



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

## Legislation Text

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File #: 22-196, Version: 1

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** County Administrative Office

**Agenda Section:** Departmental

**SUBJECT:**

Vaccination and Testing Policy and Authorization to Enter into An Agreement for Contact Tracing and Other Services

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt a Vaccination and Testing Policy (Attachment 1) that will be a substantially similar version containing minor edits approved by the County Administrative Officer (CAO) and County Counsel following final meet and confers with applicable employee bargaining groups, and return a final version to the Clerk of the Board to file;
2. Approve delaying implementation and authorize the Employee Policy Group, consisting of the CAO, Sheriff, County Counsel and Human Resources, to determine if and when the policy should be implemented and expire, with a requirement that bargaining groups are engaged as required per the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act prior to implementation, and the Board is notified of any changes;
3. Authorize the County Administrative Officer (CAO) to execute a cooperative purchasing agreement with Maximus not to exceed \$260,388 for contact tracing and other services to implement the Board's direction, after approval from Risk Management and County Counsel.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

American Rescue Plan Act (3232-120200), US Treasury

**DISCUSSION:**

On Oct. 12, 2021 your Board directed staff to develop an official policy which requires weekly testing for employees, contract for testing services and meet and confer with union groups on the policy. Attached is the draft policy produced as an outcome of that work, and a draft scope of services needed to implement a testing program.

The policy, if adopted, would require all county workers, as specified in the policy, to verify their vaccination status with the county via a third-party vendor and submit to weekly rapid testing and report those results if they are not fully vaccinated. This policy does not supersede state, federal or

other local mandates, and county workers must still abide by those mandates, as applicable.

In response to declining case rates and hospitalizations, on Mar. 1, 2022 the state's modified masking mandate went into effect and now only those who work in certain high-transmission environments, including public transit, emergency shelters, health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters and long-term care facilities are required to mask, regardless of vaccination status. Humboldt County's masking order ended on Feb. 15, 2022 and now Humboldt is under the state's order only.

The current situation in Humboldt County is vastly different than when your Board first discussed this policy in October 2021. At that point, the county was preparing for a surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, and testing was widely available. However, during development of the policy, the county experienced the surge, vaccination rates increased from 57% on Oct. 12, 2021 to 64.6% as of Feb. 28, 2022, state masking and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CalOSHA) requirements went through several different iterations related to COVID-19, and the availability of testing supplies (particularly rapid tests) has varied widely depending on the state and national circumstances. As with most issues related to COVID-19, circumstances change rapidly, and modifications to the policy have been made over the past several months, and are likely to be needed in the future.

For these reasons, staff are recommending that you adopt a substantially similar version of the attached Vaccination and Testing Policy after final meet and confer meetings with applicable employee union groups, but not implement the policy immediately.

Instead, as this policy is related to county workers, staff recommend you authorize the Employee Policy Group (consisting of the CAO, Sheriff, Human Resources and County Counsel) to determine when the policy should be implemented or expire, and require the Board be notified of any changes. It should be noted that if your Board authorizes the Employee Policy Group to determine when the policy is implemented, Section IV.B.1 may need to be modified to reflect this authorization.

### **Agreement with Maximus, Contact Tracing**

One CalOSHA requirement that has remained is the need for employers to perform contact tracing when an employer is made aware that an employee has tested positive. Contact tracing is a specialized and time-consuming task, which has been performed by Human Resources staff for cases involving employees. Due to the task and volume of work, staff recommend having a vendor (Maximus) perform this work, with Human Resources managing the program.

There are a variety of other services that Maximus can provide that would be essential to the county to carry out the Vaccination and Testing Policy, if and when it is implemented, including vaccination verification and storing sensitive records in an area that is separate from other county personnel files, as required by the state. Maximus is eligible for cooperative purchasing, which allows the county to use more affordable rates for services from vendors as those rates have already been established by other agencies, and allows for expedited contracting. Accordingly, staff are recommending your Board authorize the CAO to execute a contract with Maximus for an amount not to exceed \$260,388 for contact tracing and other services to carry out your Board's direction, after approval by Risk

Management and County Counsel.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

This agenda item is requesting authorization to enter into an agreement with Maximus for an amount not to exceed \$260,388 for a period of 1 year from the date of execution. These services would include implementation, vaccination verification and contact tracing. Expenditure appropriations related to a service related to the proposed agreement were included in the ARPA spending plan approved your Board, and there is funding available in the ARPA budget unit (3232-120200) as a result of salary savings.

Implementation of the Vaccination and Testing Policy will require staff time to train. In addition, employees would be compensated for the time spent testing (15 to 20 minutes) and in some cases testing would require employees to incur overtime, which would impact the General Fund, though staff are not able to determine that amount.

Management of the services provided by Maximus would fall to the Human Resources Department, which has 3.0 full-time equivalent staff funded by ARPA. In addition, implementation of the policy would require the county to procure likely hundreds of tests weekly, and costs of those test vary. For comparison, the county recently purchased 5,000 rapid tests for employees at a cost just over \$74,000. Such costs are eligible to be used by ARPA funding.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by investing in county employees.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

CalOSHA, US Treasury

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to adopt the policy or authorize the CAO to enter into an agreement with Maximus for the services described above. However, this alternative is not recommended as there may be a need for the policy to be put into use depending on the impact COVID is having in the community and county government. In addition, the county has a need for the specialized services, particularly contact tracing, offered by Maximus and not allowing the CAO to enter into an agreement for those services would further impact staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Vaccination and Testing Policy
2. Draft Schedule of Rates from Maximus

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: D-1

Meeting of: Oct. 12, 2021

File No.: 21-1423