

# COVID-19 Vaccination: HUD Message (For January 11th Newsletter)

Vaccine planning and distribution presents unique challenges and considerations for Continuums of Care (CoC) leads, Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) recipients, and homeless service providers. As communities prepare to undertake these activities, HUD will provide information on critical issues. This document will be updated regularly as new information is released.

**Updated: January 11, 2020**

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### 1. Ensure priority vaccine access for essential staff and people residing in congregate shelters

Since supplies of COVID-19 vaccine are limited, states are required to establish a phased vaccination approach. [According to the CDC](#), increased rates of transmission have been observed in congregate living settings. HUD concurs with [CDC guidance](#) that:

1. Homeless service staff and outreach teams are considered essential workers and should be prioritized for Phase 1.
2. Homeless shelters meet the definition of congregate settings and should be prioritized for the vaccine, consistent with other congregate settings determined by CDC to be high risk. Consider vaccinating persons who reside in shelter at the same time as the frontline staff, because of their shared increased risk of disease.
3. Systemic racism and trauma experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups has led to diminished trust in healthcare systems. To improve vaccine confidence, communities must provide easily understandable and consistent vaccine information to staff and PEH.

## 2. Vaccination status should be excluded from housing prioritization decisions

Under HUD and CDC guidance, communities have made adjustments to Coordinated Entry (CE) processes to identify and prioritize housing for persons most at risk of severe illness from COVID-19. As the COVID vaccine begins to roll out, HUD expects those adjustments to remain in effect in accordance with CDC guidance. To support the public health emergency response, vaccination status should be excluded from housing prioritization policies and procedures. CoCs should continue to look out for and address any racial disparities in housing outcomes that result from CE systems.

## 3. Communities can use ESG and ESG-CV for vaccine distribution activities

Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) annual or ESG-CV funds can be used for a wide range of activities that support vaccine planning and distribution. Recipients may advance ESG or ESG-CV funds to quickly inject much-needed resources into communities and help sub-recipients with vaccine rollout. Eligible vaccine-related costs under the street outreach and or emergency shelter components include but are not limited to:

	Emergency Shelter	Street Outreach
Renting spaces for vaccine events	Outpatient Health Services	Emergency Health Services
Hiring vaccine ambassadors to engage/educate peers about the vaccine	Case management	Engagement Case management
Transporting people to/from vaccine events	Transportation	Transportation
Mobile outreach vans and staff to support vaccine distribution	Not Applicable	Emergency Health Services
Staff training on vaccine and rollout strategies	Training	Training
PPE and supplies at vaccine events	Operations	Emergency Health Services

If your shelter or outreach project needs additional supplies or staffing that will impact your approved budget, please check with your ESG recipient (i.e., state, city, or county) about how to initiate a budget modification.