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## City Proof of Vaccine Mandate For On-Premises Dining Has Expired

After a review of current data on COVID-19 positivity rates and hospitalizations from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Mayor and City Council determined that the City would not extend the Emergency Declaration and the local order requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination for patrons of on-premises dining establishments. **Patrons dining on-site no longer need to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination at restaurants, coffee shops, and other applicable businesses.**

Last week Governor Pritzker reported that IDPH data indicated that the immediate threat to healthcare system capacity during the omicron surge had passed. Statewide ICU bed availability now stands at 20%, up from a low of just under 8%, and the daily total of COVID-19 hospitalized patients and the daily total of COVID-19 patients requiring ICU care have fallen significantly (more than 60% for both) from the omicron peak. The City will continue to monitor pandemic metrics as the health and safety of our community is our highest priority.

Although the omicron surge has peaked and current caseloads and patient

care are manageable for healthcare providers statewide, it is important to note that we are still in a pandemic that continues to pose a great health risk to immunocompromised individuals, seniors, and those who are unable to be vaccinated, including young children for whom a vaccine is not yet available. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your neighbors. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and available to everyone age 5 and older, free of charge. Learn more at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

## Share the Love Social Media Challenge

# SHARE THE LOVE *challenge*

Create a video about your favorite business in Highland Park by February 28, and you could win a \$25 gift card to that business!

*details:*

[enjoyhighlandpark.com/sharethelove](https://enjoyhighlandpark.com/sharethelove)

 City of Highland Park

ENJOY  
*highland park*

The City has launched a new social media challenge: [Share the Love!](#) Now through February 28, customers are invited to create a short, 10-second video

showing why they love their favorite Highland Park business. All submissions will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card to the winner's favorite business, and videos may be posted to the City's social media.

Please encourage your patrons to participate in this fun contest! If the City posts a video about your business, your social media accounts will be tagged, so this is a great way to generate some word-of-mouth buzz about your business.

Information about the Share the Love Challenge is live on the City's Instagram stories and at [Enjoy Highland Park](#). Help us spread the word by sharing our stories, posting to your social media ([downloadable graphic](#)), and posting the [flyer](#). The URL to share with your customers is [enjoyhighlandpark.com/sharethelove](http://enjoyhighlandpark.com/sharethelove). They'll find all the details about the challenge there, including a link to the form to upload their video."

**Calling All Businesses: Participate in a Food Drive!**

HIGHLAND PARK BUSINESSES

# Food Drive

BENEFITTING THE MORAINE TOWNSHIP FOOD PANTRY

**February 21 - February 27**

Highland Park's business community is coming together to support community members in need! Donate non-perishable food items in the designated container inside this business. Most-needed food items at this time include jelly/jam, mayonnaise, canned salmon, canned tomato sauce, tea, and soup.



Gilat Zamost, owner of [My Best Friend's Closet](#) at 1780 Green Bay Road, would like to encourage Highland Park businesses to come together to care for those in need within our community. After speaking to some of her clients, she realized that many residents need necessities, especially food. We are reaching out to ask local business owners in Highland Park to unite to participate in a local food drive to benefit the [Moraine Township Food Pantry](#). It would require placing [this flyer](#) in your window and providing a bin, box, or any container in your business. It would also be helpful to share the food drive information on your social media.

Requested donations: Unexpired jelly/jam, mayonnaise, canned salmon, canned tomato sauce, tea, and soup, and of course, any and all donations would be appreciated.

Food Drive Dates: Monday, February 21 through Sunday, February 27

After February 27, business owners would take the containers and deliver them to Moraine Township.

Moraine Township welcomes donations of unexpired food Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM at their office at 800 Central Avenue, Highland Park (not the Food Pantry entrance).

Gilat has generously offered to pick up any donations if needed. She may be reached at 312.953.8040.

## Governor Pritzker Announces Timeline for Mask Mandate Expiration



In a [press conference](#) on Wednesday, February 9, Governor Pritzker announced plans to [lift the State of Illinois's mask mandate](#) in indoor public spaces on February 28, 2022, should current trends continue.

