

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS AND TESTING TOOLKIT

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Overview

On May 5, 2021, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Marcia L. Fudge and U.S. Health and Human Service (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra announced a joint-agency effort to increase access to COVID-19 prevention and treatment services, including testing and vaccinations, among disproportionately affected communities, including among HUD-assisted households and people experiencing homelessness.

In a [letter](#) announcing the joint effort, Secretaries Fudge and Becerra wrote: “We encourage all community health centers to establish or further expand existing partnerships with local HUD grantees and program participants, including single- and multi-family housing owners and managers, public housing authorities, Continuums of Care, and homeless providers. These partnerships should engage at the local level as part of a comprehensive strategy to prevent, mitigate, and respond to COVID-19, including through testing, treatment, and vaccination. This includes accessible, culturally responsive outreach on vaccine safety and efficacy to increase vaccine confidence.”

The Secretaries continued: “In the coming days, HHS and HUD will also provide further resources, tools, and guidance on the specific steps and strategies that community health centers, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, state Assistive Technology Act programs, and HUD grantees and program participants can take to facilitate broader access to COVID-19 vaccines and testing.”

This toolkit is intended to support community health centers and HUD-assisted housing and homeless programs to partner on COVID-19 vaccination delivery, COVID-19 testing, and health care for residents of public housing, low-income housing (including housing for older adults and people with disabilities), and people experiencing homelessness.

Toolkit – COVID-19 Vaccinations and Testing

1. Forming and Strengthening Partnerships Health Centers and HUD-Assisted Programs

- **Health center and HUD programs mapping tool:** HHS and HUD are using a newly developed [mapping tool](#) to help broker partnerships between health centers and HUD housing and homelessness programs.
- **CDC guidance for COVID-19 vaccinations for people experiencing homelessness** This [webpage](#) outlines implementation strategies to improve delivery of COVID-19 vaccination services to people experiencing homelessness, who face higher risks for infection and illness from COVID-19.
- **Health center and public housing partnerships (webinar recording):** The National Nurse-Led Care Consortium, the National Center for Health in Public Housing, and subject matter experts from HUD hosted a [webinar](#) about leveraging health center and housing authority partnerships for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Speakers discussed lessons learned from the HUD0HRSA Flu-LEAD Initiative.

2. Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines

- **Homeless populations:** The COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Vaccine Planning and Distribution [page](#) features a Building Vaccine Confidence tab, which is the home for materials, including meeting templates, community examples, informational flyers, and vaccine conversation tips, to help providers build vaccine confidence among people experiencing homelessness.
- **Increasing access to COVID-19 vaccines among homeless populations webinar:** This [webinar series](#) highlighted successful partnerships between Health Care for the Homeless facilities and local governments in their efforts to effectively vaccinate people experiencing homelessness.
- **CDC FAQs for people experiencing homelessness:** The CDC continues to update [Frequently Asked Questions](#) regarding COVID-19 responses for people experiencing homelessness including vaccinations, testing, and more.
- **CDC Toolkit for older adults and people at higher risk and CDC Toolkit for people with disabilities:** These toolkits ([older adults and people at higher risk](#), [people with disabilities](#)) provide guidance and resources to help people with disabilities and those who serve or care for them make decisions, protect their health, and communicate with their communities. Resources are categorized into multiple domains including COVID-19 Vaccine Resources, Guidance and Planning Documents, Web Resources, FAQs, Fact Sheets, Social Media, Videos and PSAs.
- **Promising practices for reducing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and disseminating accessible messages (older adults and people with disabilities):** This [webinar](#) from the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) details how to effectively reach and communicate with the disability community and their caregivers around vaccines, including best practices for states and counties.

- **NASEM Report on Strategies for Building Confidence in the COVID-19 Vaccines:** The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine created an [interactive web summary](#) of their publication “Strategies for Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines.” It highlights opportunities for public engagement and communication strategies that can be implemented at the national, state, and local levels to change patterns of interaction with the public, address confidence about COVID-19 vaccines, and build trust.

