

Massachusetts Senior Affordable Housing COVID-19 Vaccine Information

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Overview

All residents and staff of public and private low income and affordable senior housing are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. For all information about vaccine eligibility for this population visit the [Senior Affordable Housing vaccine webpage](#).

It is essential to understand that the Commonwealth continues to experience significant demand for vaccines in a supply constrained environment. **It may take several weeks for eligible individuals to secure a vaccine appointment or for housing agencies to schedule a clinic. Please do not publicize dates of vaccine clinics until the vaccine provider is able to confirm allocation of doses.**

There currently are two options for residents and staff of senior affordable housing (as defined below) to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

- 1) Residents and staff of senior affordable housing may schedule individual appointments at public vaccination locations, including mass vaccination sites, pharmacies, community health centers and health care systems. To schedule an appointment visit [mass.gov/covidvaccine](https://www.mass.gov/covidvaccine) and select "[Find your appointment](#)". Please note, due to limited supply and high demand it may take several weeks to schedule an appointment.
- 2) Housing owners and operators may plan onsite or offsite vaccination clinics in partnership with a vaccination provider, such as the local Board of Health, an independent or retail pharmacy, a community health center, or a healthcare system. Please note, due to limited supply, clinics should not be publicized until the vaccine provider confirms allocation of doses. Additional information on planning for a vaccination clinic can be found below on pages 2 through 6.

Senior Affordable Housing Eligibility Definition

Public and private low income and affordable senior housing is 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 age-restricted housing properties:

- Public housing properties designated primarily for older adults that are owned or operated by Local Housing Authorities. This includes those public housing properties owned by a Housing Authority but managed by a private company.
- Privately owned rental properties designated for older adults that are financed in whole or part through resources made available from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), MassHousing, USDA, 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.



“**Residents**” include those household members currently on the lease for a rental unit in public and private low income and affordable senior housing.

“**Staff**” includes all persons, paid or unpaid, working or volunteering at each of the qualified housing locations, who have the potential for exposure to COVID-19 via residents or infectious materials, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air.

For more information about the options available to senior affordable housing owners and property managers, as well as eligibility requirements, visit [Vaccine Distribution in Public and Private Low Income and Affordable Senior Housing: Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Plan and Schedule a Vaccination Clinic for Senior Affordable Housing

Step 1: Find a Partner and Complete the Planning Survey

Senior affordable housing, [as defined by the guidance](#), can form partnerships with vaccine providers to arrange an onsite or offsite clinic for residents and staff. Any providers enrolled in the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP) with a PIN and able to report information in the MA Immunization Information System (MIIS) may partner with senior affordable housing. Providers may include local Boards of Health, independent or retail pharmacies, community health centers, and healthcare systems. Please note, vaccine providers that partner with senior affordable housing agencies to organize clinics will be able to request vaccine allocation for this population.

Once a vaccinating partner has been identified, the [housing agency must complete the required online planning survey](#). One survey must be completed for each planned clinic and will include contact information for both the senior affordable housing agency and the vaccine provider, as well as:

- Vaccine provider PIN
- Estimated number of doses (first and second) that will be needed
- Estimated date of first clinic
- Name/address of building clinic is being arranged for

The [planning survey](#) only needs to be completed once for each first clinic and will not need to be completed again to receive second doses.

The planning survey completed by the housing agency must be fully accurate and reflect only confirmed partnerships with the vaccine provider. Data from the survey directly informs the state’s process for allocating vaccine for clinics in senior affordable housing. All contact information submitted in the planning survey for both the housing agency and vaccine provider must be accurate and current. Submitting incorrect or out of date contact information may lead to a delay in vaccine allocation. In addition, each vaccine provider has a unique PIN number and the correct PIN must be submitted to ensure that the vaccine is shipped to the correct location.

Completing the planning survey is a critical first step; no vaccine will be distributed to support clinics in housing without a completed planning survey.





Step 2: Plan and Prepare for the Clinic

When planning and preparing for the vaccine clinic, the housing agency and vaccine provider should educate residents, review space needs, complete required paperwork, identify staffing needs, and develop a system for appointment scheduling.