The State anticipates lifting the requirement based on the following data points:

- Statewide ICU bed availability now stands at 20%, up from a low of just under 8%.
- The daily total of COVID-19 hospitalized patients and the daily total of COVID-19 patients requiring ICU care have fallen significantly (more than 60% for both) from the omicron peak.
- Community vaccination metrics are strong. In the Midwest, Illinois has the highest percentage of residents who have received at least one shot and the highest percentage of fully vaccinated kids age 5-17; 80% of eligible seniors have received a booster dose.
- At three weeks past the peak of the omicron variant surge, Illinois is experiencing the fastest rate of decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations since the pandemic began.

To account for the risk of community spread among more vulnerable populations and in accordance with CDC guidance, Illinois will continue to [require](#) masks in healthcare settings, long-term care facilities, congregate

settings such as prisons or shelters, [transportation](#), and [daycare](#).

Public health officials continue to urge Illinoisans to get their COVID-19 vaccinations and, if eligible, a booster dose. Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike reported that 89% of individuals hospitalized with COVID-19 in Illinois are unvaccinated. Information about scheduling a vaccination is available at [vaccines.gov](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How does the State recommend managing the risk of COVID-19 once the mask mandate is lifted?**

IDPH will continue to monitor COVID-19 metrics, which are available online at [dph.illinois.gov](#). Governor Pritzker and Dr. Ezike reiterated that masks will continue to be strongly encouraged in indoor public settings after February 28, because simple community mitigations can have a large impact. These include wearing masks, testing, vaccination, and creating safer indoor public settings through improved ventilation.

### **Will masks still be required on public transportation?**

Yes, the mask mandate for public transportation, including bus, train, and air travel, is a [federal mandate](#) from the CDC and is still in effect.

### **Does the City have a local mask requirement?**

The City does not currently have a local mask mandate in place, because the statewide mandate in effect through February 28 applies to municipalities.

### **Does this measure apply to masking in schools?**

During his press conference, the Governor indicated that his administration would continue to advocate for masking in schools as an effective public health mitigation to protect students and staff. The school mask mandate, which is currently under a temporary stay due to pending litigation, will be addressed separately. The City urges individuals with questions regarding mask policies in schools to contact their child's school.

### **Why is the Governor arguing that the mask requirement should remain in place for schools?**

Gov. Pritzker provided the following rationale for continuing to recommend different policies for the general public and for schools:

- The vaccination rate among children is lower than adults, and a vaccine is not yet approved for all children.
- The school environment has certain differentiating characteristics from other public spaces, including greater opportunities for exposure (such as long hours, five days a week) and difficulty maintaining distance.
- The goal is to keep schools open to in-person learning, avoiding adaptive pauses or pivots to virtual learning.

### **May local business owners continue to require masks within their businesses?**

Yes, private businesses may choose to require stricter measures they determine to be in the best interest of their staff or customers, including masking. Please be respectful and understanding of businesses that choose to

require masking in their stores after February 28.

### **What is the value in continuing to wear masks if the omicron surge has passed?**

COVID-19 continues to pose a major health risk to communities across the country. IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike explained that although rescinding the mask mandate is reflective of the fact that the surge has passed a critical point and cases are now more manageable for the healthcare system, future variants remain a concern and could potentially result in future surges. However, Dr. Ezike and national public health officials continue to urge individuals to wear masks as a protection for those who cannot be vaccinated or who are immunocompromised, especially seniors, those with chronic illnesses such as cancer, and children.

## **Private Activity Bond Information**

Private Activity Bonds (PAB) are tax-exempt bonds issued on behalf of businesses engaged in the manufacture or production of tangible personal property. PABs can be used to finance the acquisition of fixed assets such as land, buildings, or equipment or for renovation and new construction. PABs may also be used for new construction or renovation, as well as construction or renovation of residential units that meet income guidelines. The City is seeking offers from any organizations that may be interested in purchasing the City's annual PAB allocation. The bonds are exempt from federal income tax and feature competitive interest rates, and may be combined with other tax credit programs. Interested parties may contact Finance Director Julie Logan at [jlogan@cityhpil.com](mailto:jlogan@cityhpil.com) or 847.432.0800 by Friday, February 25, 2022.

[Click here for more information on Private Activity Bonds](#)!"

## **Adopt-A-Planter & Sponsor-A-Planter Programs**

The City of Highland Park offers two opportunities for businesses to take part in the beautification of our business districts.

