

Supporting North Carolina's Vaccination Efforts Toolkit for Partner Organizations

Updated October 11th, 2021

Current State of North Carolina COVID-19 Vaccinations:

COVID-19 vaccines are available for free in North Carolina to everyone ages 12 and older. Those 18 and over can receive any of the three approved vaccines, while youth aged 12-17 may only receive the Pfizer vaccine. Individuals and CBOs may use the [CDC Vaccine Finder](#) to find locations that carry the Pfizer vaccine.

While walk-in vaccinations are available, some locations may require appointments. In North Carolina, anyone can get vaccinated regardless of immigration status – getting vaccinated will not affect your immigration. No government-issued ID or insurance is required. Everyone can read the [frequently asked questions](#) on the DHHS website to learn more about vaccinations and what you can do after you're vaccinated.

Earning the Trust of North Carolinians:

The injustices that drive the disparate impact of COVID-19 on historically marginalized populations (HMP)¹ can also cause very legitimate reasons for community members to have questions about vaccines. That is why NCDHHS are working to partner with trusted leaders and organizations to provide accurate information to communities. NCDHHS is committed to earning the trust of North Carolinians related to the COVID-19 vaccine and beyond and building upon already established relationships. Organizations can consider the following strategies to support North Carolina's vaccination efforts:

1. Share information about the COVID-19 vaccine:

- Use the [NCDHHS COVID-19 vaccine communications toolkit](#) to make sure all North Carolinians have accurate and up-to-date information on the vaccine.
- Encourage everyone to use these [tips when talking about the COVID-19 vaccine](#):
 - i. Be patient and respectful of those who may have concerns about the vaccine and address misinformation by sharing key facts (see our [Frequently Asked Questions](#))
 - ii. Listen and respond to questions

2. Become a vaccine ambassador by doing the following:

- Demonstrate trust in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines:

¹ HMPs are individuals, groups, and communities that have historically and systematically been denied access to services, resources, and power relationships across economic, political, and cultural dimensions as a result of systemic, durable, and persistent racism, discrimination and other forms of oppression. HMPs are often identified based on their race (Black/African American, American Indian), ethnicity (LatinX/Hispanic), social economic status, geography (rural), religion, language, sexual identity (LGBTQ+), and disability status.



- Share positive experiences of getting vaccinated against COVID-19—use our **tip sheet** ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) to create and share a video to promote vaccination.
- **Stay up-to-date on the latest vaccine information** by sharing the NCDHHS Frequently Asked Questions page with your networks ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)). This FAQ is updated weekly.
- **Promote “Vax Up or Mask Up”** to slow the spread of COVID-19 by encouraging people who have not been vaccinated to continue to wear a mask to protect themselves and people around them:
- Post graphics on your organization’s social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) ([English](#) / [Spanish / Bilingual](#))
- Share the following materials:
 - Business Flyer ([English](#) / [Spanish](#) / [Bilingual](#))
 - Images for Web, Emails, and Virtual Backgrounds ([English](#) / [Spanish/ Bilingual](#))
 - Playing video PSAs in meetings or in lobbies ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
 - COVID-19 Vaccines and Pregnancy ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
 - You Have a Spot...at Opening Day ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
 - North Carolina | It’s Time to Get Your Shot ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))

3. Host virtual town halls about the COVID-19 vaccines:

- Host a virtual town hall for community members about COVID-19 vaccines where they can ask questions.
- [Request a COVID-19 Vaccine 101 presentation](#) through NC Counts and Healthier Together to learn more about the vaccine, then share accurate information about the vaccines with your networks. **Link:**
- Invite local leaders to share information about the COVID-19 vaccines.
 - **For example:** invite prominent faith leaders who have received the vaccine to share with others in the faith community their reason for getting vaccinated and their positive experience with others.

Meeting People Where They Are:

This pandemic has shed light on the pervasive impacts of social and structural inequities in our health systems. The same conditions that have resulted in the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on historically marginalized populations, including access to health care, are also barriers to vaccine access.

We are working with partners to overcome those barriers and meet people where they are to increase equitable access to COVID-19 vaccinations. All North Carolina vaccine providers are expected to distribute vaccines in a way that reflects the proportion of historically marginalized populations (HMP) in a given county or region. To achieve that goal, community organizations that serve historically marginalized populations can play several important roles: I. helping people find their spot to get vaccinated, II. partnering with vaccine providers to reach historically marginalized populations, III. host or support community vaccine events, and IV. providing transportation.

1. Help people find where they can get a vaccine

Even with increasing vaccine supply, there are several reasons why it can be challenging to know where it's possible to get a vaccine: the process for scheduling an appointment is different for each provider, and providers may be relying on online scheduling tools that not everyone can access. However, many vaccine providers are offering walk-in vaccinations across the state, which offers greater flexibility to people who are still looking to get vaccinated.

