

Legal brief: Can governments, private employers, businesses or universities require vaccines?

With several vaccines available for emergency use in the U.S. and distribution efforts underway, policymakers and public health officials are increasingly focusing on ways to accelerate the pace and maximize the extent of vaccine uptake. These efforts include increasing vaccine supply and relaxing [eligibility requirements](#), public education and outreach campaigns, ensuring the accessibility of vaccine administration sites, job-based incentives, and even mandates.

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Public opinion on such mandates is mixed, with our [surveys](#) showing about half of the public saying employers should be allowed to require vaccination for COVID-19 (51%) and 45% saying they should not be allowed to do so.

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Neither states nor the federal government have mandated vaccination for COVID-19 to date, though some employers have done so... In addition, some states are [considering legislation](#) that would prohibit employers from adopting COVID-19 vaccine mandates for employees generally or limit employer vaccine mandates to only employees working in health care settings.

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So far, most colleges and universities have been encouraging but not mandating COVID-19 vaccines for students, though several, starting with [Rutgers University](#) and [Cornell University](#), recently announced that they will require students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 for attendance in Fall 2021... Other colleges and universities are also beginning [to announce similar policies](#), in some cases for staff and faculty as well.

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