

# Should Job Seekers Disclose Their Vaccination Status Upfront?

By Roy Maurer

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**A**s more companies consider establishing a vaccine mandate, a trend is taking shape: Job seekers are promoting themselves as "Fully Vaccinated" on applications, resumes and LinkedIn profiles to stand out.

Some experts are beginning to say that vaccination status is a must-have line item on resumes and LinkedIn profiles as employers prepare for regulations that limit hiring to people who have been vaccinated.

The Biden administration in September issued a mandate ([www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/Pages/federal-vaccine-mandate.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/Pages/federal-vaccine-mandate.aspx)) for federal workers and government contractors to be vaccinated by later this year, and a forthcoming Occupational Safety and Health Administration rule ([www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/Pages/What-to-Expect-from-OSHA-on-COVID-19-Vaccine-and-Testing-Rules.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/Pages/What-to-Expect-from-OSHA-on-COVID-19-Vaccine-and-Testing-Rules.aspx)) will require employers with over 100 employees to get their workforce vaccinated or undergo at least weekly COVID-19 testing.

In addition, data from jobs sites shows an uptick in job postings that seek fully vaccinated candidates as a condition of employment. As of Aug. 30, the share of job listings requiring vaccinations has soared on Indeed, with job postings per million requiring vaccination up 242 percent from a month earlier. More than 50,000 new job postings on jobs site Adzuna require COVID-19 vaccination, up from 35,000 in July and 2,300 in January, with positions in health care, hospitality and information technology the most likely to require vaccine disclosures.

Thus, for job seekers, letting potential employers know upfront that they are vaccinated could mean the difference between getting a recruiter's attention or not.

## FEATURED RESOURCE CENTER

COVID-19 Vaccination Resources ([www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/Pages/COVID-19-Vaccination-Resources.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/Pages/COVID-19-Vaccination-Resources.aspx))

In an August survey of 1,250 hiring managers, nearly 70 percent said they were more likely to hire somebody who indicates on their resume that they are fully vaccinated, according to ResumeBuilder.com, a resume-creation tool based in San Francisco, which commissioned the poll. One-third of hiring managers surveyed said they were automatically eliminating resumes that don't include vaccine status.

One reason employers with vaccine mandates may favor candidates who lead with their vaccine status in the application stage is that it completes an important step in the screening process.

"Vaccination status will certainly be a factor to hiring managers," said Andrew Challenger, senior vice president of global outplacement at executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas in Chicago. "If they already know you are vaccinated, they can check off that question and will not need to worry about getting that candidate tested every week. It will speed up the hiring process if the HR department already knows in which bucket the candidate goes."

Feedback

Challenger said it is likely that, in most cases, vaccinated candidates will have an edge over their unvaccinated competition. "In other cases, it depends on the ideology of the hiring manager and the company's culture overall," he noted. "Certainly, there are reasonable exemptions that hiring managers will take into account, but generally, at this point, a vaccinated candidate will require less work from a company."

Carolyn Kleiman, a career coach, resume consultant at ResumeBuilder.com and senior career counselor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., warns that screening out resumes just because they don't include vaccination status may have negative consequences.

"Employers could be losing out on qualified candidates if they use that as a screener, as it is not common practice to include this information on resumes," she said.

Instead, Kleiman recommended that employers take the onus on themselves and be upfront about their vaccination policy and requirements in the job posting in order to not waste anyone's time or efforts.

"Overall, employers want to hire qualified candidates who will be an asset to the workplace," she said. "If they have a clear vaccine policy and they are transparent, this should help both hiring managers and candidates. Candidates may not be vaccinated when they apply, or at the time of their interview, but if they are required to be vaccinated by the first day of work, that needs to be clearly communicated."

Another problem with employers discarding resumes solely based on vaccination status is that qualified but unvaccinated applicants may be subject to the two noted legal exceptions—a medical disability or a sincerely held religious belief.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has said that federal anti-discrimination laws do not prohibit employers from requiring all employees who physically enter the workplace to be vaccinated for COVID-19. However, employees and candidates with a religious objection or a disability may need to be excused from the mandate or otherwise accommodated, according to legal experts.

Notably, the majority of hiring managers in the ResumeBuilder survey said they are more likely to hire better-qualified candidates, even if they are not vaccinated, over less-qualified but vaccinated candidates, by a small margin (53 percent to 47 percent). However, 34 percent of hiring managers at companies with vaccine mandates already in place say they are very likely to hire a less-qualified but vaccinated candidate over a more-qualified but unvaccinated candidate.

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