Organizations can:

- **Help people find a vaccine provider.** Online tools can help community members find vaccination sites. The [CDC Vaccine Finder](#) webpage includes vaccinating provider locations and contact information. With this tool, North Carolinians can enter their ZIP code or current location to find nearby vaccine providers. They can contact vaccine providers directly to schedule an appointment or walk-ins.
- **Advertise where walk-in vaccinations are available in your community:** Share information on social media or spread the word to friends and family about local vaccine providers that are providing walk-in vaccinations.
- **Offer vaccine to others who may have accompanied a recipient** to their appointment. They may not know they have the ability to be vaccinated on the spot.
- **Tell people they can get information about the COVID-19 vaccine by calling the COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center** at 888-675-4567.
 - The Help Center is open **Monday – Friday 7am – 7pm** and **Saturday – Sunday 8am – 4pm**.
 - Help center staff can answer general COVID-19 vaccine questions and provide information on how to find vaccine locations and transportation to vaccine sites.
 - The COVID-19 vaccine help center supports English, Spanish, and TTY. A language line is available for other languages needed.
 - Callers can request a call back instead of waiting in line for an agent if their call is not answered immediately
- **Individuals** can download and follow instructions from our [toolkit](#) to encourage their communities and loved ones through simple, specific steps everyone can take to help someone get a vaccine appointment (i.e. calling loved ones who haven't been vaccinated yet or sharing their experience on social media and asking if anyone needs support in getting vaccinated)

2. Partner with local vaccine providers to help reach historically marginalized populations

Vaccines are available in all 100 counties, including local health departments, hospitals and health systems, community health centers, primary care providers, and pharmacies (such as Walgreens, CVS, Harris Teeter, Walmart, and independent pharmacies). NCDHHS recommends that vaccine providers make an active effort to conduct outreach to historically marginalized populations (HMP) at their vaccine clinics.

Organizations can:

- **Find out which providers have vaccine in your community.** You can learn which vaccine providers are near you by visiting the [CDC Vaccine Finder](#) and entering your zip code. You can contact the vaccine provider by phone or through their website.
- **Educate and recruit community members from historically marginalized populations.** This could include working with vaccine providers to host vaccine events in locations that are accessible to historically marginalized populations.

2. Host a community vaccine event in partnership with a local vaccine provider

Community organizations can play an important role in hosting community vaccine events in places that are accessible to and trusted by individuals from historically marginalized populations. Ideally, organizations that want to host a vaccine event can provide “everything but the vaccine” – that is, providing the physical location and volunteers for all non-clinical roles (e.g., scheduling appointments, parking/traffic control, greeting, check-in, check-out). A particularly important role organizations can play is ensuring that people are scheduled for every available vaccine dose, confirming those appointments in advance, and letting people know about walk-in appointments.

If your organization is interested in learning about what it may take to host a vaccine event or support another organization’s vaccine event, please review the checklist in [Appendix 1](#). This checklist includes recommendations for organizations that may wish to (1) host a vaccine event or (2) contribute a facility, volunteers, or equipment to support another organization’s vaccine event.

If your organization can meet most of the recommended items in the checklist, we encourage you to complete the [Survey for Organizations Interested in Hosting or Supporting a Vaccine Event](#). The results of this survey are shared with vaccine providers who are encouraged to reach out directly to organizations to form partnerships.

3. Provide transportation

Access to transportation is an important element for equitable distribution of vaccines. Vaccine providers can ask individuals if they need assistance getting to the vaccination site.

Organizations can help people safely get to and from vaccination appointments by:

- Making a list of community members needing transportation



- Arranging transportation for those with difficulty getting to the vaccine event by contacting your [local transit agency](#)
 - Existing ride-share partners in North Carolina include Ride United NC and national Lyft and Uber programs
 - [Ride United NC](#) is an organization working (through a Partnership with Lyft) to provide access to the COVID-19 vaccine for low-income, elderly, uninsured, and/or unbanked individuals and families statewide: call 1-844-771-RIDE to schedule a roundtrip ride to your COVID-19 vaccine appointments
- Publicizing information about local transit agencies to community members who may need help with transportation to and from vaccination appointments. Funding has been made available to local transit agencies to help provide this support.
- For those organizations serving older adults or the elderly, specifically individuals 65+, coordinate with either your local transit agency or with your existing contracted transportation provider

Appendix 1. Checklist for Hosting or Supporting a Vaccine Event

This checklist includes recommendations for organizations that are interested in

1. Hosting a vaccine event *or*
2. Contributing a facility, volunteers, or equipment to support another organization's vaccine event

For organizations that are interested in hosting a community vaccine event, it is recommended they can provide “everything but the vaccine” – where the organization provides the facility, volunteers, and equipment. Other organizations may want to contribute some resources (e.g., offer their facility, offer volunteers, offer equipment) but not handle all the logistics. We welcome organizations that wish to support either way!

