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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.

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. 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](#) 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](#) 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 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.

For more information on the City's response to COVID-19, contact the City's Communications Manager Amanda Civitello at 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. The City reserves the right to edit and/or filter submissions. No pricing information will be published.

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