



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Adrienne Sturrup, Interim Director 

**DATE:** August 9, 2021

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Vaccine Incentives

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This memorandum serves to update the Mayor and Council Members regarding Austin Public Health's (APH) use of incentives to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in our community. According to the Community Preventive Services Task Force, incentives to increase vaccination rates for routine vaccines are recommended. Based on this, APH has implemented a tangible incentive program, offering HEB gift cards in the amount of \$50.00 to individuals who receive a COVID-19 vaccination from an APH event and complete an exit survey. This incentive is offered for both the first and second doses, as applicable. It enables an individual to receive a total of \$100.00 for receiving both doses and completing two exit surveys.

APH believes that the vast majority of community members who want to be vaccinated against COVID-19 have already done so. Many of the remaining community members are in the "moveable middle." By offering this gift card incentive, APH hopes this population will be motivated to protect themselves and others by getting vaccinated. To enhance the incentive, APH will deploy outreach staff to educate individuals on the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, dispel myths and misinformation, and help people feel more comfortable with the decision to be vaccinated.

In Ohio, one week after announcing its plan to award five \$1 million lottery prizes and five full college scholarships, their vaccination rates increased by 28%. New Mexico offered \$100, leading to a 333% increase in single-dose rates and 26% in completed series rates. An additional 27 states offer various incentive programs to increase vaccination rates, as do numerous private businesses.

Previous to the launch of our program, APH partnered with Central Health (CH) to provide gift cards at our vaccination events. CH will spend the month of August analyzing their more than 1200 surveys (including non-APH events) to determine the effectiveness of the incentive and will share the results with APH. Anecdotally, CH reports that attendance at events has increased due to the availability of incentives. APH intends to continue this progress.



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Desmar Walkes, Health Authority at [Desmar.Walkes@austintexas.gov](mailto:Desmar.Walkes@austintexas.gov), or Interim Director, Adrienne Sturup at [Adrienne.Sturup@austintexas.gov](mailto:Adrienne.Sturup@austintexas.gov).

Cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
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