The items in the checklist are recommendations, not requirements. An organization may still be able to support vaccination efforts even if they are not able to meet all the recommendations in the checklist.

- NCDHHS has developed a survey for community organizations that are interested in contributing volunteers, facilities, equipment, or other resources to support vaccination efforts: [Survey for Organizations Interested in Hosting or Supporting a Vaccine Event](#).
- Advance planning in partnership with a vaccine provider is very important to the success of a community vaccine event
- In most cases, vaccine providers (i.e., hospitals, local health departments, etc.) will staff the following components of vaccine events: registration in COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS), vaccine storage and handling, vaccine administration, post-vaccination monitoring, and data entry. Vaccine providers may also guide/support other activities as needed

A. Offering a Location/Facility for Proposed Vaccine Event

- ✓ Location is trusted and easily accessible to historically marginalized communities i.e., churches, other faith-based settings, schools, or community centers.
- ✓ Organizations can help promote vaccine equity by focusing on locations that are accessible to people with low incomes, people who may not have personal transportation, and people who may not have strong internet access.
- ✓ Location can host at least two vaccine events, if using a two-dose vaccine (one for first doses, followed by another event for second doses 3 to 4 weeks after the first dose event)
- ✓ Location is accessible via public transportation (if not, it is recommended that an organization work to arrange or facilitate transportation for community members who need it)
- ✓ Location is available during extended workhours to help seniors that may rely on transportation from family members and other individuals working traditional business hours
- ✓ Location is wheelchair accessible and able to provide communication access for people with disabilities when requested. Please refer to [Vaccination Site Accessibility Checklist](#) to address accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
- ✓ Location has at least 2,500 square feet
 - Please note: FEMA estimates 2,500 square feet is the minimum square footage needed to administer about 250 doses per day. An organization may be able to host an event with less than 2,500 square feet but it may be less throughput than 250 doses per day. It is not required to have 2,500 square feet to host a vaccine event.



- ✓ Location has at least 130 spaces of onsite parking (please note, your organization may still be able to host even if less than 130 spaces of parking)
 - Please note: FEMA estimates 130 parking spaces are needed for staff and vaccine recipients for an event that is providing 250 doses per day. This also varies on whether the event is a drive-thru or a fixed site. It is not required to have 130 parking spaces to host a vaccine event.
- ✓ Location has running water, electricity, heat/air conditioning
- ✓ Location has working toilets and handwashing stations (portable rentals if indoor facility is not close)
- ✓ Location has wireless internet
- ✓ Accessing Wi-Fi can be crucial for the medical partner to register patients, whether through expanded network near the vaccine site or adequately powered hotspot.
- ✓ Location has reliable cell phone service
- ✓ Location can accommodate a one-way in, one-way out traffic pattern
- ✓ Location has at least 20 tables and 40 chairs
 - Note: It may be possible to host smaller event with less than 20 tables
- ✓ For groups that are helping to get elderly individuals vaccinated, it is recommended to have:
- ✓ Chairs with two arm rests for people to prop themselves up
- ✓ Wheelchairs for people who may have difficulty with mobility

B. Contributing Volunteers for Staffing Proposed Vaccine Event

Please note: *Volunteers and vaccine providers will need to coordinate on the activities listed below. This may include training or planning sessions.*

- ✓ Volunteers who can schedule vaccine appointments for a proposed event
- ✓ Volunteers will need to work with the vaccine provider to determine best approach to schedule on behalf of others (e.g., pen and paper, by phone, online, etc.)
- ✓ For example, one vaccine provider (a health system) gave iPads to pastors to schedule members of their congregation. Many organizations may be able to provide support for scheduling vaccines prior to a vaccine event.
- ✓ Volunteers can print event tickets with time/date of vaccine slot and distribute to people
- ✓ Volunteers who can call and confirm appointments prior to the vaccine event
- ✓ Volunteers who can greet people, take temperature, and screen for symptoms of COVID-19
- ✓ Local organizations are a good source of volunteers with familiar faces to greet people and put them at ease.
- ✓ Volunteers can be available to accompany people with disabilities through the vaccination process when requested to assist with communication or mobility needs. Please refer to [Accessibility for COVID-19 Vaccination Sites](#)
- ✓ Volunteers who can help direct people to parking and provide traffic control
- ✓ Volunteers who can help with check-in and confirm appointment when people arrive at vaccination site
- ✓ Volunteers who can help with check-out and scheduling of 2nd dose, if using a two-dose vaccine.
- ✓ Volunteers can schedule people for their 2nd appointment before they leave the site after vaccination. Volunteers can help with check-out by handing out masks, handing out flyers for resources, sharing other resources with people before they leave (emphasizing Vax Up or Mask Up, or resources like [Hope4NC](#) mental health supports).
- ✓ Staff who can serve as interpreters for individuals for whom English is not their first language (contact communications.access@dhhs.nc.gov to learn more about local interpreters and possible funding sources)
- ✓ Volunteers who can bring food or bottled water for vaccinators and volunteers
- ✓ Volunteers who can be runners/floaters to help with miscellaneous tasks that are needed at the

