

Moscow Offers Mini Handouts to Firms with High Vaccination Rates

Payouts will go to small businesses that have vaccinated 60% of their employees.

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Small businesses have complained about a lack of support throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

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Moscow will offer small stimulus payments to businesses in the capital that have vaccinated at least 60% of their employees against the coronavirus, Mayor Sergei Sobyenin [announced](#) Thursday.

Firms operating in certain service sectors, including bars and restaurants, cinemas, beauty salons and educational and cultural institutions, will be able to access the payouts of at least \$300, provided they had hit the vaccination target by Aug. 15.

Moscow had earlier rolled out a controversial [mandatory vaccination](#) program requiring businesses in the capital to ensure 60% of their workers were fully vaccinated by mid-August.

But Sobyenin, citing rising vaccination rates in the capital, [ditched](#) that policy last month after coming under political pressure.

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City authorities have allocated 1 billion rubles (\$13.5 million) for the new handouts, which will be set at a flat payment of 15,000 rubles (\$200) per business with an additional 6,500 rubles (\$90) for each employee.

The funds are officially designated to help businesses cover the costs of compliance with anti-coronavirus measures, such as the purchasing of masks, gloves and sanitizers for employees.

Small businesses have previously [criticized](#) the government for not offering sufficient support in response to the pandemic, with the most generous subsidies and assistance reserved for the country's largest employers.

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