Housing agencies and vaccine providers may only plan and schedule two clinics (one for first doses and one for second doses) at each property. For larger sites, a clinic may span multiple consecutive days to accommodate all residents. For smaller sites (less than 100 residents and staff), housing agencies should consider holding one clinic for multiple buildings or collaborating with other housing agencies in the same or adjacent communities to hold one clinic for multiple properties.

Housing agencies may also assist in the transportation of residents to [public vaccination sites](#) if they are unable to host their own clinic.

Educate Residents:

Housing agencies should communicate often with residents about the upcoming clinic and address any vaccine hesitancy. This should include the distribution and posting of vaccine related materials. For additional information on materials visit [Trust the Facts, Get the Vax Campaign Materials](#) or [Stop COVID-19 – Vaccine Education and Outreach Materials](#) for toolkits of materials in multiple languages that community-based organizations may use to conduct outreach. The vaccine provider and housing agency should develop protocols for reassuring residents and staff who may be hesitant about getting the vaccine.

Review Space and Logistical Needs:

The housing agency and vaccine provider should discuss the available space in the building and identify a layout that will work for the vaccine clinic. The following considerations should be used when planning:

- Space is available for (1) pre-vaccine registration and check in, (2) vaccination administration, and (3) post-vaccine observation
- There is a separate entrance and exit
- Space allows for social distancing
- If adequate space is not available within the building, the housing agency may contact municipal agencies, such as the Council on Aging, Town Manager, or Public Library to inquire if there may be community space available. For an offsite clinic, the housing agency may also contact the local Council on Aging and other aging service agencies for assistance in arranging for transportation of residents and staff to the clinic.

Complete Required Paperwork:

The vaccine provider should identify any paperwork, such as consent forms or copies of insurance cards that will be required for the vaccination. The housing agency should work with residents to complete this paperwork in advance of the clinic date.

Develop System for Scheduling Appointments:

The housing agency and vaccine provider should develop a schedule for the clinic based on how many vaccines will be administered at a given time, as well as taking into account the observation



period capacity based on the layout and estimated number of people to vaccinate. Please note, the housing provider will need to provide a count of residents and staff scheduled to be vaccinated in advance of the clinic to the vaccine provider.

Once the vaccine request is approved (see step 3 for additional information), the housing agency and vaccine provider will schedule the clinic. Prior to the announcement of the clinic date(s), the housing agency should develop a system to schedule appointments, which may include:

- Paper sign up-board in a common area
- Online scheduling system, such as Sign-Up Genius
- Proactively assigning each resident a scheduled time

The vaccine provider and housing agency should discuss and develop plans for accommodating residents who may be unable to leave their apartment for the clinic, which should include scheduling time to visit individual apartments for vaccination, as well as allow for the fifteen-minute observation period.

In addition, the housing agency should create and maintain wait lists of eligible individuals they can quickly call if they have extra vaccine that needs to be administered the same day to prevent wastage.

Identify Staffing Needs for the Clinic:

The vaccine provider will be responsible for vaccinating individuals and observing them for fifteen to thirty minutes after the vaccination.

The housing agency will be responsible for checking people in, assisting with flow of individuals, helping residents get from their apartment to the clinic and other logistical and operational tasks. The housing agency should identify if additional staff or volunteers are needed for the clinic.

If additional assistance is needed, the housing agency may contact the local Aging Service Access Point Agency (ASAP) or Council on Aging to recruit volunteers. Additionally, the housing agency should consider if translators may be needed. Please note, volunteers at the clinic are considered "staff" and are eligible to be vaccinated and should be included in the count of doses needed.

Step 3: Confirm and Receive Vaccine Allocation for the Clinic

Vaccine providers who partner with eligible senior affordable housing to hold onsite or offsite clinics are able to obtain vaccine above any regular allocation. However, the process for receiving and requesting the vaccine differs from usual processes.

As stated above, the housing agency is required to complete the online planning survey. The state reviews these surveys in the order in which they submitted and allocates doses each week to the vaccine providers that have agreed to partner with housing agencies. Unlike other initiatives, vaccine providers do not need to make a request to DPH through the weekly MCVP survey to obtain vaccine for clinics in partnership with eligible senior affordable housing. The state will make the vaccine order request on behalf of the vaccine provider.

