Our mission is to coalesce, inspire and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit

Accessing the COVID-19 Vaccine

NHSA's COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation Working Group sourced the following list of information and ideas on how to help Head Start and Early Head Start staff access a COVID-19 vaccine. Some examples that illustrate the ideas below are available on our website at go.nhsa.org/sleeves-up.

Collect all information relevant to your state or region in one location. Whether that be an email to staff, a bulletin board, or an online forum that staff use regularly, having the information readily accessible is key.

Important links to include:
- VaccineFinder.org
- The CDC's Federal Retail Pharmacy Program
- Your state or local health department’s vaccine website

Compile a list of local vaccination spots, dates and times of appointments, registration requirements, and any tips about how to get an appointment, such as logging on at a certain time of day when new appointments are released.

If your state does not prioritize educators, outline which eligibility guidelines each site is following. Appointments through Federal Retail Pharmacy locations are available to all staff in your agency through self-attestation (staff just give their word.) Appointments through state or local health departments might be different.

For appointments that do require proof of eligibility, draft an eligibility letter that staff can use as evidence of their employment with your agency in a qualifying role.

Provide time off for staff to go to their vaccine appointment and consider changes or clarifications of your sick leave policy for staff who may experience side effects.

HELPFUL TIP:
It’s best not to have your whole staff vaccinated on the same day because of the potential for side effects to leave you short-handed the day or two after!

Make sure you have translated documents for staff (and in the future, families and community members) who don’t speak English.
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Leverage any relationships or partnerships you have with local hospitals, pharmacies, health departments, or similar organizations who are providing vaccines. They may be willing to reserve a block of appointments for your staff each week if you commit to filling them, or they might be willing to call you if they have cancellations throughout the day or extra doses at the end of the day. You can keep a waitlist of interested staff to quickly fill those last-minute spaces.

**HELPFUL TIP:**
Offer your site as a vaccination hub to these organizations. This could be helpful in the future when families and other groups in your community are eligible too!

Allow staff to use **program vehicles** or **provide transportation** for vaccine appointments if they lack their own transportation.

**Remind staff, and yourself, to be patient.**
All around the country, demand for vaccines exceeds supply. It will take time to get everyone vaccinated, but patience and persistence will get us all through.

Find the full **COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit** series at [go.nhsa.org/sleeves-up](go.nhsa.org/sleeves-up).
Questions? Ideas? E-mail us at vaccines@nhsa.org.

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