



Updated 2/14/23

## COVID-19 Policy

### **Vaccines**

Berkeley Food Network (BFN) reserves the right to require all Employees and Volunteers to be vaccinated against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) via one of the vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and to further furnish proof of completed vaccination to their Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.

As a public-facing emergency food assistance organization, BFN is considered an essential business. In addition to remaining open during the pandemic and other emergency situations, regular business at BFN necessitates a good deal of personal interface with a variety of community members, including the very young, the very old, and those with pre-existing medical conditions that could make them more susceptible to either catching or experiencing severe complications (up to and including death) from COVID-19. We must place equal emphasis on the health and safety of our employees, our volunteers, and the clients we serve.

Employees and volunteers may request a reasonable accommodation for exemption from this policy if they have a documented medical exemption or sincerely held religious beliefs that preclude them from receiving a vaccination. Such requests must be made to the Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator and accompanied by supporting documentation.

Employees and volunteers must note that while circumstances will be assessed on an individual basis, a reasonable accommodation request for exemption from vaccination is not a guarantee that this request will be granted. Requests can be denied if honoring them would result in undue hardship and/or a direct threat to the BFN environment due to the significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation.

As per state and federal law, any and all records relating to COVID-19 vaccination status; including but not limited to proof of vaccination, request(s) for exemption from vaccination, and documents submitted in support of any such request(s) for exemption; will be kept confidential. Any and all physical documentation will be maintained in a secure, locked location; only the employee's Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator will retain the key(s) to this location. Any and all electronic documentation will be kept in a password-protected area of the BFN Cloud Drive, with only the employee's supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator having access.

### **Booster Shots/Additional Vaccine Doses:**

Employees and Volunteers are strongly encouraged to receive additional vaccine doses (also called 'booster' shots) to lower their chances of contracting or carrying more contagious variants of COVID-19, in line with FDA and CDC recommendations.



## **Masks**

In early 2023, COVID-19 cases in Berkeley began to fall precipitously. Accordingly, BFN will relax its rules on mask wearing in the following ways: Masks are encouraged, but not mandatory, in indoor locations, including the warehouse, kitchen, and offices. Although outdoors transmission is vanishingly rare, volunteers and clients are encouraged to wear masks on the pantry line as well.

We ask all employees, volunteers, partners, and clients to continue to observe social distancing, good hygiene practices, and to stay home and immediately alert their supervisor, contact, and/or the Volunteer Coordinator if they are feeling unwell. The following outlines best practices for wearing a mask:

1. N95 or KN95 masks are the most effective against the transmission of all known variants of COVID-19 as of the date of this policy. BFN is happy to provide such masks to employees and volunteers upon request.
2. Mask hygiene: N95s and KN95s may be reused; however, it is recommended that one has multiple masks to 'rotate' across days. Masks may be sanitized with a UV light or time: the virus may take up to 72 hours to 'break down' on surfaces, so allowing a mask to 'air out' inside a paper bag for three days before reuse is also acceptable.
3. To be effective, masks must be well-fitting and cover the mouth and nose at all times, including and especially when speaking.

These guidelines around masking will remain effective until further notice, contingent on local case rates and health department guidance.

## **When Testing is Required:**

Employees and Volunteers will be required to complete an antigen "rapid" test and/or a PCR test under the following circumstances:

1. Known exposure to COVID-19 through close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the time period that person was contagious (up to two days

before onset of symptoms and/or a positive test result, and 5-10 days after onset of symptoms and/or a positive test result).

2. Experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms:
  - a. Fever or chills
  - b. Cough



- c. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - d. Fatigue
  - e. Muscle or body aches
  - f. Headache
  - g. New loss of taste or smell
  - h. Sore throat
  - i. Congestion or runny nose
  - j. Nausea or vomiting
  - k. Diarrhea
3. Commercial travel (ie, airline, cruise, or Amtrak) requiring extended periods of time in close proximity with others, either while traveling or at a destination (ie, a convention or festival).
- a. The Supervisor and/or Volunteer Coordinator will exercise judgment regarding exposure risks associated with travel, taking into account factors such as:
    - i. Whether any and all venues visited at the destination enforce precautions such as masking, vaccinations, or negative antigen or PCR tests.
    - ii. Whether the governing entities of the destination (municipal, state, or national government) enforce best practices in line with those of the City of Berkeley, County of Alameda, and/or State of California, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
    - iii. Current local infection rates at the destination or at any stops/layovers along the way.
    - iv. Whether the employee or volunteer experienced additional exposure to infected individuals during travel or at destination; and whether the employee or volunteer is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

### **Testing Procedures:**

There are two types of COVID-19 tests: (1) Antigen tests, also called rapid tests or at-home tests, which provide results within 10-20 minutes and (2) PCR tests, which are administered by a health authority and sent to a laboratory for processing. PCR tests are believed to be more accurate, while antigen tests are faster but carry a slim possibility of giving a false positive. However, once a person contracts COVID-19, they are capable of testing positive through a PCR test for up to 90 days after infection, even if they are no longer experiencing symptoms and are no longer contagious. For this reason, antigen tests are the most reliable way to test individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days.

Volunteers: Volunteers will be required to receive a negative antigen test result before returning to volunteer. Should a volunteer receive a positive PCR or antigen test, they will be asked to



self-isolate until they receive a negative antigen test result. Any other people potentially exposed to infection through contact with this individual at BFN will be contacted and asked to test in accordance with these guidelines.

Employees: Employees will be provided an antigen test to complete. If the antigen test is negative, employees will be permitted to continue working on-site, provided they continue to observe best practices for masking and handwashing and remain asymptomatic. Should the employee receive a positive PCR or antigen test, or should the employee begin to develop symptoms, the employee(s) in question will immediately be asked to self-isolate as per the guidelines laid out below. Any others potentially exposed to transmission through contact with this individual at BFN will be contacted and asked to test in accordance with these guidelines.

### **When to Quarantine:**

Any BFN employee or volunteer who contracts COVID-19 will be required to quarantine as per the following schedule, based upon CDC guidelines:

- The onset of symptoms or a positive COVID-test (whichever occurs first) is considered 'Day 0'
- Stay at home and isolate from others for at least 5 (five) days after Day 0.
- At the end of the isolation period, the employee/volunteer will be permitted to return to BFN on the condition that they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- The returning employee/volunteer must take extra precautions, such as continuing to wear a well-fitted N95 or KN95 mask and socially distancing, for an additional 5 (five) days for a total of at least 10 (ten) days from Day 0.

### **Sick Leave (Employees)**

As per the Cal-OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), if an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and must quarantine, the employee is entitled to paid leave that is not to be deducted from their regularly accrued sick leave. This applies only to employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 and who cannot perform their normal job functions remotely/from home. Any and all

other sick leave for all employees of BFN must be taken from regularly accrued sick leave. The ETS only covers employees for the duration of their quarantine as outlined above.



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Please note that BFN employs fewer than 26 individuals; therefore, BFN employees are not covered by California's Supplemental Paid Sick Leave law.

**Other:**

Volunteers and Employees will be asked to self-identify to the Volunteer Coordinator or their Supervisor if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. The symptoms and definition of 'exposure' will be posted at all building entrances.

BFN reserves the right to update or rescind this policy at any point. This policy will remain effective from February 14, 2023, until such time as it is announced to be no longer in effect, or replaced by an updated policy.