



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

NORTH CAROLINA'S COVID-19 VACCINE ROADMAP



THE DESTINATION

Vaccinate every person living or working in North Carolina who wants to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.



YOU HAVE A
SPOT.

TAKE YOUR
SHOT.

THE STARTING POINT

- Tested, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will help us get back in control of our lives and back to the people and places we love.
- North Carolina will mobilize to vaccinate as many people as quickly and fairly as possible given the available vaccine supply.

THE DESTINATION

Vaccinate every person living or working in North Carolina who wants to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

TRUE NORTH

North Carolina's COVID-19 Vaccine Roadmap is guided by a set of principles:

- **Access for everyone:** All North Carolinians have equitable access to vaccines.
- **Inclusion and respect:** Vaccine planning and distribution is inclusive and draws upon the experience and expertise of leaders from historically marginalized populations.
- **Frequent and trustworthy communication:** Transparent, accurate and frequent public communications is essential to building trust.
- **Data-driven decisions and accountability:** Data is used to promote equity, track progress and guide decision-making.
- **Continuous improvement:** Appropriate stewardship of resources and continuous evaluation and improvement drive successful implementation.
- **Partnerships:** Strategies are informed by key stakeholders, including the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee convened by the NC Institute of Medicine and the NCDHHS Historically Marginalized Populations Workgroup.

THE MILE MARKERS

Supply will drive access to vaccines and our approach to the work in phases



Launching Vaccinations
December 2020

Estimated: > 100k doses/week

When the first vaccine doses were allocated to North Carolina, the focus was on activating a limited group of vaccine providers for the highest risk individuals.



Limited Vaccine Supply
Jan – Feb 2021

Estimated: 100k-250K doses/week

When vaccine supply increases, additional vaccine providers will increase access for all North Carolinians.



Increasing Vaccine Supply
March 2021 – Present

Estimated: 250k-350K doses/week

When vaccine supply increases, additional vaccine providers will increase access for all North Carolinians.



Abundant Vaccine Supply
Spring - Summer 2021
Supply > Demand

When there is sufficient vaccine to immunize anyone in the state via more established delivery channels.

All North Carolinians have equitable access to vaccines.

THE ROUTE

Our route charts where we started, where we are now, and where we are going. Our route includes actions to:

1. **Establish vaccine prioritization groups**
2. **Earn the trust of North Carolinians**
3. **Help people find their spot**
4. **Onboard vaccine providers**
5. **Embed equity in vaccine operations**
6. **Manage vaccine allocations**
7. **Enhance vaccine technology**
8. **Support vaccine providers**

1

Establish Vaccine Prioritization Groups: Vaccine supply is limited at first, so North Carolina established prioritization groups to save lives and slow the spread of COVID-19. Prioritization groups were informed by independent state and federal public health advisory committees, including the North Carolina Institute of Medicine-convened COVID-19 Advisory Committee. Our guidance to vaccine providers is to follow the state's prioritization framework:

Group 1: Health Care Workers and Long-Term Care Staff and Residents

Group 2: Older Adults

Group 3: Frontline Essential Workers

Group 4: Adults at High Risk for Exposure and Increased Risk for Severe Illness

Group 5: Everyone



Launching vaccinations

- Opened vaccinations to **Group 1** (Health care workers & long-term care, ~250,000 people)



Limited vaccine supply

- Continue vaccinations for **Group 1**
- Open to **Group 2** (Older adults 65+, ~1.6 million people)
- Open to **Group 3** (Frontline Essential Workers, >1 million people)



Increasing vaccine supply

- Continue vaccinations for **Groups 1-3**
- Open to **Group 4** (Adults at high risk for exposure and increased risk of severe illness, ~4.1 million people)



Abundant vaccine supply

- Continue vaccinations for **Groups 1-4**
- Open to **Group 5** (Everyone wanting a safe, effective vaccine, ~3.5 million people)

2

Earn the Trust of North Carolinians: The injustices that drive the disparate impact of COVID-19 on historically marginalized communities can also cause very legitimate reasons for people in these communities to have questions about vaccines and fair access. That is why we are partnering with trusted leaders and organizations to share accurate information with communities. Early in the pandemic, North Carolina demonstrated its commitment to data transparency by developing and continually enhancing a robust **COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard**. NC’s data dashboard currently includes key metrics related to the number of vaccine doses that have been administered; number of vaccine doses promised to and received by the state; percent of doses received that have been administered; breakdown of vaccinations by race and ethnicity; and number of people vaccinated by county of residence.



