

How Can Faith Leaders Help Support the COVID-19 Vaccination Effort?

Build Vaccine Confidence

Talk about the COVID-19 vaccine within your faith community.

Faith leaders have an important role in helping to protect their congregants and community from COVID-19. When you talk about the importance of getting vaccinated, they listen.

1 Promote the value and benefit of the vaccine.

- Lead from the front! Share your vaccination and booster stories and talk about how you chose to vaccinate yourself and your family.
- Encourage your staff and community members to serve as role models for their family, friends, and the community by sharing their reasons for getting vaccinated and boosted! Surveys have shown that nothing sways a vaccine-hesitant person to get vaccinated more than encouragement from a family member or friend.
- Acknowledge your community's concerns and skepticism about COVID-19 vaccines.
- Be the voice of hope and wisdom in your community during these challenging times—share accurate scientific information about COVID-19 and the development of these safe and effective vaccines.
- Consider joining existing coalitions of faith leaders focused on building vaccine confidence and supporting the COVID-19 vaccination effort (e.g., [GHC3 Worship Action Coalition](#), [Faiths for Vaccines](#), etc.)
- Capture positive vaccination experiences on video or infographics to share on social media and with your networks.

2 Talk about how:

- Getting vaccinated helps keep you, your family, and your community healthy and safe.
- COVID-19 vaccines can protect us as individuals and protect our communities. When large numbers of people are vaccinated in a community, we slow the spread of the virus.
- COVID-19 vaccines can help prevent hospitalization and death and protect us from experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19.

3 Invite a local trusted health care provider to your community events or engage members of your health ministry to develop and share educational information with the congregation and community.

- Having a subject matter expert on vaccination can help to build confidence in the vaccines. Tie the message into faith values, such as how we are called to protect our neighbors.
- Involve your congregation in planning key messages. Test those messages with members of your congregation and community.

Messages to share with your community:

- Let's unite in prayer to support our scientific and medical communities' vaccination efforts.
- Getting vaccinated is an act of LOVE and protects everyone, especially the elders and immune-compromised individuals in our community who are especially at risk.
- Thanks to our joint efforts, COVID-19 can be controlled so that we may return to the lives we loved.
- Getting vaccinated can help us all get back to life—including the in-person worship and community volunteer work we have all missed so much.

How to Support State and Local Immunization Programs' Communication Efforts

- Reinforce state and local health departments' messages through your communications, such as bulletins, social media, newsletters, prayer groups, and phone trees.
- Offer the immunization program insight into how your congregation best receives information. The immunization program's traditional approaches for sharing information may not fit well within your community. Your insights can help the program modify its approach. For example, some congregations or communities may find that sharing the information during regularly scheduled service times may be more beneficial than distributing information on social media.
- Offer to review state and local health communication messages to make sure they resonate with your community—including any language preferences/translations and insights into local customs and religious observances.
- Consider co-branding state and local health department messages by adding your logo and contact information to their materials. Co-branding lets your congregation know that you support the work of immunization programs and that these programs are valuable and trusted resources for your community.

Support Vaccine Access

Offer your house of worship as a vaccination site.

Are you interested in making COVID-19 vaccines more accessible to your congregation and in your community? Consider offering your house of worship, parking lot, or other outdoor space as a vaccination site!

Depending on your location, you might work with your local government to host a vaccination clinic. Immunization programs are part of state and local health departments and are responsible for overseeing the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in your area. Health departments are [structured differently, depending on where you live](#). These agencies can determine the best way for your organization to get involved.

Other Key Resources:

- Ad Council - [Get Vaccinated! Black Faith Community Toolkit](#) and [Get Vaccinated! Hispanic Faith Community Toolkit](#)
- CDC - [COVID-19 Vaccine Equity: Best Practices for Community and Faith-Based Organizations](#)
- Global Health Crisis Coordination Center (GHC3) - [Worship Action Coalition Playbooks](#)
- [We Can Do This: Faith-Based Leaders Toolkit](#)
- American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) - [COVID Vaccine Resources](#) and [Vaccine Advocacy Program \(open to people of all faiths\)](#)
- Christians and the Vaccine - [Pastor's Toolkit](#)
- United Methodist Health Ministry Fund - [Faith in Vaccines Toolkit: A Guide for Talking to Your Congregation](#)

Public Health Structure	Authority	Sample Action Steps
Centralized	The state maintains authority, and local units are typically run by state employees.	Connect with your state immunization program .
Decentralized	The local government has authority over most decisions. Employees work for local government and not for the state.	Reach out to your local health department .
Shared or Mixed	The government is set up differently depending on where you live within a state, county, or city. It's not consistent across the state.	Ask your state immunization program who is the best contact.

How to Work with Immunization Programs to Support Vaccine Access at Your House of Worship

1 Know what to expect. Your state or local immunization program may want to work with you directly or may refer you to a local pharmacy, healthcare agency, or other organization that can partner with you in your efforts to vaccinate your community.

2 Work with all of your congregation's decision-makers to agree on your goals and the resources and time you are realistically able to offer. Consider:

- State, county, and local guidelines regarding meeting capacity in light of COVID-19 restrictions and the need for social distancing.
- Your capacity to hold vaccination clinics in your facility, such as available square footage, parking, restrooms, a socially distant waiting/line area, a separate entrance, and exit, electrical requirements for vaccine storage equipment, supplies and equipment such as tables and chairs, hours of operation, staff support and compensation, disability-friendly transportation, and creative options such as outdoor spaces and drive-thru vaccination.
- Existing in-person services you offer and if both a vaccine clinic and these essential services can operate safely at the same time.
- If you have multiple locations, which one will be the most accessible location to the people who need the vaccine the most?
- Liability insurance limitations you may have when offering your space.
- Communicating to your community where vaccine clinics are located if you cannot host a clinic.
- Inviting a subject matter expert on vaccination to help build confidence in the vaccine.

- Hosting several information sessions leading up to a vaccination event to help build vaccine confidence.
- Combining another event with your vaccination clinic, for example, a food drive/giveaway or a health fair addressing other issues that may face your community, such as nutrition, mental health, etc.

3 Reach out to your local health department and explain who you are, what your goals are, and the resources you have.

- If your congregation is part of a larger organization, coordinate within your organization and have one person reach out to the health department on behalf of the group. This will make it easier for public health to work with you.

4 Investigate funding opportunities for the distribution and administration of vaccinations.

- Ask your state and/or local health department whether they provide funding opportunities for COVID-19 vaccination activities.
- The Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may provide funding opportunities. Certain private non-profit organizations that own and operate medical care facilities may be able to apply to FEMA for the cost of work to support the distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines under the Public Assistance Program. More information may be found [here](#).