Each Monday vaccine providers will receive an email from the state notifying them of the proposed vaccine allocation that they may be receiving in the following week for senior affordable housing clinics. The proposed vaccine allocation will be for a specific housing property based on the



information submitted by the housing agency in the [online planning survey](#). **No vaccine will be allocated to support clinics in senior affordable housing without a completed planning survey.**

The email that vaccine providers receive on a Monday will instruct the providers to take the following steps:

- **Confirm time and date of clinic with housing agency**
- Confirm with the housing agency the number of residents and staff that are anticipated to be vaccinated at the clinic. Please note, some residents and staff may have already scheduled appointments at vaccination locations and should not be included in the request. At this time, the Moderna vaccine will be allocated for senior affordable housing and will be in increments of 100, which have been rounded to minimize waste. **The vaccine allocation must be fully administered within ten days of receipt.**
- After conferring with the housing agency, the vaccine provider is required to confirm with the state of the amount of vaccine needed **by Tuesday at 5PM**. Vaccine providers who do not meet this deadline may not receive vaccine allocation for that week.

The vaccine provider will receive a confirmation email on Friday that the vaccine allotment will be shipped to arrive Monday through Wednesday of the following week. Clinics **must** occur within ten days after receipt of the vaccine.

Due to limited supply there may not be sufficient vaccine to meet the demand immediately. Therefore, not every housing property will be able to receive vaccine allocation each week.

Housing agencies and vaccine providers should not finalize and publicize clinic date(s) until the vaccine providers receive confirmation that they will be receiving doses.

The vaccine provider should work closely with the housing agency to plan for how to use any extra allocation that may be received beyond what is needed due to the required increment sizes. This should include:

- Invite to the clinic residents from other buildings operated by the partner housing agency who are ages 65 or older or have two or more certain medical conditions that puts them at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Consult with the local Council on Aging or the regional Aging Services Access Point agency to develop a list of older adults in the community who need to be vaccinated and are able to attend the housing clinic.
- Use the extra doses in a clinic in another senior affordable housing property, if an approved clinic is scheduled within 10 days of receipt of the vaccine.

In no circumstances, should a public clinic be held with the remaining doses. In cases where the vaccine provider and housing agency are unable to utilize the extra doses at the onsite clinic, they must notify the state immediately seniorhousingvaccine@mass.gov to have the doses relocated.

Please note, the vaccine provider will be responsible to providing second doses to any individuals who receive their first dose from the vaccine provider.



Step 4: Organize and Hold the Clinic

Once the vaccine provider receives confirmation from DPH of the vaccine request, the housing agency and vaccine provider should finalize date(s) and time of the clinic.

In advance of the clinic, the housing agency and vaccine provider should:

- Confirm staff and volunteers
- Review and finalize logistics, including supplies that the vaccine provider will bring to the clinic, such as PPE, thermometers, and other medical equipment
- Notify residents of scheduled appointments and remind residents to bring identification and insurance cards (if available) and to wear loose clothing/short sleeves; confirm that residents will keep appointments and offer to remind them of appointment times, as needed
- Organize and obtain materials needed for clinic, these may include: name tags, pens and clipboards, hand sanitizer, spray, wipes, timers or sticky notes for observation period, signs on floors and walls to manage flow and to ensure social distancing, extra thermometers and batteries, stapler, paperclips, tape, trash containers and trash bags, and masks
- To encourage participation, consider making the clinic “an event” with stickers, photos, social media, or food

The vaccine provider must still input all information from the clinic to the MIIS.

Step 5: Confirm and Receive Second Doses, Plan and Organize the Second Clinic

At the first clinic, each person vaccinated should receive an appointment for a second dose (either 21 or 28 days later depending on the vaccine brand). Please note, appointments can be made for second doses even if the vaccine provider does not have those doses available at the time.

Requests for second doses will be sent automatically using the same process as described under Step 3 above. Vaccine providers do not need to and should not save first doses in “reserve” to use for second doses.

Housing agencies that need assistance, may contact seniorhousingvaccine@mass.gov with questions.