

Illinois COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Phase 1B to Commence January 25, 2021

On Friday, January 15, 2021, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker announced that Phase 1B of Illinois Department of Public Health's COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution Plan will begin on Monday, January 25, 2021. Phase 1B will include "frontline essential workers" and include a sizeable number of Teamster Members. By the time Phase 1C is expected to begin as early as mid-to-late February, most Members should be eligible for the vaccine. IDPH has some guidelines on COVID-19 vaccine distribution, but the rollout will differ greatly county-by-county and depend on supply at each vaccination site. It is unclear how involved each individual employer will be in notifying Members that they are eligible to receive the vaccine.

What We Know:

- The IDPH is planning Phase 1B to begin on January 25, 2021
- Many Teamster members, who are frontline essential workers, shall be eligible to receive the vaccine during Phase 1B and most members would be eligible by Phase 1C
- The State will set up drive-thru vaccine sites, as well as offering the vaccine at pharmacies, healthcare centers, and "through large employers"
- The best course of action for anyone interested in receiving the vaccine ASAP is to fill out a survey and sign-up for updates from their Local County Health Department, healthcare provider and pharmacy

What We Don't Know:

- How and when County Health Departments (or healthcare providers) will notify individuals and/or employers they can schedule a vaccination
- How and if individual employers will have a role in notifying workers they are eligible
- How those administering vaccine will certify Phase 1B eligibility
- Where drive-thru testing facilities/sites will be located
- When or if the IDPH will give Local Health Departments further guidance for Phase 1B or Phase 1C

IDPH

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health's guidelines, this will include residents 65 and older and essential frontline workers, which it does not clearly define, but gives examples such as "education, food and agriculture, manufacturing, corrections workers and inmates, USPS workers, public transit workers, grocery store workers and staff at shelters and day cares."

The IDPH said the vaccine will be distributed by healthcare providers, local pharmacies, and dozens of drive-through vaccination clinics to be set-up Statewide (similar to the COVID-19 drive-thru testing sites). The IDPH expects some to be operating by Monday, but there is no list yet as to where these sites will be operational, or how they will work. It is unclear whether they will require proof of job title and/or proof of residency, but once vaccination clinics open, you're advised to bring your work ID and State issued ID or Driver's License to the vaccination site.

The IDPH advised individuals interested in the vaccine to contact your Local Health Department or healthcare provider for more information on the availability and scheduling of the vaccine.

County Health Departments

Individual Counties throughout the State are all handling the vaccination plan differently. Most County Health Department websites like DuPage and Lake County have a sign-up a list to receive updates on when the vaccine is available to you. Some are calling it “registration” while others indicate it is simply a sign-up for updates. Every County Health Department encourages those interested in obtaining the vaccine to take the survey and/or sign-up for updates on their County Health Department website.

Cook County has a survey for individuals to take that will also sign them up for COVID-19 vaccine updates. It asks a few questions about your job duties and employer to give the County a better idea of how many doses they should plan for at each stage. It is encouraged for all interested in the vaccine within Cook County to fill out the survey. They also have one for organizations on their website, which appears to be only for 1A organizations, which applies to only medical care facilities. It is unknown at this time if they will put out a similar survey for 1B and 1C organizations.

Pharmacies and Healthcare Providers

Much like County Health Departments, pharmacies like Osco and CVS are offering the option to sign up for vaccine updates, but not an actual sign-up list to secure an appointment to receive said vaccine. There will be vaccination sites along with State operated sites that will be assembled and manned by the Illinois National Guard.

Employers

Governor J.B. Pritzker said in addition to drive-thru, State operated, and pharmacies, “large employers” will be offering and providing the vaccine to its employees during Phase 1B. It is unclear how large a “large employer” is. For example, we know the State is working with larger healthcare facilities and public safety agencies to offer the vaccine to first responders and frontline healthcare workers. It is unknown how many employers the State is working with for Phase 1B distribution.

Phase 1C

It is anticipated that Phase 1C vaccinations could begin by late February, though there are conflicting predictions and several variables in play that will affect when Phase 1C will commence. The CDC guidelines, which Illinois has adopted, says that will include, "all other essential workers: workers in transportation and logistics, water and wastewater, food service, shelter and housing (e.g., construction), finance (e.g., bank tellers), information technology and communications, energy, legal, media, and public safety (e.g., engineers), and public health workers."

We have confirmed with the IDPH...that outside of public transportation, most transportation workers, including UPS workers, will not be eligible to receive the vaccine until Phase 1C vaccination launches.

