

Status of Federal COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate Litigation

Updated May 17, 2022

In 2021, various federal, [state](#), and [private](#) entities instituted Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccination requirements to address the pandemic, particularly as the [Delta variant](#)—a highly contagious strain of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19)—spread in the United States. The federal COVID-19 vaccination requirements issued to date by the President or executive agencies include those directed at (1) [federal executive agency civilian employees](#) (federal employee mandate); (2) [federal contractors for executive departments, agencies, and offices](#) (federal contractor mandate); (3) [most Medicare- and Medicaid-certified providers and suppliers](#) (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ [CMS’s] Medicare/Medicaid provider mandate); (4) [employers with 100 or more employees](#) (Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s [OSHA’s] large employer vaccination and testing mandate); and (5) staff of the Head Start program, which provides comprehensive early childhood education and development services to low-income children (Head Start mandate). These employment- or workforce-based mandates—subject to accommodations required by federal law—either directly require certain employees to receive COVID-19 vaccinations or direct certain employers to impose a vaccination or vaccination-and-testing requirement on their employees or staff.

These federal vaccination mandates have generated numerous legal challenges that have moved quickly through the courts. To date, some of these mandates have been enjoined by courts either on a nationwide basis or only in certain states. **Table 1** below provides a summary of the mandates and their statuses. (For more detailed analysis of these mandates and related litigation, see CRS Report R46745, *State and Federal Authority to Mandate COVID-19 Vaccination*, by Wen W. Shen.)

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Table I. Summary of Federal Nonmilitary COVID-19 Vaccination Mandates

As of February 7, 2022

Federal Mandate	Statutory Authority	Covered Individuals/Entities	Vaccination Requirement	Compliance Deadline(s)	Status
Federal Employee Mandate (Executive Order 14,043)	5 U.S.C. §§ 3301, 3302, 7301	Federal executive branch employees	Employees must be fully vaccinated ^a unless granted a legally required exception based on a disability/medical condition or a sincerely held religious belief. Remote-working employees are subject to requirement.	Receive a one-dose vaccine or two-dose vaccine series by November 8, 2021. Be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021.	Enjoined by court. ^b
Federal Contractor (Executive Order 14,042)	40 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.; 3 U.S.C. § 301	Federal contractors/subcontractors that have a covered contract with executive departments and agencies	Covered contractors must ensure covered contractor-employees are fully vaccinated, except in circumstances where an employee is legally entitled to an exemption based on a disability/medical condition or a sincerely held religious belief. Remote-working covered contractor-employees are subject to requirement.	As of January 18, 2022, covered contractor-employees must be fully vaccinated on the first day of performance on a new contract or the renewal, extension, or exercised option of an existing contract.	Enjoined by courts: Kentucky v. Biden, No. 21-6147, 2022 WL 43178 (6 th Cir. Jan. 5, 2022) (declining to stay the district court's preliminary injunction in KY, OH, and TN); Georgia v. Biden, No. 1:21-cv-00163 2021 WL 5779939 (S.D. Ga. Dec. 7, 2021) (enjoined the vaccination requirement nationwide).

Federal Mandate	Statutory Authority	Covered Individuals/Entities	Vaccination Requirement	Compliance Deadline(s)	Status
CMS's Medicare/Medicaid Provider Mandate (CMS IFR)	42 U.S.C. §§ 1302, 1395hh, and other provider- or supplier-specific provisions	Specified provider and supplier types that participate in Medicare and Medicaid	<p>Covered providers and suppliers must ensure covered staff who directly provide care or other services for their facilities and/or patients are fully vaccinated, except in circumstances where a staff member is legally entitled to an exemption based on a disability/medical condition or a sincerely held religious belief.</p> <p>Staff who work 100% remotely from sites of patient care or away from onsite staff are <i>not</i> subject to the requirement.</p>	<p>Phase 1:</p> <p>(1) covered providers and suppliers must establish and begin to implement the vaccination policies and (2) covered staff must receive first dose of a two-dose vaccine or a one-dose vaccine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 27, 2022 (in all other jurisdictions not listed in bullets below) February 14, 2022 (in AL, AK, AZ, AR, GA, ID, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, MT, NE, NH, ND, OH, OK, SC, SD, UT, WV, WY) February 22, 2022 (in TX) <p>Phase 2: Covered staff must complete two-dose vaccine series by February 28, 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 28, 2022 (in all other jurisdictions not listed in bullets below) March 15, 2022 (in AL, AK, AZ, AR, GA, ID, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, MT, NE, NH, ND, OH, OK, SC, SD, UT, WV, WY) March 21, 2022 (in TX) 	In effect.

Federal Mandate	Statutory Authority	Covered Individuals/Entities	Vaccination Requirement	Compliance Deadline(s)	Status
OSHA's Large Employer Vaccination and Testing Mandate (OSHA ETS)	29 U.S.C. § 655(c)	In all jurisdictions, private employers with 100 or more employees. In 26 states , Puerto Rico , and the U.S. Virgin Islands with OSHA-approved state plans, state and local government employers with 100 or more employees.	A covered employer must establish and enforce a policy that either (1) ensures employees are fully vaccinated, except in circumstances where an employee is legally entitled to an exemption based on a disability/medical condition or sincerely held religious belief; or (2) requires employees to be fully vaccinated or provide proof of regular COVID-19 testing and wear a face covering when indoors. Employees who work remotely, at a site where other people are not present, or exclusively outside are <i>not</i> subject to the requirements.	Covered employers must establish and begin to implement the vaccination policies by January 10, 2022. Covered employees must receive either a one-dose vaccine or a two-dose vaccine series, or begin regular testing by February 9, 2022.	Withdrawn.
Head Start Mandate	42 U.S.C. § 9836a(a)(1)(C), (D), (E)	Head Start staff	Head start staff must be fully vaccinated unless granted a legally required exception based on a disability/medical condition or a sincerely held religious belief. ^c	Receive a one-dose vaccine or two-dose vaccine series by January 31, 2022.	Enjoined by courts in 25 states: Texas v. Becerra, No. 5:21-cv-300, 2021 WL 6198109 (N.D. Tex. Dec. 31, 2021) (enjoining the mandate in TX); Louisiana v. Becerra, No. 3:21-cv-4370, 2022 WL 16571 (W.D. La. Jan. 1, 2022) (enjoining the mandate in AL, AK, AZ AR, FL, GA, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MI, MO, MT, NE, ND, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, UT, WV, WY)

Source: CRS analysis of the relevant Executive Orders, CMS IFR, and OSHA ETS as well as related litigation.

- For purposes of the relevant Executive Orders, CMS IFR, and OSHA ETS, individuals are considered “fully vaccinated” for COVID-19 two weeks after they have received either a one-dose vaccine or a two-dose vaccine series.
- The Fifth Circuit issued an opinion vacating the district court’s preliminary injunction on April 7, 2022. See *Feds For Med. Freedom v. Biden*, 30 F. 4th 503 (5th Cir. 2022). As of the publication date of this updated Sidebar, the Fifth Circuit, consistent with the applicable federal rules of appellate procedure, has not issued the mandate terminating its jurisdiction. Accordingly, the district court has not yet issued an order implementing the Fifth Circuit’s opinion.
- The Head Start mandate also includes a masking requirement for individuals two years of age or older when indoors.

Author Information

Wen W. Shen
Legislative Attorney

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