# FEMA lends hand in West Virginia community vaccine event

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**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** – Just days after newly sworn-in President Joe Biden issued the challenge of giving Americans 100 million shots in 100 days to combat the coronavirus, the Federal Emergency Management Agency responded by lending its support to one of the country's leading vaccine distribution efforts.

On Saturday, members of the West Virginia FEMA Integration Team volunteered to take part in a vaccination clinic sponsored by the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department and the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center.

West Virginia has become a U.S. leader in rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine, with an 87.7 percent rate of first-dose administration totaling more than 137,000. The weekend clinic was the health board's largest distribution effort to date

Saturday's event resulted in 3,870 participants vaccinated, culminating a three-day effort totaling nearly 6,500 people receiving their COVID shot. Among those included in the tally were those over the age of 65 and their caretakers, healthcare workers and first responders.

FEMA staffers served as greeters and ushers, entered data for the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS), directed traffic and administered vaccines. The FEMA volunteers, most of whom are state natives, worked with a group of more than 60 others from the sponsoring agencies, as well as those from the City of Charleston, the Kanawha County Commission, the Kanawha County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Charleston Area Medical Center, the West Virginia Health Right free clinic, the University of Charleston and the office of U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin.

In addition to the effort at the Coliseum, FEMA assisted the City of Charleston's emergency management department in a vaccination event at Carroll Terrace, a city public housing facility.

“Our FEMA team was ready and eager to support West Virginia,” said Janice Barlow, acting Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 3. “It was such a total team effort having our FEMA staff work so closely with state and local health and emergency management to help get the country closer to defeating COVID.”

This was a sentiment echoed by local officials.

Dr. Sherri Young, health officer and executive director of the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, said in a news release: “I am so proud of this team and the work we’ve put in over the last three days. Our directive is to get vaccines into arms, and we’re doing that as quickly and efficiently as we can.”

The numbers testify to the impact the partnerships produced in the endeavor.

“Over a three-day period, the City of Charleston, Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, Kanawha County and over 70 partner organizations came together using a whole community response to give approximately 6,500 COVID-19 vaccinations,” said City of Charleston Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Mark Strickland. “Our team is committed to vaccinating as many as possible, as efficiently as possible. We will continue to work diligently to keep our residents safe and healthy.”

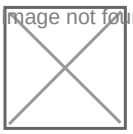
Acting FEMA Region 3 Administrator Barlow recognized the operation worked smoothly. “West Virginia already has a great system in place. We were honored and humbled to contribute to their success, and we look forward to continued collaboration.”

FEMA figures prominently in President Biden’s strategy for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with his signing of an executive order for the agency to set up vaccination centers. This buttresses ongoing agency priorities, including the provision of reimbursement for vaccine administration costs and workforce expenses and partnering with federal health agencies to provide support and training for public health workers for contact tracing and community vaccinations. These efforts are just the first visible step in backing up state and local agencies to help put an end to this global catastrophe.

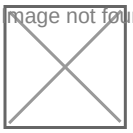
Visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html for more information about the COVID-19 vaccine. To learn more about the president’s

efforts to combat COVID, go to https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Strategy-for-the-COVID-19-Response-and-Pandemic-Preparedness.pdf.

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Region 3 Office of External Affairs at (215) 931-5597 or at femar3newsdesk@fema.dhs.gov.




Caption: Megan Browning, Environmental and Historical Preservation lead with the West Virginia FEMA Integration Team, takes registrants through pre-vaccination questionnaire using the Vaccine Administration Management System or VAMS, at the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2021 at the Charleston Coliseum-Convention Center in Charleston, W.Va. (Philip Maramba/FEMA)




Caption: Cassaundra Vincent, Operations Section Chief with the West Virginia FEMA Integration Team and a certified pharmacy technician, administers the COVID-19 vaccine at the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2021 at the Charleston Coliseum-Convention Center in Charleston, W.Va. (Philip Maramba/FEMA)




Caption: The Charleston Coliseum-Convention Center hosted a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic sponsored by Kanawha-Charleston Health Department and the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority, in partnership with Charleston Area Medical Center and West Virginia Health Right, on Jan. 21, 2021 in

Charleston, W.Va. The Saturday clinic, the culmination of a three-day event, administered shots to 3,870 people, making it the city's biggest vaccination event to date. (Philip Maramba/FEMA)

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