vaccination site

- ✓ Volunteers should review this video: [Effective Communication Tips in Mass Vaccination Setting](#)
- ✓ Volunteers who can attend trainings that led by vaccine providers (as needed)
 - It is recommended that volunteers/staff review [NCDHHS Frequently Asked Questions](#) to be able to consistently answer questions related to vaccines

Clear Identification of Vaccination Site Staff:

Volunteers should be easily and clearly identified. Without a standardized identification (could be as simple as a colored sticky name tag on the chest), it is difficult to tell who is there to be tested and who is a volunteer since everyone has different face coverings. Clear identification keeps the environment safe for privacy (if not well identified, others can access areas intended only for staff) and makes it easy for people presenting for vaccination to know who can answer their questions.

For some communities, law enforcement presence and fear of authorities may deter people from coming to a vaccine event. Avoiding highly uniformed staff and wearing more casual street clothes creates a safer- feeling environment at times. Additionally, it is recommended that law enforcement know the location of the event and be close by if needed, but not visibly onsite.

C. Contributing Equipment for Proposed Vaccine Event

- ✓ Vehicles and drivers to help with transportation support
- ✓ This can include organizing carpools or large group transportation to and from vaccination sites (e.g., through minivans, buses), especially for community vaccine events.
- ✓ PPE for volunteers (e.g., disposable masks, face shields, hand sanitizer)
- ✓ Tables
- ✓ Chairs
- ✓ Golf carts (to help transport individuals, especially if parking lot is far from vaccination site)
- ✓ Traffic cones (to help manage traffic flow and to help keep 6-foot distance marks)
- ✓ Sign boards
- ✓ Wi-fi hotspots
- ✓ Heaters
- ✓ Outdoor lighting (especially if the event is outdoors, or taking place while it is dark outside)
- ✓ Heavy-duty tents (if the event is outdoors)
- ✓ Shelter in the form of several secure, heavy-duty tents to endure heavy wind, rain and sun; cover the medical team, health department educators, etc., and their electronics; and provide adequate space to social distance. You should plan on at least one tent for each workstation including the traffic monitors and patient monitoring stations.
- ✓ Generators
- ✓ Portable toilets (if not restrooms indoors)
- ✓ Food and beverages (e.g., bottled water, coffee, pastries, lunch delivered to site) for volunteers and vaccinators

Appendix 2: Recommendations for Hosting Vaccine Events

Effective practices:

- Locating event in a majority HMP community
- Leverage media to alert about the event
- Provided Spanish-speaking volunteers
- Canvassing at farmers market and churches
- Well thought-out logistics; had emergency team on call
- Created a comfortable atmosphere – acknowledge public be hesitant about medical events
 - Food trucks, music, games
 - Family friendly event with childcare provided
 - Guidance on COVID-19 safety
- Vaccinated people brought unvaccinated people to get vaccines
 - Offered swag to people to show enthusiasm about vaccine
- Providing lead time in planning to conduct door-to-door outreach
- Give away free ice cream/popsicles to draw families and children
- Asking local authorities to wear plainclothes to avoid being perceived as intimidating

Appendix 3: Additional Resources

PPE

- Volunteers who are not administering vaccine should be wear a face covering, but otherwise do not require specific or special PPE.
- Organizations that are hosting vaccine events or contributing volunteers for vaccine events [can request face coverings](#) using the [Non-Health Care PPE request form](#). Please note that requests will be fulfilled as quantities are available.
- Vaccine providers are responsible for supplying PPE for their staff, including clinical vaccinators.

Potential Reimbursement

In federally declared disasters, FEMA can provide funding and technical help to state and local governments and certain private, non-profit groups. Please reach out to your local emergency management and vaccine providers as you are planning community vaccine events to discuss questions about potential reimbursement from FEMA. Please visit the [NC DPS Public Assistance webpage](#) for more information.

Resources providing educational information on North Carolina vaccines that can be shared with the public:

- [Interim Provider Guidance for Vaccinating North Carolinians](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Toolkit](#)
- [North Carolina Vaccine Strategy](#)
- [Healthier Together Initiative](#)