**Overview**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), in coordination with the COVID-19 Command Center and in collaboration with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and MassHousing, will be deploying COVID-19 vaccines for residents living in and staff working in public and private low income and affordable housing for older people. This document, *COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Guidance for public and private low income and affordable senior housing,* provides key planning and operational considerations, as well as vaccine deployment options for housing organizations that meet this definition. All planning is in alignment with the Massachusetts [Vaccination Advisory Group](https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-vaccine-presentation-1292020/download) principles for COVID-19 vaccine administration. General information on the vaccine rollout in Massachusetts can be found [here](https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts).

**Both residents and staff of public and private low income and affordable senior housing** are included in the first tier of [Phase Two of vaccine deployment](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/when-can-i-get-the-covid-19-vaccine) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which we anticipate to begin later in February.

**This guidance document is applicable to** **public and private low income and affordable senior housing** defined as any residential premises available for lease by older or disabled individuals which is financed or subsidized in whole or in part by state or federal housing programs established primarily to furnish housing rather than housing and personal services. Specifically, this includes the following types of housing properties:

* Public housing properties designated primarily for older adults that are owned/operated by Local Housing Authorities. This includes those public housing properties owned by a Local Housing Authority but managed by a private company.
* Privately owned properties designated for older adults that are financed in whole or part through resources made available from DHCD, MassHousing, or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and in which the majority of units are restricted to residents earning less than 80% of Area Median Income.

For the purpose of this guidance, “residents” include those household members currently on the lease for a rental unit in **public and private independent affordable senior housing.**

For the purposes of this guidance, “staff” includes all persons, paid or unpaid, working or volunteering at each of the qualified housing locations, who have the potential for exposure to residents or to infectious materials, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air.

There are three vaccination options for staff and residents who were not included in the [Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships.html)with CVS and Walgreens.

**Vaccination Options:**

1. Organizations may leverage existing pharmacy partnerships or an existing relationship with a medical or community health provider to offer an on-site clinic; or
2. Organizations may contact their Local Board of Health (LBOH), if the Board is running clinics, to discuss capacity to provide an on-site clinic; or
3. Residents and staff may schedule an appointment at a provider location, pharmacy, or a Mass Vaccination Site. Vaccination sites can be found [here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-locations-for-individuals-currently-eligible-to-be-vaccinated). Additional pharmacy, provider and mass vaccination sites will come on line in the coming weeks.

To learn more about the currently available COVID-19 vaccines, please visit the CDC websites on the [Moderna](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Moderna.html) and [Pfizer](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Pfizer-BioNTech.html) vaccines. Both vaccines require two doses for an individual to be fully vaccinated. It is critical that the second dose be the same as the first dose. Individuals must receive their second dose within a specified time frame and from the same location that they received their first dose.

**Vaccine Deployment Options**

To facilitate deployment of multi-dose vaccines to residents and staff in affordable senior housing several options are available. Some combination of the options below may be necessary for a property to assist in the vaccination of residents and staff.

**Option #1: Leverage Existing Pharmacy Partnerships or other Medical Provider Relationships**

Owners or property managers may have existing partnerships with local pharmacies through regular flu vaccine clinics, and/or with local hospitals, health care practices, community health centers, university health centers, ambulance providers or visiting nurse agencies; these partnerships may be leveraged to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Owners/managers are encouraged to contact existing health care partners to determine if these partners have the capacity to operate a vaccination clinic on-site at the housing property or the ability to arrange for a special vaccine clinic for your residents at a mutually agreeable location. If you identify a clinical partner, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) will work with you to ensure your clinical partner is allocated vaccines.

**Option #2: Partnership with Local Board of Health**

Some local boards of health will be organizing clinics to immunize people in Phases 1, 2, and 3. Information on locations and hours for these clinics, once available, will be posted. If your local board of health has a clinic posted on this map, it is important to understand how the local board of health operates the clinic and if there is capacity to come on site to administer vaccines or for the local board of health to dedicate part of a scheduled clinic for your residents.

**Option #3: Mass Vaccination, Provider and Pharmacy Sites**

Residents and staff may schedule an appointment at a provider location, pharmacy or a mass vaccination site. Vaccination sites can be found [here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-locations-for-individuals-currently-eligible-to-be-vaccinated). Additional pharmacy, provider, and mass vaccination sites will come online in the coming weeks.

These sites will require appropriate identification to establish that residents and staff meet the senior housing prioritization criteria. For residents, documentation includes a letter from the housing owner/manager verifying that the resident lives in public or private affordable or subsidized senior housing as described above. For staff, appropriate identification may include a letter from the employer organization and an employee identification card or state/federal issued identification.

Additional avenues for local vaccine clinics and/or mobile vaccine distribution are actively being explored. Information will be shared as it is available. Vaccination locations will be posted on the [mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cecooper%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5Cmass.gov%5Ccovid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts) website, which is updated regularly.

**General Operational Considerations**

As housing owners/managers consider plans for vaccine deployment in affordable senior housing, it may be useful to discuss the following operational considerations.

**On-site vs Off-site**

As illustrated in the options above, owners/managers have the option of hosting a clinic on-site or directing residents and staff to Mass Vaccination sites or other vaccination sites as they open. Hosting a clinic on-site may carry the following responsibilities:

1. The housing owner/manager will have to identify a clinical partner, such as a local board of health, community health center, pharmacy, ambulance provider or other health care provider to partner with who is available to come on site to offer the clinic for both doses, with three weeks between each clinic date.
2. The housing owner/manager will have to work with residents and staff to share information about the timing of clinics and to distribute available materials about the vaccine and what to expect at the clinic. It is recommended that the owner/manager works with housing service coordinators, local [Councils on Aging](https://mcoaonline.com/what-is-a-coa/coa-directory/), the [Aging Services Access Points (ASAP)](https://www.mass.gov/location-details/aging-services-access-points-asaps-in-massachusetts) or other community partners who may be able to help educate residents regarding the vaccine well in advance of scheduled clinic and who may be able to support the collection of documentation and logistics for the day of the clinic.
3. Depending on how the clinic is structured, it is possible that the housing owner/manager may have to assist with gathering required paperwork from residents, these may include consent forms, insurance information, and other documentation required for the clinic.
4. The housing owner/manager will be responsible for providing adequate space for immunizations and post-immunization observation.
5. The housing owner/manager will also be responsible for logistics, scheduling, and resident flow on the day of clinics, including ensuring appropriate social distancing while people are waiting. This may include planning for how to accommodate those residents that may be frail or unable to leave their apartment for medical reasons.
6. If a housing owner/manager needs assistance with any aspects of these responsibilities, they may work with a [local Council on Aging](https://mcoaonline.com/what-is-a-coa/coa-directory/), [Aging Services Access Point (ASAP)](https://www.mass.gov/location-details/aging-services-access-points-asaps-in-massachusetts), or other community-based organization.

**Communication**

Owners/Managers should communicate in advance to residents, guardians (where applicable), and staff about the vaccine and vaccine administration process. Resources to share include the [COVID-19 vaccine FAQ](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html) and the COVID-19 vaccine distribution timeline.

**Point of Contact**

For questions regarding this guidance document or the implementation of the vaccine deployment options, please contact: SeniorHousingVaccine@mass.gov