

# FEMA Supports Vaccine Distribution Amid Winter Weather Response

---

Release Date: February 17, 2021

WASHINGTON – Even as FEMA continues supporting vaccination distribution efforts, the agency maintains its mission readiness in supporting a variety of disasters, including recent snowstorms. A major winter storm continues spreading from the Southern Plains into the Northeast, covering large areas with snow, sleet and freezing rain. Significant travel disruptions and power outages are occurring as winter weather extends from south Texas into Maine.

An [Emergency Declaration](#) was approved for Texas on Feb. 14, providing emergency protective measures for mass care and sheltering and direct federal assistance under the Public Assistance program. This assistance is for all 254 counties in Texas. FEMA continues to coordinate with impacted states to facilitate any requests for federal assistance.

Families and individuals should take disaster and emergency preparedness seriously.

- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms. Stay off the road during and after a winter storm.
- Be prepared for winter weather at home, at work and in your car. Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, have a carbon monoxide alarm in place and only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows.
- Be prepared for a [power outage](#). Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, have a carbon monoxide alarm in place and only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows.
- Visit [Ready.gov](#) today and [make a plan](#) for what you and your family can do to stay safe during a disaster.

FEMA has provided more than **\$3.39 billion** for expenses related to COVID-19 vaccination at 100% federal cost share. These [funds cover critical supplies, staffing, training and transportation needs](#) that support increased vaccination efforts.



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

FEMA has deployed 1,344 staff across the nation to support vaccination centers with federal personnel and technical assistance. A National Incident Management Assistance Team has deployed to Albany, New York, to support the state's vaccination program. DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas activated the [DHS Surge Capacity Force](#) (SCF) on Feb. 5 for vaccination support operations. The SCF is composed of federal employees from other DHS components and augments FEMA's incident management workforce.

## Ensuring Equitable Vaccine Access

FEMA is committed to ensuring every person who wants a vaccine can get one.

FEMA and the CDC are working with state, local, tribal and territorial governments to identify vaccine center locations that ensure vulnerable and under-served populations have access to vaccines. FEMA civil rights advisors and disability integration specialists in each of FEMA's regions to advise state, local, tribal and territorial governments and other partners. Additional disability integration advisors and civil rights advisors are deploying to support these efforts.

FEMA established a Civil Rights Advisory Group to proactively consider and promptly resolve civil rights concerns and help ensure equity in the allocation of scarce resources including future vaccine allocation. This group evaluates policies, practices, strategies and plans to ensure equity is at the forefront of all FEMA vaccination efforts across the country.

A [Civil Rights Checklist](#) was developed by FEMA to assist state, tribal and territorial partners in understanding and fulfilling their obligations to provide access to vaccine-related programs, activities and services in a nondiscriminatory manner. Additionally, FEMA updated its website with a section titled "[Ensuring Equitable Vaccine Access](#)" to define FEMA's commitment to equity and describe the Civil Rights Advisory Group.

## Community Vaccination Center Pilot Partnerships

The centers FEMA is piloting in locations such as California, New York and Texas are selected based on data analysis, including the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index and other Census data as well as input from our state and local partners. Analyzing data allows us to pinpoint specific communities that need additional



support to ensure equitable access to vaccines.

Vaccines for these centers are provided to the states above and beyond the regular allocations. The additional vaccines are made possible through increases in production and availability. We are working to do the most good, for the most vulnerable populations, with no impact to the current allocations of vaccines to the states.

These pilots will establish a model for FEMA and its federal partners to scale up as vaccine supplies increase in the months ahead.

## **FEMA and Other Federal Agencies Are Supporting Vaccination Centers**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is supporting future planning for community vaccination centers using their subject matter experts, alongside FEMA and state assessments teams, to assess potential new site locations and provide contracting capability to establish new sites.

USACE is also coordinating with FEMA and the CDC to design walk-up, drive-through, and mobile vaccination centers. Vaccination center size and location are decided by state, local, tribal and territorial governments. The intent of these designs is the use of existing infrastructure when available.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III approved 1,110 active duty troops to support five vaccination centers. FEMA will be partnering with the Department of Defense for additional resources at vaccination centers throughout the country. The U.S. National Guard Bureau is providing 1,198 vaccinators to vaccination centers.

