

City of Chicago COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

When will vaccination phase 1b begin?

Beginning Monday, January 25th, Chicago will formally move into Vaccination Phase 1b—meaning we will *start* to ramp up vaccination for Chicago residents >65 and specific groups of highest-risk or front-line essential workers. Please note that vaccine supply remains limited and we anticipate that most people in group 1b will have vaccination opportunities in February or March, and they will remain eligible for vaccine indefinitely. At the rate we are receiving vaccine right now—just 34,000 first doses this week to Chicago—each week we can only vaccinate about 5% (1 in 20) of the Chicago residents who are eligible for vaccine in 1b.

When will vaccination phase 1c begin?

While timing is highly dependent on vaccine availability, right now we predict that Chicago will tentatively begin Vaccination Phase 1c on Monday, March 29. Phase 1c includes Chicagoans age 16-64 with underlying medical conditions and all essential workers not included in phase 1b. Most people in phase 1c will be vaccinated in April or May, and they will remain eligible indefinitely.

When will vaccine be available for all Chicago residents?

With timing highly dependent on vaccine availability, right now we predict that Chicago will tentatively begin Vaccination Phase 2 on Monday, May 31. Phase 2 includes all Chicagoans age 16 and over. Children will be added as trials are completed and vaccine is authorized for use in individuals under age 16.

Who is included in vaccination phase 1b?

There are two main categories in Phase 1b: Chicagoans who are 65+ and a specific list of front-line essential workers. Health care workers and long-term care facility residents who were prioritized in group 1a remain eligible for vaccine in phase 1b and beyond.

Chicagoans age 65 and older. Anyone 65 and older is eligible to receive vaccine in phase 1b, though the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has asked health care providers, where

possible, to first prioritize their patients who are over age 75 or who are 65-74 with significant underlying conditions. There are approximately 360,000 Chicago residents in this group. Obviously, older Chicagoans have been at much higher risk for hospitalization and death—with our very oldest residents at highest risk.

Front-line essential workers. The CDC used national data to prioritize a subset of front-line essential workers for 1b and both Illinois and Chicago are broadly following this prioritization, with minor local adjustments. These groups include correctional officers and first responders; grocery store workers and day care workers; early education and K-12 educators; workers in public transit, manufacturing, and agriculture; and a limited number of government workers, including legislators and postal service workers. We also will continue to vaccinate workers and residents in non-healthcare congregate settings, like homeless shelters, correctional settings, and group residential settings like convents, where we have seen local outbreaks.

How will group 1b be vaccinated?

Think about how you get flu shots, because we're using the same 4 channels here: Health care providers, pharmacies, dedicated vaccination sites, and employers. We are hopeful that under the new federal administration more resources and support will be available and even more options will be available even more quickly.

1. Medical Clinics

First, most people in Chicago get their flu shot from a **medical clinic**—whether that is your regular doctor's office or health center, or through a hospital or urgent care center. That will be the case for COVID-19 vaccine as well—the great majority of people in 1b, especially those in the 65+ group, will get the vaccine, by appointment, from a medical clinic over February and March. Most ideally you will be vaccinated at your own doctor's office, community clinic, or affiliated hospital. As of January 20, we have nearly 400 health care providers all over the City already enrolled to be able to vaccinate their patients, with dozens more coming online every week. These settings will not have enough vaccine for everyone in 1b right away, and we've asked them to prioritize their older and more medically vulnerable patients—but over February and March, each week additional appointments will become available as Chicago receives more vaccine.

2. Pharmacies

Second, some people in Chicago get the flu shot from a **pharmacy**, and pharmacies are especially important for people who may not access medical care as regularly. We have more than 70 pharmacies all over the City enrolled to be able to vaccinate residents, with more coming online every week. Again, COVID-19 vaccine will be by appointment.

3. Vaccination Sites

Third, some people in Chicago get the flu shot through a **vaccination site, a site set up specifically for the purpose of giving vaccine**. These are sometimes called PODs (Points of

Dispensing). We have those, too; by January 23, we will have 6 larger City-operated PODs operating, as well as ongoing mobile PODs and strike teams, where CDPH and our pharmacy and medical partners bring vaccine directly to settings with many vulnerable people, like long-term care and residential behavioral health facilities, and in 1b adding in homeless shelters and other congregate settings.

4. Employers

Finally, some people in Chicago get the flu shot through their **employer**. Many of our health care workers in 1a got vaccine through their employer, and we will be following that same model in 1b for front-line essential workers, pairing employers with vaccinating partners. We will be bringing vaccine into larger workplaces and connecting workers in smaller workplaces with offsite vaccine appointments.

Will all of the front-line essential workers start at the same time? What's that timeline?

All front-line essential workers are *eligible* for vaccine as phase 1b begins, just as all Chicagoans 65+ are *eligible* for vaccine as phase 1b begins. This means that individual day care workers, teachers, factory workers, grocery store workers, etc. who live in Chicago can get vaccine at any point after January 25, if their doctor's office has available doses and appointments. However, operationally, just as we did in 1a, we will also work to bring vaccine to employer-based settings, based primarily on COVID-19 risk.

As we move into 1b--**in the last week of January and first week of February**--we will direct vaccine *through employers* to **correctional facilities and first responders**. These are some of the settings, after health care and congregate settings, where we have seen the most COVID-19 cases and outbreaks; every case we prevent in these settings indirectly prevents many other cases.

Over the month of February, depending on vaccine availability, we will begin making vaccine available *through employers* to **grocery store workers, day care workers, and workers in the manufacturing settings** where we've seen our biggest outbreaks. These workers are more likely to live in Chicago's hardest-hit communities, and pushing vaccine here has a multiplier effect in preventing additional cases and driving down COVID-19 case rates in Chicago, allowing us to more quickly bring COVID-19 under control as a City and reopen society.

Also, **later in February** we will begin directing vaccine *through employers* to **K-12 and early childhood educators**--private, parochial, and public--recognizing the critical role that educators play in our society.

Then **over the month of March**, again depending on vaccine availability, we will begin directing vaccine *through employers* to **public transit, other manufacturing, agriculture, and postal service** settings.

Do you have walk-in vaccine clinics?

Not at this time. In Vaccination Phase 1b, all vaccine will be given **via appointment**. We do not want our older and most vulnerable residents waiting in hours-long lines in January and February. Expect to need to make an appointment, either through your own health care provider/system, through a pharmacy, through a dedicated vaccination site, or through your employer when vaccine is available.

Can I register to get the vaccine?

The majority of Chicago residents will get vaccinated through their own medical providers or through a vaccinating partner in their neighborhood. CDPH recommends that individuals reach out to their healthcare providers to learn more about their plans for patient vaccination. People who are interested in getting updates on vaccine rollout or about when it may be their turn to get vaccinated should sign up for CHI COVID Coach at chi.gov/covidcoach. Residents can also stay informed on Chicago's vaccination progress and announcements by signing up for the [COVID-19 newsletter](#) or following us on social media. [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://chicago.gov/COVIDvax) is updated each day with the most up-to-date information.