



# VDH COVID-19 Vaccine Phase 1b In Depth

While the supply is limited, COVID-19 vaccine will be provided to specific groups of people over a number of phases. Virginia guidance was adapted from [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommendations](#) that aim to (1) decrease COVID-19 deaths and serious disease, (2) preserve functioning of society, and (3) reduce the extra burden COVID-19 is having on people already facing disparities.

## **Virginia's Phase 1b: Vaccinate Frontline Essential Workers, People Aged 65 years and Older, People Living in Correctional Facilities, Homeless Shelters and Migrant Labor Camps, and People aged 16 through 64 years with a High Risk Medical Condition or Disability that Increases Their Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19**

### **Frontline Essential Workers**

#### **Definition of Frontline Essential Workers**

Workers who are in sectors essential to the functioning of society, are at substantially higher risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2, and cannot work remotely. Frontline Essential Workers include:

- Police, Fire, and Hazmat
- Corrections and homeless shelter workers
- Childcare/PreK-12 Teachers/Staff (public and private)
- Food and Agriculture (including veterinarians)
- Manufacturing
- Grocery store workers
- Public transit workers
- Mail carriers (USPS and private)
- Officials needed to maintain continuity of government (including judges and public-facing judicial workers)

The [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response](#) is a framework that can be used to evaluate certain occupational groups to support prioritization decisions when the vaccine is in short supply. It is intended to be used together with CDC-ACIP and VDH recommendations. The definitions provided in the guidance document can be used to better understand certain types of workers.

#### **Frontline Essential Workers by Order of Vaccination Planning**

Because there is not sufficient supply at this time to vaccinate everyone in Phase 1b at the same time, local health districts will reach out to engage the Frontline Essential Worker groups in vaccination planning in the following order:

1. Police, Fire, and Hazmat
2. Corrections and homeless shelter workers
3. Childcare/PreK-12 Teachers/Staff (public and private)
4. Food and Agriculture (including veterinarians)
5. Manufacturing
6. Grocery store workers
7. Public transit workers
8. Mail carriers (USPS and private)
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Overlap of vaccination of groups is expected to ensure people in Phase 1b are vaccinated as quickly and efficiently as possible. Opportunities to vaccinate Frontline Essential Workers should not be missed.

## **How Frontline Essential Workers Can Access Vaccination**

Local health departments, pharmacies, healthcare systems, and employer-based occupational health units are working collaboratively to vaccinate frontline essential workers. Frontline essential workers may be most likely to receive the vaccine through employer-based vaccination clinics. Others will get it through their local health department or through arrangements with pharmacies and healthcare providers. Information will be coming out from local health departments, employers, and healthcare providers about how and when you can receive your COVID-19 vaccine. The ability to schedule appointments will depend on the supply of vaccine available.

## **People Aged 65 years and Older**

The risk for severe illness with COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk. Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may require hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe, or they may even die. The goal of vaccinating this population is to decrease the burden of disease and death caused by COVID-19. During Phase 1b, roughly half of each local health district's allocation of doses should be used for this population.

## **How People Aged 65 years and Older Can Access Vaccination**

Many of the people who are included in Phase 1b because of their age will be offered the vaccine through their healthcare provider. Others in this category will be able to access vaccination through their local health department or through arrangements with healthcare systems and pharmacies.

## **People Aged 16 through 64 years with Certain Conditions or Disabilities that Increases Their Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19**

This group is included in Phase 1b because they are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, which can result in hospitalization and death. The goal of vaccinating this population is to decrease the burden of disease and death caused by COVID-19.

The list of medical conditions is updated routinely as new data become available at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

Healthcare providers may use clinical judgement to determine if a patient's medical condition or disability warrants prioritization for vaccination.

## **How People Aged 16 through 64 Years with a High Risk Medical Condition or Disability Can Access Vaccination**

Many of the people who are included in Phase 1b because of their age will be offered the vaccine through their healthcare provider. Others in this category will be able to access vaccination through their local health department or



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through arrangements with healthcare systems and pharmacies. Information will be coming out from local health departments and healthcare providers about how and when people in Phase 1b can receive their COVID-19 vaccine.

### **People Living in Correctional Facilities, Homeless Shelters, and Migrant Labor Camps**

People living in correctional and detention facilities are at greater risk for COVID-19 because of close living arrangements with other people. People living in homeless shelters are at increased risk because homeless services are often provided in congregate settings, which could facilitate the spread of infection. Because many people who are experiencing homelessness are older adults or have underlying medical conditions, they may also be at increased risk for severe illness. Individuals in migrant labor camps may experience living arrangements or working conditions that put them at greater risk of getting COVID-19. Some migrant workers also have limited access to health care, as well as certain underlying medical conditions that put them at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, compared to the rest of the U.S. population.

### **How Persons Living in Correctional Facilities, Homeless Shelters, and Migrant Labor Camps Can Access Vaccination**

The Department of Corrections, local and regional jails, and their occupational health programs will vaccinate staff and people living in correctional facilities, with local health department assistance as needed. Those living in homeless shelters and migrant labor camps will receive the vaccine through their local health department or through arrangements with healthcare systems and pharmacies.