

# FEMA Supports Vaccine Distribution: COVID-19 Response Update

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WASHINGTON -- FEMA has established a Civil Rights Advisory Group to ensure America's vulnerable and underserved populations receive vaccinations, proactively consider and promptly resolve civil rights concerns and help ensure equity in the allocation of scarce resources, including future vaccine allocation. Led by FEMA's Office of Equal Rights, this group evaluates policies, practices, strategies and plans to ensure equity is at the forefront of all FEMA vaccination efforts across the country – with teams on the ground working with our partners on site selection and placement, as well as site management.

FEMA has civil rights advisors and disability integration specialists in each of FEMA's 10 regions to help advise state, local, tribal and territorial governments and other partners. The agency is also deploying additional disability integration advisors and civil rights advisors to support regional leadership – ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are integrated in all facets of vaccine center operation, including everything from site selection to vaccine distribution. FEMA is analyzing community demographics and mobilizing translation and interpretation services, including American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, when considering the needs of people with disabilities who choose to be vaccinated.

Additionally, FEMA has now finalized a contract for 30 mobile vaccination units, with unit inspections and deliveries scheduled to begin the week of Feb. 15. The agency has also published a [Community Vaccination Centers Playbook](#) that establishes guidance for providing federal support to state, tribal and territorial Community Vaccination Centers. Information includes interagency coordination, resource support, facility setup and other requirements.

As of Feb. 7, FEMA has provided more than **\$2.29 billion** for expenses related to COVID-19 vaccination at 100% federal cost share. These [funds cover critical supplies, staffing, training and transportation needs](#) that can help protect and save lives. FEMA has deployed 673 incident management and 318 incident support staff across the nation to support vaccine centers with federal personnel and



technical assistance. Additional FEMA staff across the country are supporting virtually.

On Feb 5, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas activated the DHS Surge Capacity Force for vaccine support operations. The force is composed of federal employees from other DHS components and augments FEMA's incident management workforce. These members will receive either virtual or in-person orientation and training from FEMA before deploying to support vaccine centers.

## **FEMA and Other Federal Agencies Are Supporting Vaccine Centers**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is supporting FEMA's COVID-19 federally supported Community Vaccination Centers response. This support includes subject matter expert support to existing FEMA/state assessment teams, providing site assessments and contracting capability to establish new sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is coordinating with FEMA and the CDC to design walk-up, drive-through and mobile vaccination centers. Vaccine center size and location are decided by state, local, tribal and territorial governments and will use existing infrastructure when available.

The U.S. National Guard Bureau is providing 1,061 vaccinators to 349 vaccine sites in 39 states and territories, and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III has approved 1,110 active duty troops to support five vaccine centers. FEMA will be partnering with the Department of Defense for additional resources at vaccination centers throughout the country.

## **Community Vaccination Center Pilot Partnerships**

The federal government is partnering with state governments to launch a small number of pilot community vaccination sites, primarily using federal staff to support state and local governments. Piloting these centers allows FEMA and its federal partners to ensure a small number of centers are successful before preparing additional support, as vaccine supplies ramp up in the weeks and months ahead.

[FEMA and the state of California partnered to launch a pilot project](#) to establish community vaccination centers in Los Angeles and Oakland. FEMA will provide resources, operational support and federal staffing support to establish these new



centers. The centers are expected to be open to eligible members of the public beginning Feb. 16.

## Vaccine Guidance

FEMA is working with the [Ad Council to encourage hesitant or underrepresented Americans to get vaccinated](#). This research-driven public education campaign provides federal, non-profit, and medical stakeholders with insights and communications strategies to tailor communications to reach diverse audiences.

The vaccine is not a perfect fix. Everyone should continue to [practice other precautions](#) like wearing a mask, maintaining physical distance, handwashing and other hygiene measures until public health officials say otherwise.

Everyone has a role to play in increasing vaccinations. Support your family, friends and neighbors if they need help getting appointments or getting to a vaccination center. You can help those without access to technology or those with low computer literacy to sign up online.

FEMA is committed to ensuring every American who wants a vaccine can get one.

