

FEMA Ensures Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccines

Release Date: Mas 9, 2021

WASHINGTON -- FEMA has established the Civil Rights Advisory Group as part of the agency's commitment to the COVID-19 vaccination mission amid the ongoing battle against the pandemic.

The advisory group's mission is to evaluate the policies, practices, strategies and plans in place to ensure equity in vaccine access and administration.

The advisory group, is led by FEMA's Office of Equal Rights, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response and Administration for Community Living, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

"Statistics from the CDC bear out the need to bring vaccines to underserved areas," said Acting FEMA Administrator Bob Fenton. "African Americans are twice as likely than Caucasians to die of COVID-19, and Hispanics are 2.3 times more likely to die of the virus."

These statistics highlight the importance of placing community vaccination centers in areas that are accessible to and prioritize underrepresented communities.

FEMA continues analyzing data and collaborating with states, territories, tribes and local public health officials to determine the best locations for FEMA pilot community vaccination centers, ensuring that underserved and historically marginalized communities have access to vaccines and are not left behind.

"States are in the best position to understand their resources – both health care providers and community resources," said Fenton. "We rely on this understanding and perspective to validate and determine the appropriate location for FEMA-supported vaccination centers."



Equitable Distribution and Access to Vaccines is a FEMA Priority

Equity is at the core of the FEMA mission, as the agency strives with partners to ensure everyone who wants a vaccine can get one.

States, territories and tribal nations are required to collect demographic data and make data-driven decisions to ensure an equitable pandemic response.

FEMA has civil rights advisors and disability integration specialists in each of its 10 regions to advise state, local, tribal and territorial governments and other partners, ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are integrated in all facets of vaccine center operations. Additional Disability Integration Advisors and Civil Rights Advisors are deploying to vaccination sites to support these efforts.

To support the deaf and hard of hearing community, FEMA continues providing live on-demand American Sign Language interpreters at all federally supported community vaccination centers during each center's hours of operation.

FEMA continues using population data and CDC's Social Vulnerability Index to identify communities for pilot community vaccination centers. The agency is also working with CDC staff and public health officials to engage community and faith-based organizations to help reach underserved, hesitant and historically marginalized groups.

"FEMA is also aware that there are certain categories of communities – for example, individuals experiencing homelessness or migratory workers – where it may be more difficult to accurately collect data," said Fenton. "FEMA is working with states to target vaccination efforts to these communities, despite any potential data gaps."

Vaccine Guidance

Find vaccine updates in your community and more information from your local health department to confirm if you can get a vaccine. You can also find a [list of places where adults can get a vaccine](#).

Visit FEMA.Gov for information on [FEMA's vaccination support efforts](#).

To learn more about FEMA's commitment to equity visit [Ensuring Equitable Vaccine Access](#).



FEMA