19. Employees who are currently infected with COVID-19 should defer getting the vaccine until they have recovered from any acute illness associated with the infection (if they had symptoms) and criteria have been met for them to discontinue isolation. Employees who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, those who are breastfeeding and those with other medical conditions should discuss the risks and benefits of the vaccine with their healthcare provider before receiving it.