Launching vaccinations

- Invested in **research on vaccine confidence** with focus on African American/Black, LatinX/Hispanic, American Indian and rural communities.
 - Fielded online survey of 1,922 North Carolina residents oversampled for Historically Marginalized Populations.
 - Conducted 30 in-depth interviews with Black/African American, Hispanic/LatinX, and American Indian North Carolina adult respondents.
 - Research revealed that the most effective messages were similar across populations and that messengers are 90% of message effectiveness.
- Formed a **Vaccine Communications Advisory Committee**, with half of the members from historically marginalized communities, to inform the development of North Carolina’s communication plan and to help get information out to communities, especially to prioritized and historically marginalized populations.
- Launched YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov and Vacunate.nc.gov as North Carolina’s online spots for reliable and accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccines.
- Launched [vaccine dashboard](#) with weekly updates and race/ethnicity data. North Carolina has been recognized as one of three states [reporting thorough vaccination data](#) by race and ethnicity.



Limited vaccine supply

- Update **vaccine dashboards** with county-level data and interactive features.
- Launched the **COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Toolkit** – ready-made materials to help partners communicate about safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines.
- Share on-camera interviews with North Carolinians about why they are taking their shot, including Community Health Workers, NAACP leaders, first responders, agricultural workers, and child care workers. See the growing library of videos. ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
- Partner with the Advanced Center for COVID-19 Related Disparities (NCCU ACCORD) to ensure comprehensive COVID-19 information is reaching underserved communities.
- Train 300+ leaders, including community health workers, AMEXCAN, and members of our Historically Marginalized Populations workgroup, to host vaccine conversations, roundtables and presentations.
- Begin paid media focused on reaching historically marginalized populations.
- Launch research effort to assess changes in vaccine confidence and decision-making.



Increasing vaccine supply

- Increase data transparency for the public, vaccine providers, county leaders and internal teams through interactive dashboards.
- Deepen and broaden stakeholder engagement with trusted vaccine ambassadors.
- Expand paid media strategy.
- Continue research to assess changes in vaccine confidence and decision-making.



Abundant vaccine supply

- Continue broadening of stakeholder engagement.
- Continue providing data transparency for public, vaccine providers, county leaders and internal teams through interactive dashboards and reports.

3

Help People Find Their Spot: North Carolina is working to build better ways for more people to find information about how to get vaccinated.

 <p>Launching vaccinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched an online list of vaccine locations with provider contact information. • Launched an initial call center (COVID-19 hotline). • Posted regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions.
 <p>Limited vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch an online tool in English and Spanish called Find My Group to help North Carolinians know when they will be eligible to get their vaccine. People can also sign up to be notified when their group is active. • Launch an online vaccine location search tool in English and Spanish called Find My Spot that is continually updated to help North Carolinians find nearby vaccine providers. • Expand COVID-19 vaccine help center to help callers with general questions, information on eligibility groups, clinical questions about the vaccine, how to find vaccine locations and transportation services. The help center, 888-675-4567, is available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.
 <p>Increasing vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch an online scheduling tool for vaccine providers that makes it easier for people to schedule appointments. • Leverage Community Health Workers and other community partnerships to provide vaccine navigation support to those most underserved. • Encourage more vaccine providers to offer easier appointment scheduling, either online or by phone.
 <p>Abundant vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy additional vaccine navigation tools to help people find appointments.

4

Onboard Vaccine Providers: Our approach prioritizes vaccine providers based on their ability and to quickly administer vaccines and reach eligible prioritized populations across North Carolina in all 100 counties. As supply allows, more vaccine providers will be onboarded based on their capacity to administer vaccine doses, operational readiness, and ability to equitably distribute vaccines. A key expectation for all vaccine providers is that the percentage of vaccine administered to historically marginalized populations (including Black / African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian/Native American) should meet population estimates of these communities in their county and region.