3. Conducting On-Site Vaccinations at HUD-Assisted Housing and Programs

- **Homeless shelters and programs:** The COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Vaccine Planning and Distribution [page](#) features a Vaccine Distribution Strategies tab, which is the home for materials to assist Continuums of Care and homeless assistance providers organize vaccine events among people experiencing homelessness, in partnership with local public health. Resources include vaccination event floor plans, sample social media messages supporting local vaccine efforts, and vaccine event checklists for congregate shelter settings.
- **Public housing:** HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) released [guidance](#) to public housing authorities (PHAs) describing eligible uses of CARES Act and other funding to support local COVID-19 vaccination efforts on site or in the community. The guidance encouraged PHAs to communicate directly and often with residents about vaccination, and the document included examples of how PHAs could improve residents’ access to vaccines.
- **Multifamily Housing (low-income housing, housing for seniors, and housing for people with disabilities):** Includes [guidance](#) encouraging Multifamily Housing owners and management agents to host on-site vaccinations, including eligible uses of program funds, and entering into partnerships to support local vaccination efforts.
- **Area Agencies on Aging assisting with on-site vaccination clinics at senior housing:** This [compilation document](#) provides a non-comprehensive list of the way Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) are helping older adults get vaccinated, including local efforts to vaccinate residents of senior housing.
- **Characteristics of homebound older adults and potential barriers to vaccine access:** In this [brief](#), the HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation describes the characteristics of approximately 1.6 million older adults that may have trouble accessing the COVID-19 vaccine because they are homebound.
- **Issues and barriers to vaccines for people with disabilities:** The ADA National Network provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act. This [webinar](#) describes how the ADA applies to the state/local governments and private organizations administering the vaccinations, web based and telephone systems used to search/locate and schedule a vaccine appointment, vaccination site accessibility and effective communication with recipients.

4. Data Collection

- **Homeless programs (including HMIS):** The COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Vaccine Planning and Distribution [page](#) features a tab titled Using Data and HMIS for Vaccine Rollout. Resources include guidance on data collection options, how to analyze data to develop data-informed improvement strategies, and data monitoring and evaluation strategies. Communities can use these resources to understand and overcome vaccine hesitancy and barriers to equitable vaccine access among people experiencing homelessness.
- **Homeless program COVID-19 testing data:** This [dashboard](#) provides COVID-19 testing and vaccination event data hosted by shelter or encampment-based service sites.
- **COVID-19 data dashboard for health centers serving public housing residents:** The National Center for Health in Public Housing published [data dashboards](#) featuring community health centers charged with meeting the primary care needs of people who live in public housing. The dashboards featured data being reported by these health centers.

5. Conducting COVID-19 Surveillance Testing in Public Housing and Homeless Service Settings

- **Homeless shelters/programs:** This [dashboard](#) provides COVID-19 testing and vaccination event data hosted by shelter or encampment-based service sites.
- **Public housing partnerships (webinar recording):** As the COVID-19 pandemic changed rapidly, this [webinar](#) highlighted different strategies to maintain clinical preventive services including immunization and testing. The National Center for Health in Public Housing featured La Maestra Community Health Centers, Mile Square Health Center and Zufall Health Center to talk about how they each addressed COVID-19 vaccination, testing promising practices, lessons learned, and challenges.

6. Mobilizing Workforce and Volunteers

- **Student Workforce:** This [webinar session](#) explores innovative partnerships that engage students to support COVID-19 education, outreach, and vaccine efforts. A panel of nursing experts discussed how to mobilize a student workforce through schools of nursing and collaboration with regional Area Health Education Centers.
- **Utilizing AmeriCorps members:** This [webinar](#) discusses promising practices for deploying AmeriCorps members to assist with vaccine delivery, and ways to ensure that primary care staff, providers, and community-based organizations can elicit support from available local, state, and national resources.
- **The Aging and Disability Network: The Administration for Community Living Strategies for Helping Older Adults and People with Disabilities Access COVID-19 Vaccines:** This [brief](#) from the Administration for Community Living gives examples of vaccine access strategies members of the aging and disability network are engaged in, including for older adults and people with disabilities living in HUD financed housing.

7. Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People

- **CDC information on for fully vaccinated people:** CDC provides [guidance and recommendations](#) regarding daily activities for people who have been fully vaccinated from COVID-19, including specific guidance covering homeless shelters. These recommendations are not intended for healthcare settings.

8. General

- **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations:** The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) provides [advice and guidance](#) to the Director of the CDC regarding use of vaccines and related agents for control of vaccine-preventable diseases in the civilian population of the United States. Recommendations made by the ACIP are reviewed by the CDC Director and, if adopted, are published as official CDC/HHS recommendations in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).
- **National Health Care for the Homeless Council COVID-19 resources:** This [webpage](#) features an array of webinars and other COVID-19 related resources created by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and other organizations from 2020-2021.
- **HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing COVID-19 Homepage:** The Office of Public and Indian Housing provides official [COVID-19 resources](#) for public housing authorities.
- **HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing COVID-19 Resources Page:** A compilation of all [COVID-related guidance](#) for Multifamily Housing owners, agents, residents, and partners.
- **The Office for Civil Rights Guidance on Federal Legal Standards Prohibiting Disability Discrimination in COVID-19 Vaccination Programs:** This [guidance](#) sets out legal standards under applicable Civil Rights laws as well as examples of the application of the legal standards in the context of COVID-19 vaccine programs.
- **Johns Hopkins University disability vaccine prioritization dashboard:** This [web-based tool](#) tracks vaccine prioritization plans across five categories (long term care settings such as nursing homes, other congregate settings, people with chronic conditions, disability relate groups and caregivers) in the 50 states, DC and five territories.
- **CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker (by county):** This site [provides](#) an integrated, county view of key data for monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.