

# Vaccine Distribution: Phases 1A and 1B

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The COVID-19 vaccine is a critical tool to safely reach the other side of this pandemic. Through efficient and effective distribution of the vaccine, we can suppress the spread of the virus, save as many lives as possible, and rebuild our economy. Illinois will only distribute a vaccine that is deemed safe. As we move through phases of vaccine distribution, the administration will ensure it reaches Illinoisans as quickly as possible using an equity-centric approach as we have done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As we move forward, it is critical that Illinoisans continue to follow public health recommendations to suppress the spread of the virus until vaccines are ready for widespread distribution.

## CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

The CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) — an esteemed group of public health experts and medical professionals — develops recommendations on how to use vaccines to control disease in the United States. The Committee’s recommendations are then approved by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

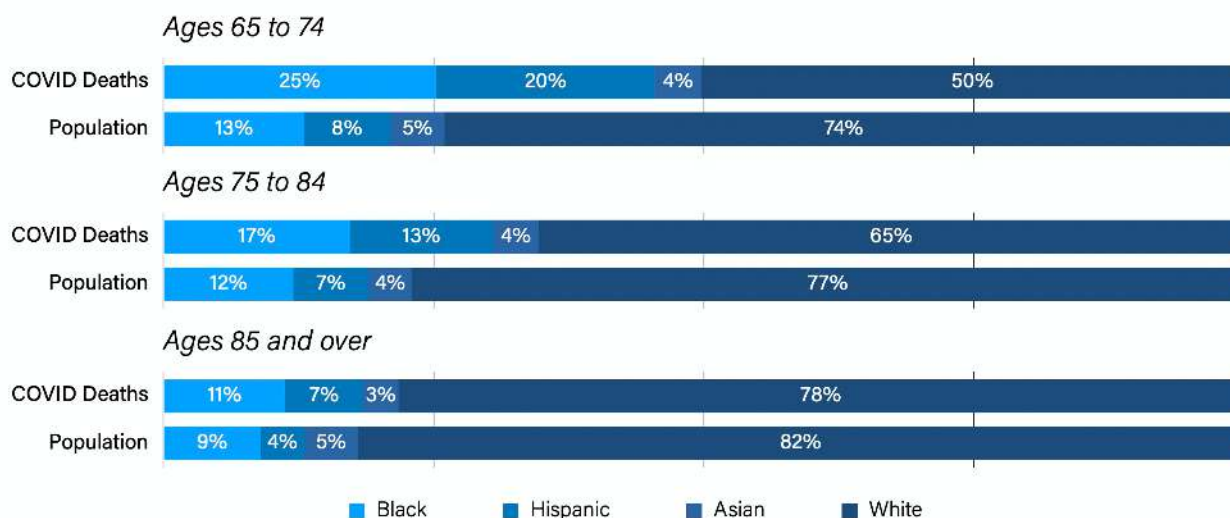
With the demand for COVID-19 vaccines expected to exceed supply during the first months of the national COVID-19 vaccination program, ACIP recommended the following priority groups – those at the highest risk of exposure, morbidity and mortality – receive the first doses of vaccines before the general public:

- **Phase 1A:** health care personnel and residents of long-term care facilities
- **Phase 1B:** persons aged ≥75 years and non-health care frontline essential workers

## ILLINOIS’ EQUITY-CENTRIC VACCINATION APPROACH

As a result of longstanding disparities in healthcare system access and delivery, Black and Brown Americans have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, including suffering a disproportionate number of deaths. In Illinois, Black and Brown residents are more likely to die at a younger age from COVID-19. While the average white Illinoisan who has lost their life to COVID-19 died at age 81, that figure drops to age 72 for Black Illinoisans and 68 for Hispanic Illinoisans.