 <p>Launching vaccinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided initial vaccine supply to hospitals, health systems, and local health departments (LHDs). • Vaccinations for staff and residents of most long-term care facilities is managed by the federal government through the Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program with CVS and Walgreens.
 <p>Limited vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize enrollment of new providers in areas of the state with insufficient capacity to administer vaccines. • Provide vaccine to providers that are able to administer at least 100 vaccines in five days. • Provide vaccine supply to clinics that are able to reach Historically Marginalized Populations, such as community health centers, rural health centers, pharmacies and some primary care practices serving these populations. • Provide vaccine supply to other long-term care pharmacies and providers who can reach long-term settings not covered by the Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program. • Provide vaccine supply to providers that are offering community events to reach underserved and historically marginalized populations eligible for vaccine, including at churches and schools, as well as high throughput vaccine events. While vaccine supply remains limited, most providers will not be able to receive a direct allocation of vaccine and will not be able to provide vaccinations in their offices. • Work with providers to scale capacity and ensure vaccine providers are “at-the-ready” when vaccine supply increases including health systems, FEMA and vendors through contracts. • Work with FEMA and state partners (e.g., health systems) to be ready to activate higher-throughput regional operations. • Federal pharmacy retail program launched Feb. 11, 2021. More than 300 Walgreen stores in North Carolina are receiving vaccine allocation directly from national supplies and offering vaccinations. • Federal health center COVID-19 vaccine program launched the week of Feb. 25, 2021 with direct allocations from the federal government to FQHCs in North Carolina.
 <p>Increasing vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surge new vaccine supply rapidly as it becomes available with “at-the-ready” providers. • Continue to match the capacity of existing vaccine providers to leverage experience and efficiency. Continue to increase the number of places where people can access a vaccine by onboarding new providers, including more primary care offices, occupational health clinics, pharmacies and mobile vaccination units. • Establish vendor contracts to rapidly expand points of vaccine access as additional vaccine supply becomes available. • Establish regional strategy leveraging health system, local health department and vendor relationships to create steady higher-throughput centers across the state with a focus on equity goals.
 <p>Abundant vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide vaccine supply to additional providers (e.g., specialty practices, dental practices, universities).

5

Embed Equity in Vaccine Operations: The 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 communities are also barriers to vaccine access, including access to health care. We are working with partners to overcome those barriers.

 <p>Launching vaccinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with leaders from historically marginalized populations to develop North Carolina’s vaccine plan and identify local vaccination partners.
 <p>Limited vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a vaccine allocation methodology that provides additional vaccine doses to providers that serve a higher proportion of adults over 65 from historically marginalized populations • Partner with 150+ Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) sites to distribute vaccines focused on our safety net population. Vaccine doses are directly allocated to FQHCs and transferred from other local vaccine providers to reach underserved or historically marginalized populations. • Provide free transportation for people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. \$2.5 million in Coronavirus Relief Funding is being distributed through local transit agencies in all 100 counties to help pay for rides for people who need transportation assistance to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. • Train and deploy 400+ Community Health Workers (CHWs) to educate residents in historically marginalized communities on the vaccine and help connect people to vaccine appointments and provide second dose reminders. CHWs are provided with tablets and mobile hotspots to help schedule vaccine appointments for historically marginalized populations and are assisting local health departments, community health centers and other vaccine providers with logistical support for neighborhood and community vaccination clinics. • Provide additional guidance to vaccine providers to support equitable vaccine distribution and share best practices. • Set aside a portion of the state’s allocation to support vaccination sites and events focused on reaching historically marginalized populations and encouraging community vaccination events to prioritize first appointments for historically marginalized populations by partnering with African-American and LatinX/Hispanic churches and community organizations to fill the schedule before opening to the broader public. • Support partnerships with community organizations to hold vaccine clinics in historically marginalized communities in churches, HBCUs, community centers, and community-based organizations.
 <p>Increasing vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Healthier Together Health Equity Action Network to build a ground game to overcome persistent health inequities starting with equitable vaccine access by investing in state, regional and community partners led by and serving historically marginalized populations. • Expand mobile and community-based vaccination events, using data to identify zip codes with higher social vulnerability (e.g., high poverty, lack of vehicle access and crowded housing)
 <p>Abundant vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue data-driven efforts to promote equitable vaccine distribution and partnerships with local organizations.

6

Manage Vaccine Allocations: North Carolina’s allocation decisions prioritize geographic, racial and ethnic equity, while continuing to expect that all doses are used within the week. Course adjustments are made to ensure stability, transparency of allocations, and equity. The federal government allocates vaccine to North Carolina on a weekly basis. The state then determines which providers will receive vaccine and the number of doses. The vaccine manufacturer then ships vaccine directly to the vaccine providers.

