

Massachusetts Senior Affordable Housing COVID-19 Vaccine Information

17 February 2021



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Overview

Effective February 18, 2021, 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 and housing agencies should not publicize 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 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 5.

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, 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

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

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.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccinations-for-senior-housing-settings>

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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: Request Vaccine Allocation for the Clinic

The vaccine provider is responsible for requesting vaccine doses from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The vaccine provider must submit request for vaccine through DPH’s weekly MCVP survey due each Tuesday by 5 PM. The vaccine providers should follow the [DPH instructions when requesting allocation](#). In the notes field please include: ‘senior affordable housing’ followed by specific information about the planned clinic, including the name and address of property(s) and the number of first and second doses requested. Additionally, when completing the request, the following information should be considered:

- Confirm with the housing agency the number of residents and staff that will be attending the clinic. Please note, some residents and staff may have already scheduled appointments at vaccination locations and should not be included in the request. The housing agency may consider surveying residents and staff prior to submitting the allocation request to understand the current demand for onsite appointments.
- Only request a quantity that can be fully administered within ten days of receipt.
- Requests must be submitted in increments of 100 for Moderna and 1,170 for Pfizer. Please note, DPH will round requests in different increments to minimize waste (e.g., a request for 115 doses will be rounded down to 100). A provider may schedule multiple clinics for the same week to use the full allocated amount of vaccine.
- The provider must have a plan for using any extra allocation that may be received beyond what is needed due to the required increment sizes.

DPH will request the following information from the provider in the survey: (1) the number of doses the provider has on hand, not including any doses received Monday or Tuesday of that week, (2) the weekly capacity, including the number of vaccines that the provider can administer Monday through Sunday of the next week, and (3) the number of first and second doses the provider plans to administer Monday through Sunday of this week and the following week.

Please note, requests may be approved, modified, delayed, or denied by DPH depending on multiple factors including, but not limited to:

- A housing planning survey was not submitted or does not match the allocation request
- The provider has not met the 65%/85% threshold for distribution of previously allocated vaccines
- Insufficient vaccine available for the week



If DPH is unable to fulfill the request, the provider will be contacted with the reason. **Please note, completing the survey does not guarantee vaccine allocation and no clinics or appointments should be confirmed until the provider receives the order confirmation.** If the request is approved, vaccine will be shipped to arrive Monday through Wednesday of the following week and clinics must occur within ten days upon receipt of the vaccine.

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

Step 5: Request 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 are not sent automatically, **vaccine providers are required to complete the weekly MCVP Survey to request and confirm their anticipated second dose needs.** The vaccine requests for second doses are prioritized each week as long as providers are meeting the 65%/85% threshold. 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.