

Minnesota Guidance for Allocating and Prioritizing COVID-19 Vaccine – Phases 1b, 1c, 2

3/10/2021

Introduction

On December 8, 2020, the *Minnesota Guidance for Allocating and Prioritizing COVID-19 Vaccine – Phase 1a* was released. This guidance laid out sub-priority groups under the federal guidance for phase 1a vaccine allocation. You can read the guidance and see other resources at [COVID-19 Vaccine \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).

As more people become eligible for vaccination in phase 1b and subsequently 1c, vaccinators should continue to prioritize people that were eligible for vaccination in phase 1a.

Key principles for allocation in Minnesota

The following guidance is grounded in key principles and ethical considerations outlined by ACIP¹ and adapted for Minnesota by MDH.

- **Maximize benefits and minimize harms:** Protect the population’s health by reducing mortality and serious morbidity.
- **Promote justice:** Respect people and groups and promote solidarity and mutual responsibility.
- **Mitigate health inequities:** Strive for fairness and protect against systematic unfairness and inequity.
- **Promote transparency:** Respond to needs respectfully, fairly, effectively, and efficiently in ways that are accountable, transparent, and worthy of trust.

¹ McClung N, Chamberland M, Kinlaw K, et al. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ Ethical Principles for Allocating Initial Supplies of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1782-1786. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6947e3>

Sub-prioritization of phase 1b populations

Sub-prioritization was guided by the risk criteria presented in the Framework for Ethical Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine, published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine².

- **Risk of infection:** People have higher prioritization because they work or live in settings with a higher risk of transmission occurring because SARS-CoV-2 is circulating.
- **Risk of severe morbidity and mortality:** People who are older and that have comorbid conditions are at higher risk of severe outcomes and death.
- **Risk of transmitting to others (at work and at home):** People have higher priority because they live or work in settings where transmission is more likely to occur.
- **Risk of negative societal impact:** People have higher priority due to the extent that society and other people's lives depend on them being healthy.

People included in phase 1b, 1c, and 2

The following table provides an overview of people included in phases 1b, 1c, and 2 for COVID-19 vaccination. Sub-prioritization of vaccination among people at high risk for severe disease and essential workers is outlined. Settings and roles within a priority group have equal priority. More detailed definitions for high-risk conditions and essential workers are included after the table.

² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2020. Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25917>.

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Phase 1b, phase 1c, and phase 2 COVID-19 vaccine priorities

Phase and priority group	Populations at high risk for severe disease	Essential workers
Phase 1b – tier 1	People age 65 years and older.	Child care, E-12 schools staff.
Phase 1b – tier 2	People age 16 or 18 years and older ³ with Sickle cell, Down Syndrome, active cancer treatment, immunocompromised from organ transplant, oxygen-dependent chronic lung or heart conditions. People with rare conditions or disabilities that put them at higher risk ⁴ .	Food processing facilities.
Phase 1b – tier 3	People age 45-64 years with one or more underlying medical conditions listed below. People age 16 or 18-44 years with two or more underlying medical conditions listed below. People age 50 years and older in multi-generational housing ⁵ .	Agriculture, additional school and child care workers, airport staff, correctional settings, first responders, food production, food retail (grocery), food service, judicial system workers, manufacturing, postal service workers, public transit workers, public health workers.
Phase 1b – tier 4	People age 16 or 18 years and older ³ with any underlying medical condition listed below. People age 50-64 years regardless of current health status.	
Phase 1c		Energy, finance, shelter/housing (construction), IT/communications, legal, media, public safety (engineers), transportation and logistics, water and wastewater.
Phase 2	General public	General public

³ The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for people age 16 years and older. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccines are authorized for people age 18 years and older.

⁴ Every condition or disability that might increase one’s risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19 is not listed, such as those for which evidence may be limited (e.g., rare conditions like muscular dystrophy). Providers should use their judgement for those conditions.

⁵ Multigenerational homes is defined as households where people from three or more generations reside such as an elder, parent, and grandchild. Does not include a parent or guardian caring for a child of any age.

Underlying medical conditions for phase 1b – tier 3 and tier 4

The below list of underlying medical conditions for phase 1b was adapted from conditions listed on [CDC's People with Certain Medical Conditions \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html). The list is very similar, but slightly different from CDC's list. The list is based on current information and research for conditions that are known to put people at **increased risk** for severe disease and input from the Minnesota Care Delivery System Coalition. There are other conditions that might put people at increased risk, but those are not included in phase 1b tiers.

- Active cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions (heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies)
- Immunocompromised (HIV, bone marrow, chronic steroids for more than 30 days, immunodeficiency disease, or taking immunosuppressive medications)
- Obesity - body mass index (BMI) greater than 30 kg/m²
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 1 or 2 diabetes

Phase 1b frontline essential worker definitions

Tier 1

Child care: Child care providers and staff in licensed or certified child care programs including family child care providers, child care centers and Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

E-12 school staff: All staff that work in public, non-public and tribal schools. This includes licensed staff, non-licensed staff, bus drivers, school-based child care program staff, and mental health providers including school-linked mental health providers.

Tier 2

Food processing facilities: Workers, including migrant and seasonal workers, who work in meatpacking facilities and other food-processing plants.

Tier 3

Additional child care workers (not previously eligible): License-exempt child care programs including Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA and YWCA child care programs, parks & recreation programs, and nonprofit

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and religious based programs; and legally non-licensed child care (including family, friend and neighbor and private child care). Homeless and runaway youth programs and shelters, foster care and child welfare (people receiving payment and who are actively providing care), child welfare case workers, and licensors who provide oversight and regulatory support to child care and other programs and services that provide care of children, and youth enrichment programs.

