

## Covid-19 Vaccination Planning for Unsheltered Populations: Tips

In conversations with partners across the state there have been themes to the work being done to ensure vaccinations are available to unsheltered people. This document summarizes the most prominent themes and tips that have emerged and will hopefully provide a useful compilation for ongoing planning and implementation.

People who are surviving unsheltered homelessness face significant barriers to accessing medical services in traditional settings, such as a clinic or pharmacy. Vaccine distribution plans should include strategies to bring vaccines to people who are living outdoors. COVID-19 vaccination program implementation plans should also include strategies to offer vaccination in areas frequented by people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. These areas could include encampments or other known locations where people spend time such as day centers, food pantries, transit stations and others.

Resources for more information:

- <https://headinghomealliance.com/covid-19-response/>
- <https://headinghomealliance.com/covid-19-vaccine-information/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>
- Join the weekly statewide webinar to hear updates and information on COVID-19 specific to staff working with people experiencing homelessness. **The webinars take place every Wednesday from 1:00-2:00 pm** and are hosted by staff from the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Health, and Department of Human Service. [Please register for the webinars here.](#) Please reach out to [elizabeth.dressel@state.mn.us](mailto:elizabeth.dressel@state.mn.us) with any questions or challenges registering.

**Themes from around the state:**

### Locating People

- Include all the street outreach agencies in your strategizing; you will need them to find people and help build trust in the vaccine.
- Rely on outreach and shelter providers to help identify frequent locations where unsheltered people may be found- could be food banks, day centers, skyways in the metro, etc. Partner with these informants to implement mobile vaccine.
- Do you have a complete list of outreach agencies and do you need help connecting with them? The state could help: contact [Margaret.king@state.mn.us](mailto:Margaret.king@state.mn.us)
- In Minneapolis/St. Paul: loop in Involve MN as a planning partner, ([info@involvemn.org](mailto:info@involvemn.org)) since they are in encampments everyday (delivering meals) and have relationships with people sleeping outside that could help with logistics coordination and vaccine education/hesitancy.

## Vaccine Implementation

- Expect needing multi-prong strategy to reach all unsheltered people.
- Prepare mobile clinics as well as vaccine events in existing service sites or pop-up locations.
- Connect with every outreach provider to inform them of plan, enlist their ideas and support, and coordinate for vaccine events.
- Ensure vaccination providers hold multiple vaccination events to allow people time to consider receiving the vaccine.
- To improve vaccine confidence, work with staff members and community navigators who have trusted relationships with the clients you serve. Additionally,

## Communication

- Provide frequent, (even daily) clear, and transparent vaccine information to staff, community organizers, and people experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure there is a point of contact within each vaccine provider to take community questions and provide up-to-date information about the vaccine.
- Consider creating web-based information hub for your region to share up to date changes to vaccine plan. This will equip all partners with the information they need to help unsheltered people learn about and get the vaccine if they choose to.
- Seek out existing networks of lived experience experts to help with planning and implementation. If unsure how to find them, contact Matt Traynor at MN Coalition for the Homeless at [matt@mnhomelesscoalition.org](mailto:matt@mnhomelesscoalition.org)