### AGE AND RACIAL BREAKDOWN OF COVID-19 DEATHS COMPARED TO ILLINOIS POPULATION



As Illinois continues to scale its vaccination program, Governor Pritzker, Dr. Ezike, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the entire administration are committed to putting equity at the forefront, as it has been throughout the COVID-19 response efforts. Building on ACIP's recommendations, the state of Illinois is lowering the age eligibility by 10 years to ensure equitable access to the vaccine's protections, prioritizing residents age 65 and over in Phase 1B. In doing so, Illinois seeks to save lives in a truly equitable manner, recognizing that multi-generational institutional racism has reduced access to care, caused higher rates of environmental and social risk, and increased co-morbidities for people of color. As public health experts continue to review the federal government's recommendations for Phase 1C in the context of Illinois' data, Governor Pritzker and Dr. Ezike will ensure the state's exit plan for this pandemic centers on the very structural inequalities that allowed COVID-19 to rage through our most vulnerable communities in the first place.

## PHASE 1A AND 1B IN ILLINOIS

### Phase 1A

The first phase of vaccinations includes frontline healthcare workers as well as residents and staff of long-term care facilities. The goal is to fortify the healthcare workforce by removing the most exposed workers from the cycle of illness and infection as well as protect our most vulnerable residents. Most recent evaluations of Illinois' healthcare workforce and nursing home and long-term care facility residents and staff estimate approximately 850,000 Illinoisans qualify for Phase 1A. Healthcare vaccinations began on December 15, 2020, with the federal government's nursing home and long-term care vaccination program delivering its first shots on December 28, 2020. The state estimates that all interested residents in Phase 1A will be vaccinated in the coming weeks.

### Phase 1B

Once Illinois makes substantial progress in Phase 1A and federal vaccine deliveries increase, Phase 1B will include frontline essential workers and residents age 65 and over. The frontline essential workers designation includes many residents who carry a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure because of their work duties, often because they are unable to work from home, and/or they must work closely to others without being able to socially distance. This include first responders, education, food and agriculture, manufacturing, corrections workers and inmates, USPS workers, public transit workers, grocery store workers and staff at shelters and day cares. To provide more equitable vaccine access to elder populations given data showing people of color die of COVID-19 at younger ages, Illinois lowered the age eligibility recommended by ACIP by 10 years, from age 75 to age 65. Illinois has 1.3 million people who qualify as "frontline essential workers" and 1.9 million adults age 65 and over, totaling 3.2 million eligible Illinoisans.

## PREVENTING INFECTION WHILE VACCINATIONS CONTINUE

While Illinoisans get vaccinated for COVID-19 and build immunity, it's vital that residents continue to take safety precautions to prevent additional infections from occurring. Wearing a mask and practicing social distancing and hand hygiene are proven methods of reducing virus transmission and can help save lives.

For the latest information on vaccine distribution in Illinois, please visit the IDPH website: [dph.illinois.gov](https://dph.illinois.gov).

### PHASE 1A



**FRONTLINE  
HEALTHCARE WORKERS**



**LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY  
RESIDENTS AND STAFF**

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### PHASE 1B



**FRONTLINE  
ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

1.3 MILLION IN ILLINOIS



**RESIDENTS AGE  
65 AND OVER**

1.9 MILLION IN ILLINOIS

**Including, but not limited to, the following occupations:**

- **First responders:** Fire, law enforcement, 911 workers, security personnel, school officers
- **Education:** Teachers, principals, student support, student aids, day care worker
- **Food and agriculture:** Processing, plants, veterinary health, livestock services, animal care
- **Manufacturing:** Industrial production of good for distribution to retail, wholesale or other manufactures
- **Corrections workers and inmates:** Jail officers, juvenile facility staff, workers providing in-person support, inmates
- **USPS workers**
- **Public transit workers:** Flight crew, bus drivers, train conductors, taxi drivers, para-transit drivers, in-person support, ride sharing services
- **Grocery store workers:** Baggers, cashiers, stockers, pick-up, customer service
- **Shelters and day care staff:** Homeless shelter, women's shelter, adult day/drop-in program, sheltered workshop, psycho-social rehab