

Ukraine offers payments for COVID jabs amid record deaths

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Ukraine reported record daily COVID-19 deaths Tuesday as authorities struggle to boost the country's vaccination rate amid rising coronavirus infections.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promised Monday to pay 1,000 hryvnias (\$38) to each Ukrainian who gets vaccinated. Ukrainians can receive their payments starting Dec. 19, authorities said.

"With this money, it will be possible to purchase a gym or fitness club membership, visit a cinema, theatre, museum, [concert hall](#) or exhibition center, or buy tickets for domestic travel," Zelenskyy said in a video message posted on Facebook.

The government plans to allocate 3 billion hryvnias (\$113.8 million) to the incentive program this year and the same amount in 2022.

Ukraine reported 838 more deaths from COVID-19 on Tuesday, bringing the pandemic death toll in the country of about 41 million residents to 77,985.

Although Ukraine has four coronavirus vaccines available—Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Sinovac—only 19.8% of the population has been vaccinated so far, one of the lowest rates in Europe.

Authorities have blamed the recent surge in new cases on widespread public reluctance to get vaccinated. To get more people immunized, the government required teachers, doctors, [government employees](#) and other groups of workers to get fully vaccinated by December 1.

The government also started requiring proof of vaccination or negative test results to board planes, trains and long-distance buses.

New government regulations and restrictions have spawned a [black market](#) for fraudulent vaccine documents. Fake vaccination certificates are selling for the equivalent of \$100-\$300, and there have been reports of a fake version of a [government](#) digital app that comes with fake certificates installed.

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