The Adopt-A-Planter Program is only open to Highland Park Business and Property Owners in the Central Business District. As an Adopter, you must commit to the summer and fall seasons each year and you are responsible for the provision of plants as well as care and maintenance of the planters. This includes but is not limited to planting, watering, and weeding.



[View the Adopt-A-Planter Program Brochure](#)

The Sponsor-A-Planter Program offers community members the opportunity to sponsor an available municipal planter during the summer and fall seasons. An annual fee covers planting, maintenance, and a 5" x 7" commemorative placard in the planter. The placard will recognize the sponsor or an individual or family chosen by the sponsor. Planters are located in the Central Business District and the Ravinia District and are maintained from May to November.

[View The Sponsor-A-Planter Program Brochure](#)

More information is available at [cityhpil.com](http://cityhpil.com). Please contact the Office of Business Development at 847.926.1046 with questions.

## 2022 Food & Beverage Holidays



Are you participating in any 2022 Food & Beverage Holidays? Take a look at this [Calendar](#) and email [Melissa Rosen](mailto:Melissa.Rosen@cityhpil.com) if you are running any specials or promotions!

## Send Us Your Specials & Promotions for *The Weekender!*

Sent out every Friday, The Weekender is all about things to do, places to shop, restaurants to visit, and more in Highland Park! Email [Amanda Civitello](mailto:Amanda.Civitello@cityhpil.com) with events and promotions so that we can help get the word out!

WEEKENDER

explore. experience. enjoy.

ENJOY

*highland park*

## Sign Up For Business of the Week



Each week a new business is chosen and promoted on [Enjoy Highland Park](#) and on the Enjoy Highland Park [Facebook Page](#), as well as in the *Weekender eNews*, and on the Central Avenue Digital Kiosks, regardless of the business location.

Providing this information is easClick [HERE](#) to fill out a brief questionnaire to have your business featured as Business of the Week.

**\*Don't forget to upload 1-3 high-resolution photos!**

## Update Your Business Plan to Grow Your Business! Meet With A Small Business Advisor Through SBDC Illinois

[Illinois Small Business Development & International Trade Center](#) offers confidential, no-cost, one-on-one virtual advising sessions.

To schedule a meeting click [HERE](#)



INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER

## SCORE Mentoring at the Highland Park Public Library & Free Webinars

**SCORE offers in-person or virtual sessions using phone, email, or video**

All sessions are free and confidential. SCORE mentors are successful business professionals, some retired, some working, from all industries and experiences.

Visit [northchicago.score.org](http://northchicago.score.org) and register to "Find a Mentor". You will be asked to provide the nature of your business interest. Please include whether you prefer in-person or virtual mentoring (phone, email, video) and note, the **Highland Park Public Library** even if you prefer a virtual session.



[Upcoming SCORE Webinars](#)

## Highland Park Career Exploration Program

Interested in sharing your profession with a high school student exploring their

career options? The Highland Park Career Exploration program (HPCE) provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable insights into a potential career path and goals. Students are matched and meet with professionals to discuss career aspirations, work initiatives, and other professional inquiries.

[Learn more about HPCE](#)

## Get Hired Illinois

The State of Illinois has launched [Get Hired Illinois](#) to connect job seekers with employers and training opportunities as well as employers who are looking to fill open positions with available workers. Visit [GetHired \(illinois.gov\)](#) for more information.



## Additional Resources

[Available Commercial Space](#)

[Business Directory](#)

[Establishing Your Business](#)

[Chamber Of Commerce](#)

[SCORE](#)

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

[Job Center of Lake County - Business Services](#)

[Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity](#)

[Lake County Health Department](#)

[NorthShore University HealthSystem](#)

[Illinois Department of Public Health](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

**For general business inquiries, contact the City's Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at [chersch@cityhpil.com](mailto:chersch@cityhpil.com).**

**For more information on the City's response to COVID-19, contact the City's Communications Manager Amanda Civitello at [acivitello@cityhpil.com](mailto:acivitello@cityhpil.com).**

This newsletter is produced by the City of Highland Park's Office of Business Development. If you have information you would like to include in this weekly mailing, please submit information, photos, and news to Melissa Rosen at [mrosen@cityhpil.com](mailto:mrosen@cityhpil.com). The City reserves the right to edit and/or filter submissions. No pricing information will be published.

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