 <p>Launching vaccinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide allocations to vaccine providers based on population. • Develop process for vaccine transfers between vaccine providers to balance local supply and demand.
 <p>Limited vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase predictability and transparency through allocation model that accounts for equity. • Provide baseline allocations to all 100 counties based on population and adjust baseline to address 1) counties with higher numbers of low-income adults 65 and older and historically marginalized populations and 2) stated capacity of vaccine providers. • Provide set-aside allocations for community vaccination events selected based on equity, readiness and speed, and demonstrated partnerships that will reach underserved communities.
 <p>Increasing vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to refine allocation approach to balance speed and equity, anticipating increased flexibility in allocations as vaccine supply increases and potentially additional vaccines are authorized.
 <p>Abundant vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate vaccines to all enrolled vaccination providers requesting vaccine.

7

Enhance Vaccine Technology: North Carolina developed a **COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS)** – a secure, web-based system accessible and free to all COVID-19 vaccine providers. Vaccine providers use CVMS to enroll in the vaccine program, manage vaccine inventory, and track vaccine administration. Vaccine providers are expected to enter vaccine data into CVMS within 24 hours to the extent possible and must enter data with 72 hours after administration. Providers must collect race and ethnicity data to ensure so that the state and vaccine providers are held accountable for equitable access to vaccines.

 <p>Launching vaccinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched critical COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS) functionality (e.g., dose documentation, point-of-care registration). • NCDHHS implemented a CVMS Help Desk Portal to provide transparent, efficient, real-time access for vaccine providers to receive vaccine support, issue resolutions, and tracking of requests.
 <p>Limited vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a virtual agent through the CVMS Help Desk Portal to quickly answer questions and address requests from vaccine providers. • Implement self-service reporting in the CVMS Provider Portal to help vaccine providers access reports such as information on vaccination recipients and vaccine inventory. • Launch tools to make it easier for vaccine providers to enter vaccine administrations into CVMS, including Electronic Health Record integration and Robotic Process Automation. • Expand CVMS functionality (e.g., provider enrollment, increased pre-registration capacity).
 <p>Increasing vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to enhance CVMS functionality (e.g., self-registration, appointment scheduling, integration with NC Immunization Registry).
 <p>Abundant vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to enhance CVMS functionality.

8

Support Vaccine Providers: The COVID-19 vaccine effort is one of the most complex public health operations ever undertaken. North Carolina is supporting vaccine providers in multiple ways to facilitate speed and equity in vaccine distribution.

 <p>Launching vaccinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued guidance to vaccine providers on vaccinating North Carolinians, including suggested practices on planning and running vaccination clinics and events, scheduling, and promoting equity. • Provided vaccine technical assistance to local health departments because of their unique role in the COVID-19 response in all 100 counties.
 <p>Limited vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a team of case managers who each serve as a point of contact for our 250+ enrolled vaccine providers. Case managers 1) confirm each provider's capacity, which informs weekly vaccine allocations, 2) check inventory and facilitate vaccine transfers when needed to ensure all doses are used, 3) provide technical assistance and guidance on best practices and 4) troubleshoot operational issues. • Provide staffing support to vaccine providers with state personnel, volunteers, and National Guard members to support with needed tasks, such as answering phones and scheduling appointments. • Provide data entry support to local vaccine providers that need assistance with entering individual immunization records into CVMS. • Coordinate volunteers who can support vaccination efforts, including civic groups (e.g., Rotary International) and professional organizations (e.g., NC Board of Pharmacy, NC Nurses Association).
 <p>Increasing vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build and support vaccine infrastructure and workforce able ramp up statewide vaccination capacity as supply increases.
 <p>Abundant vaccine supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue staff support and resource coordination.

ON THE HORIZON

Our approach will change over time based on vaccine supply, lessons learned, and new data, research, and opportunities. Some key areas that we are watching:

- Additional vaccine authorizations, including single dose vaccines or vaccines that are recommended for specific populations
- COVID-19 virus variants that impact vaccine recommendations.
- Recommendations for booster vaccine doses.
- Progress and outcomes of vaccine clinical trials that include children.
- Potential shifts in public health guidance on COVID-19 prevention, testing, contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine as vaccination coverage increases.