

More High-Paying Jobs Require a Covid-19 Vaccine; Growing share of open positions publicizing rules for Covid-19 shots signals potential new normal in hiring process, experts say

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FULL TEXT

People looking for work in a tight job market are increasingly finding employers requiring vaccination against Covid-19, with a small but growing percentage flagging those rules to prospective hires from the outset. Nearly 5% of U.S. and Canadian postings for jobs paying \$80,000 a year or more now mention vaccine mandates, double the rate from the previous month, according to research released Wednesday by the Ladders, a job-search site for positions paying north of \$100,000 annually. The findings are based on an analysis of millions of high-paying jobs posted between June 2019 and October 2021.

While must-be-vaccinated postings remain fairly rare, the rise signals job seekers could soon start encountering workplace mandates on job boards more regularly, hiring experts say. Employers are preparing to comply with new federal rules for Covid-19 vaccination and testing set to take effect Jan. 4, as many struggle to fill roles and seek ways to attract staffers back to physical workspaces. Friday's federal jobs data show labor-force participation remains flat and beneath pre-pandemic levels, even as the jobless rate has fallen over the past month.

The Ladders data primarily capture office workers, as opposed to front-line consumer-facing staff, suggesting that the move reflects employers' desire to bring people safely back to working in person, said Marc Cenedella, Ladders founder and chief executive.

"We'll see [vaccine requirements] in more job posts throughout the fall and winter, and I expect we'll see it through the next year until it kind of becomes assumed, in the way that job postings no longer mention 'must be able to type,'" he said.

Not all job seekers welcome employers' vaccine rules, just as many employers object to federal directives to impose them. For people who only want to work among fully vaccinated colleagues, knowing a company's expectations early could avoid a sticking point late in the hiring process. Employers advertising their rules in job posts are gambling that the risks of alienating any prospective hires are outweighed by the chance to secure the right fits quickly in a tight labor market.

"The more data there is in a job posting, it enables a job seeker to look at a job posting and have a clear idea of what to expect," said Rohan Rajiv, group manager of talent solutions at LinkedIn. "You're more likely to find people who are interested."

New job postings on LinkedIn listing vaccine requirements increased 120-fold between July and October, according to the company. Last week, the site introduced a field on company profile pages allowing employers to list workplace policies including vaccine requirements. Of the thousands of companies that made policy entries, 33% added a vaccine policy, and nearly half of those indicated that vaccines are required for on-site work, LinkedIn said.

For job seekers who don't want to get vaccinated as a condition of employment, the early transparency could flag

which roles to avoid. In a survey of more than 1,300 U.S. employees last month by software maker Qualtrics, three-quarters of unvaccinated workers said they were considering leaving their jobs when mandates take effect. A little more than a third of the unvaccinated workers surveyed reported fear of being fired for noncompliance. If terminated, 22% said they would look for a job at a smaller company.

The Biden administration's new rules require vaccinations at private companies with 100 or more workers, and larger U.S. employers have begun implementing vaccine mandates in recent weeks. Those that opt to highlight such requirements in job posts might trigger a snowball effect, said Sevin Yeltekin, macroeconomist and dean of the University of Rochester's Simon Business School.

"If you think about a particular employee you'd like to retain and the vaccine requirement is the only sticking point, they're going to go to the next available job," said Ms. Yeltekin. "But if that company is now requiring it too, companies now feel more confident in being able to make that call if they think that's the right call."

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