



Vaccination in Congregate Settings: Event Types and Considerations

Introduction

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have issued vaccine implementation guidance stating that homeless shelter staff are considered essential workers and should be vaccinated in Phase 1. Jurisdictions can choose to vaccinate those staying in shelters at the same time as staff. In the early stages of vaccine roll-out, communities may begin by vaccinating people in healthcare clinics or at mass vaccination events. Holding vaccination events at community-based venues like shelters or meal service sites may then become an option and may eliminate some barriers for members of the community who have experienced discrimination and negative interactions with medical providers. Flexible planning can help ensure either type of event is successful. This document outlines logistical planning for two types of vaccine roll-out scenarios:

- **Scenario 1: Bring the Vaccine to a Program (e.g., shelter)**
- **Scenario 2: Bring the People to the Vaccine (e.g., clinic, pharmacy, mass vaccination event, or other community vaccination site)**

General Logistical Considerations

Determine the minimum number of staff and volunteers to support a safe vaccination event. If staff will also receive vaccines at an event, consider [staggering staff vaccinations](#) to accommodate any rest needed post-vaccination.

CoCs may consider providing incentives to increase interest in vaccination. Weighting the second incentive may increase the completion of the two-dose regimen.

If completing electronic registration forms or any other electronic information entry, Continuums of Care (CoCs) and service providers should defer to [privacy and information sharing policies](#) throughout any event.

CoCs and service providers should expect that pre-registration for vaccination events may be time-consuming. CoCs should work with public health to determine which information will be needed for each client registered, collect and organize the information, and be ready to provide it (likely through an online system) before or as soon as the event opens.

CoCs should consult with Domestic Violence (DV) shelter staff on how to best maintain safety and confidentiality during vaccination. CoCs and DV shelters should plan in advance for how to collect vaccination information, including setting a date for the second dose. At no time should DV shelter residents have to choose between receiving the vaccine and maintaining the safety of their household.

Planning Considerations

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Provide a list of clients, residents, and/or staff to public health partners in advance of the vaccination event.	✓	✓
Seek information about the number of vaccine doses available. If there are not enough doses for everyone in the facility, work with public health to determine priority groups and develop a list of clients within those groups.	✓	✓
Create a contingency plan in case there are more doses available at the end of the event than expected. Individuals may need to be available quickly, within a timeframe set by the public health partner, based upon the vaccine's viability.	✓	✓
If shelter residents are participating in a community vaccination event, discuss with public health the possibility of designating a specified time for PEH to be vaccinated, similar to early high-risk hours at grocery stores.		✓
Shelters with large populations should consider creating a schedule of when people should arrive. This could be by dorm or population (e.g., families). Plan for contingencies in case of inclement weather or other unforeseen occurrences.	✓	
Identify a contingency plan for accommodating persons who experience side effects. This could include hotel rooms, removing limits on overnight bed hours, and increasing respite care.	✓	✓
Side-effect symptom onset may be delayed. Establish a point of contact for people who experience them after hours.	✓	✓

Trauma-Informed Approach

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Use trauma-informed practices before and during the event. Provide a welcoming atmosphere, treat people with respect, post clear signs that show what people can expect, and have staff, vaccine ambassadors, or peer support workers present to support shelter residents as they go through the vaccination process.	✓	✓
Utilize a vaccine ambassador to share information about the vaccine, help shelter residents navigate the vaccination process, provide peer support, offer incentives, and thank individuals for getting vaccinated.	✓	✓
Provide food and beverages that can easily and safely be served (e.g., individually packaged, maintaining social distance) during the event. This may be helpful if people wait for an extended period of time to get vaccinated. The post-vaccination observation area is one place to offer refreshments.	✓	✓

Operational Considerations

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Work with public health to discuss the event layout and ensure physical distancing and other infection control measures are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the event.	✓	✓
Consider using outdoor spaces such as canopies and portable heaters to create outdoor “rooms” for vaccine administration, post-vaccination observation, data collection, or other necessary administrative functions.	✓	
Have sufficient cleaning supplies, face masks, hand sanitizer, and personal protective equipment (PPE) on-site for event staff and shelter residents.	✓	✓
Do a walk-through in preparation for the event to determine if any changes need to be made.	✓	

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Talk with public health to determine the number of clinical staff that will be at the event and the roles that shelter staff may play, including staffing the registration and observation areas, if appropriate.	✓	
Hold meetings for staff and volunteers who are supporting the event to ask questions and discuss concerns about the vaccine or the vaccination event. Ensure education materials and flyers are available and in relevant languages and provide staff with frequently asked questions (FAQs) so they can respond to questions from people being vaccinated. Be prepared to provide information about what people can expect after getting vaccinated (e.g., common side effects, returning for a second dose of the vaccine).	✓	✓
Determine how staff/volunteers will be easily identified (i.e., different color shirts for staff/volunteers with different roles).	✓	✓
Provide clients with a vaccine card that they can take with them that identifies key information (like location, contact phone number, and email) and when they have a follow-up appointment.	✓	✓
Assign staff, peer support specialists, or vaccine ambassadors to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise between public health and shelter leadership to alleviate and address concerns. • Work with PEH to secure the appropriate documentation and complete registration information before and during the event. • Provide support to individuals experiencing anxiety about receiving the vaccine. 	✓	✓
Identify a staff member or contract with a mental health provider that can offer support to individuals that have a significant behavioral response at the event.	✓	✓

Data Collection

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
CoCs and shelter staff should be familiar with data collected during vaccine registration so they can help clients navigate the registration process and answer questions. Make sure clients/shelter residents understand the information they will need to provide to public health if releases of information will need to be signed, and for what purposes the information will be used.	✓	✓
Ensure data stations are ready before the event, both for public health partners and the homeless system. If there will be a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) check-in, for example, determine where the check-in station will be placed, if there needs to be a release of information signed, etc.	✓	
Determine tracking and reminder systems for the two-dose regimen (i.e., documenting, recording where the person will be when it is time for the second dose, supporting the individual to attend the second vaccine event, etc.). Staff accompanying clients to the vaccination event should support the collection of any pertinent information given to residents (vaccination card, vaccine brand, date of second dose) and record this information in HMIS or another data collection system used by the agency as soon as possible.	✓	✓

Communication

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Before the event, post information about the event including date, time, exact location in the shelter or site location, and what people can expect during the event. Posted materials should include information about what will happen at the shelter, including for those not being vaccinated that day. All materials should be translated into relevant languages.	✓	✓
On the day of the event, provide clear signage describing where people should queue, where vaccination stations are, and what people can expect from the event. Visual signage can be best— event floor plans , arrows indicating where to go, signs welcoming people to different areas, and reminders about infection control measures.	✓	

Transportation

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Estimate the number of clients to be transported to the vaccination event and the socially distanced seating capacity per vehicle. Based on that information, determine the number of trips needed to transport all clients getting vaccinated from the shelter to the vaccination event. Coordinate the timing of the vaccination event with the trips to and from the event location. Create an outward-facing schedule to make the information clear and transparent to staff, individuals who will be vaccinated, and partners.		✓
CoCs should approach community partners, such as the local school system or houses of worship, for transportation options such as buses and large vans. Cities with public transportation systems should explore this option, too. Review transportation safety protocols developed by public schools or transportation systems to ensure infection control measures (i.e., masks and social distancing) are maintained when transporting individuals to and from vaccination events.		✓
Require masks and provide opportunities for hand sanitizing and hygiene at different points including queuing, waiting, transporting, and upon returning to and reentering the shelter.		✓