



How to Build Staff's Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines

Homeless service providers may be some of the first individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccines because of their essential role in keeping shelters operational and increased risk of contracting and spreading the virus. Their decision to get vaccinated can protect more than just their health. It can also help protect their colleagues, clients, families, and communities.

What Is Vaccine Confidence?

Vaccine confidence is the trust that people experiencing homelessness, their families, and providers have in:

- Recommended vaccines
- Providers who administer vaccines
- Processes and policies that lead to vaccine development, licensure or authorization, manufacturing, and recommendations for use

Many factors influence vaccine decision-making, including contextual factors (e.g. cultural, social, political), individual and group factors, and vaccine-specific factors. However, confidence in the vaccines and the entity administering the vaccine support the decision to get vaccinated.

Why Getting Vaccinated is Important

Being among the first in line to be vaccinated makes some people hesitant. Before agreeing to be vaccinated, staff may need reassurance about the expedited process for developing the vaccines and information about the vaccines' safety and effectiveness.

By answering their questions and taking time to listen to their concerns, you can help staff members to be informed and confident in their choice to be vaccinated. By choosing to be vaccinated, service providers can have a powerful influence on their families and communities. And communities with strong confidence in the vaccines lead to more people getting vaccinated, which leads to fewer COVID-19 illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Six Steps to Building Vaccine Confidence in Your Organization

Staff members need to feel confident in their decision to get vaccinated. One way to build that confidence is by making vaccine confidence visible in your facility. Here's how:

1. Host discussions where personnel at different levels can provide input and ask questions.

If all personnel in a facility—from food services to volunteers to the executive director—get vaccinated and use all current protective measures against spreading the virus that causes COVID-19, it will help ensure that staff members and clients are protected. An important step to achieving this robust level of protection is holding discussions across job areas to promote confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines. These conversations should occur from a place of openness, empathy, and understanding. Open discussions can help you: a) address staff questions and concerns; b) get their input on how to best build vaccine confidence within a shelter facility; and c) ensure the effectiveness of the steps described below. Consider inviting public health experts to these conversations to talk about [how the vaccine was developed and why it is safe](#).

Resources:

- [Use Vaccine Communication and Confidence Checklist](#) to plan multiple ways to communicate with staff to promote COVID-19 vaccine confidence.
- [Use Vaccine Confidence Conversation Tips](#) to create ideas about how to structure these discussions to promote vaccine confidence within your organization. Ideas generated during these discussions can help you tailor approaches that will work best in your facility to build staff buy-in and vaccine confidence.

2. Educate shelter staff about COVID-19 vaccines, how they are developed and monitored for safety, and how teams can talk to others about the vaccines.

Educate staff about COVID-19 vaccines and the vaccine development and safety monitoring processes. Emphasize the benefits of protecting themselves, their families, coworkers, shelter residents, and communities. Remind staff of the important role they play in their communities by sharing vaccine information and building confidence in the vaccine. [Provide educational resources and training](#) on how to have effective COVID-19 vaccine conversations and answer common questions.

CDC Resources:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Basics: What Healthcare Personnel Need to Know](#) (Powerpoint)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Training: General Overview of Immunization Best Practices for Healthcare Professionals](#) (Training)
- [Quick Answers to Common Questions People Might Ask about COVID-19 Vaccines: Tips for Healthcare Professionals](#) (Fact Sheet)
- [What To Expect After Getting the Vaccine](#) (video)

Note: CDC is in the process of developing fact sheets in multiple languages accommodating a range of literacy levels.

3. Create a feedback mechanism for staff to get answers to their questions.

Let staff know they have an important role in making vaccine confidence visible in your facility:

- Offer staff a dedicated phone line to call with questions about vaccination
- Solicit and update FAQs regularly on the staff intranet and public website
- Host live question-and-answer sessions with vaccine experts and local staff members with a diverse representation of expertise using:
 - Brown bag sessions for staff
 - Public-facing social media livestreams
 - Outreach sessions for community and faith-based groups
 - Coordination with local organizations that are trusted in the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community to be guest facilitators and speakers

4. Encourage senior leaders to be vaccine champions.

Identify trusted leaders, such as shelter directors, intake workers and case managers who work with residents, or peer leaders serving as [Vaccine Ambassadors](#) within the shelter to serve as vaccine champions. These leaders should be representative of the residents in the shelter. Ask them to lead by example by getting a COVID-19 vaccine and being photographed while doing so.

Invite leaders to share personal reasons for getting vaccinated and the importance of vaccination. Share stories and photos using:

- Testimonials given during elevator conversations, meetings, and staff presentations
- Short videos
- Email blasts
- Social media
- Blogs or web articles
- Pictures that can be displayed at the shelter

5. Share key messages with staff through emails, breakroom posters, and other communication channels.

Use a variety of communication channels such as meeting announcements, posters in common spaces (breakrooms, bathrooms, hallways), email blasts, the organization's intranet, and social media to share key messages with staff about the importance of vaccination and vaccine confidence. Messages should include:

- Get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect yourself, shelter residents, your colleagues, and your family from infection.

- Vaccine confidence starts with you! Building defenses against COVID-19 is a team effort in our facility.
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection against infection for you, your coworkers, shelter residents, and your families.
- You can do several things to build vaccine confidence:
 - Choose to get vaccinated yourself
 - Share your reasons for getting vaccinated and encourage others to get vaccinated
 - [Learn how to have effective COVID-19 vaccine conversations with others to encourage them to get vaccinated](#)

6. Make the decision to get vaccinated visible and celebrate it!

- Provide ["I got my COVID-19 vaccine!" stickers](#), pins, lanyards, masks, bracelets, etc.
- With permission, post a photo gallery in common or break areas of the facility or online as part of a social media campaign showing cheerful staff who were just vaccinated.
- Offer a small, sincere token of gratitude for early adopters (such as a personalized thank you note from the executive director, an ice cream treat, or a profile in your newsletter).
- With permission, record testimonials on why personnel in your facility decided to get vaccinated and share with the media.
- Get creative with producing and sharing inclusive, positive, behind-the-scenes moments showing staff caring for residents (for example, record personnel's reactions to the moment the first resident is protected against COVID-19).
- Reach out to local news outlets to highlight your shelter facility's leadership in COVID-19 vaccine introduction.