Agriculture: Agriculture comprises establishments or individuals primarily engaged in, or in support of, growing crops, raising animals, harvesting timber, and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch, or their natural habitats.

Airport staff: Airport staff that directly or indirectly support the operation of an airport including: airport employees, airline workers, airport concessionaires, airport contractors, airport vendors, and federal partners in support of airport operations.

Correctional settings: All staff that work in correctional settings including state prisons, jails, and juvenile justice facilities. Inmates in prisons, jails and juvenile justice facilities.

First responders: Firefighters, law enforcement, and victim service advocates not previously vaccinated in phase 1a.

Food production: Food production includes food distributors, food banks, migrant farm workers, and other food supply chain support.

Food retail (grocery): Food retail includes workers in grocery stores, convenience stores, food shelves, farmers markets, and other specialty food stores like bakeries, meat, seafood, and produce markets.

Food service: Workers operating in catering, restaurants, bars, breweries, wineries, distilleries, cafes, and other congregate dining settings; meal preparation and meal service workers, including meals for the purpose of charitable hunger relief.

Judicial system workers: Staff who have substantial community and public contact and who are necessary to directly support high priority judicial functions related to liberty and public safety, such as law enforcement and judicial staff as determined by the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and the Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota.

Manufacturing: Workers manufacturing food and beverages, textiles and apparel, leather products, wood and paper products, printing, petroleum products, chemicals, plastic and rubber products, metallic and nonmetallic mineral products, fabricated metals, machinery, computers, electrical equipment, transportation equipment, furniture, and other miscellaneous manufacturing.

Postal service workers: Workers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. (e.g., clerks, mail sorters, mail carriers, processors, processing machine operators).

Public transit workers: Workers delivering public transit services, workers at operating facilities, and workers supporting operational systems and infrastructure for passenger services delivered by public transportation buses, paratransit vehicles, light rail, and passenger rail (e.g., North Star line).

Public health workers: Public health/community health workers (including call center workers) who conduct community based public health functions, conducting epidemiologic surveillance and compiling, analyzing, and communicating public health information, who cannot work remotely and previously not covered in phase 1a.

Phase 1c essential worker definitions

Energy: Workers who construct, manufacture, repair, transport, permit, monitor, operate engineer, and maintain the energy sector, regardless of the energy source, including those in the electricity industry, petroleum workers, and natural propane and gas workers.

Finance: Workers in banks and credit unions, investment advisers, mortgage lenders, money transmitters, consumer lenders, motor vehicle finance, currency exchanges, and credit service and debt settlement.

Shelter/housing (construction): Workers performing housing and commercial construction related activities, including those supporting the sale, transportation, and installation of manufactured homes.

IT/communications: Technicians installing, repairing and replacing telecommunications/IT equipment that support critical infrastructure operations and cyber security; technicians required in person to support home and business communications.

Legal: Workers providing legal services or supporting the operations of the judicial system, including judges, lawyers, paralegals, legal assistants, process servers, couriers, bail bond agents, and others providing legal assistance or performing legal functions.

Media: Workers who support radio, print, internet and television news and media services, including, but not limited to front line news reporters, photojournalists, studio, and technicians for newsgathering, reporting, and publishing news.

Public safety (engineers): Workers that ensure public safety systems function properly, including building inspectors, civil engineers, chemical engineers, and aerospace engineers.

Transportation and logistics: Workers supporting or enabling transportation and logistics functions, including infrastructure maintenance, air transportation, third party logisticians, and delivery services.

Water and wastewater: Workers involved in wastewater treatment and operations; sanitary and storm maintenance crews performing emergency and essential maintenance and conveyance systems.

Sub-prioritization of high-risk people

- MDH recommends that vaccinators prioritize people 65 years of age and older who are dual eligible for Medicare/Medicaid and younger people who participate in Minnesota Health Care Programs as they become eligible in later phases.
 - If this information is unavailable to vaccinators, they may rely on self-report.

- Data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has highlighted that people who are dual eligible for Medicare and Medicaid suffer a disparate burden of severe illness due to COVID-19⁶.
- Some communities have suffered disproportionately from COVID-19, including communities of color, older adults, people with disabilities, and people with comorbidities. The presence of multiple risk-factors should be considered if sub-prioritizing within groups.
- This framework will be coupled with a vaccine distribution and engagement approach that prioritizes disproportionately impacted communities, settings, and populations to ensure those eligible for vaccines within these communities are more likely to receive it. MDH will work with local community partners and providers to strategically target underserved populations for vaccinations within the priority groups.
- People who have not tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days may be prioritized over those who have recently tested positive.

Sub-prioritization of essential workers

- NOTE: Essential workers who can telework should not be vaccinated in phase 1b and 1c. Workers that can telework should be vaccinated in phase 2 unless they qualify for earlier vaccination due to an underlying medical condition or age.
- Groups of workers with unavoidable higher risk of exposure because of:
 - Inadequate personal protection.
 - Work in close quarters to public or coworkers (e.g., correctional officers, public transit).
- Groups of workers impacted by health disparities (e.g., migrant farm workers, workers with disabilities).
- Groups of workers who are likely to transmit infection outside of work.
 - Temporary group housing.
 - Shared transportation.



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Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.

⁶ Preliminary Medicare COVID-19 Data Snapshot
(www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-covid-19-data-snapshot-fact-sheet.pdf)