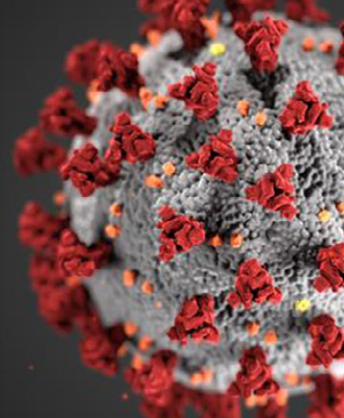


How ACL's Disability and Aging Network is Advancing Vaccination Efforts



The Urgent Need to Vaccinate Older Adults and People with Disabilities

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected people with disabilities and older adults. Older adults are at highest risk for severe illness and death because of COVID-19, followed by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. All people who receive long-term services and supports (LTSS) in the community, regardless of age or type of disability, face a higher risk of COVID-19 infection. Those risks are even greater for older adults and people of color with disabilities.

Due to this high risk, the CDC recommends states prioritize older adults and people with underlying health conditions to get vaccinated. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) network can collaborate to support this need. ACL programs are highly engaged with states and other partners, working to ensure vaccine access for all eligible people with disabilities and older adults. ACL grant programs provide and improve access to services and support the functional needs of individuals with disabilities and older adults so they can remain in their homes and communities.

This document is a summary of ACL's programs with examples of activities and partnerships that can support vaccine access. ACL has also published an in-depth [overview of strategies that support vaccine access](#).

Nine Major Components of ACL's Disability and Aging Network

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

- » Serve older adults (age 60+) and family caregivers. A majority of AAAs also serve people with disabilities through other funding sources.
- » There are 622 AAAs across the nation, which are public or nonprofit organizations designated by State Units on Aging to address the service and support needs of older adults at regional and local levels. The specific names of AAAs vary. To find a local AAA, go to Eldercare.acl.gov or call-800-677-1116.

- » AAAs contract with 20,000+ local providers nationwide to provide services and programs that may include congregate and home-delivered meals, information and assistance, evidence-based chronic disease prevention programs, caregiver respite, case management, transportation, homemaker support, and personal care.
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include identifying and reaching out to underserved older adults, including people who are homebound, live in rural areas, or have limited English proficiency; assisting LTSS clients and their caregivers to register for vaccines; facilitating transportation to and from vaccine appointments; providing second-dose reminder calls; and organizing and implementing targeted vaccination clinics.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

- » Serve individuals with significant disabilities of all types.
- » There are 354 CILs in communities in every U.S. state and territory. CILs offer the following core services (at a minimum): information and referral, independent living skills training, peer counseling, individual and systems advocacy, transition and diversion from nursing homes and other institutional settings back into the community, and transition of youth to postsecondary life. [Find a local CIL](#).
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include coordination of accessible transportation services; assessing needs and status of clients; coordinating services; addressing inaccessible vaccine sites; locating and/or providing mobility equipment, personal care attendant services, or ASL interpreters; educating communities about reasonable accommodations; and collaboration to combine vaccine delivery with existing home-delivered food services.

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Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

- » Advocates for people living in nursing homes, board-and-care homes, assisted living facilities, and similar facilities to resolve their individual problems and to bring about changes that improve their care, quality of life, and rights.
- » **Vaccine-related activities** may include visiting and serving as a resource to provide information and assistance on how to obtain the vaccine for residents and staff that have been unable to get vaccinated.

Native American Grantees

- » Serve native elders (age determined by each tribe).
- » There are 282 Native American Grantees serving over 400 tribes.
- » Native American grantees provide supportive services, nutrition services, and caregiver support to native elders and their families.
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include reaching out to and educating individuals who have not been vaccinated, partnering to organize transportation to vaccination clinics, and offering case management.

Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&A)

- » Serve individuals with all types of disabilities.
- » There are 57 P&As. P&As are in every state and territory. There is also one P&A that serves the Navajo and Hopi Nations in New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.
- » P&As are a nationwide network of congressionally mandated agencies that provide a range of legal advocacy services to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities (e.g., those denied access to a service or an opportunity to take part in an activity). P&As address allegations of neglect or abuse and conduct monitoring and investigations of facilities. [Find a local P&A.](#)
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include contacting people with disabilities to assess status and needs, ensuring vaccination sites are accessible, providing case management, ensuring access to services, and providing legal expertise to state and federal agencies.

State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils)

- » Governor-appointed councils of individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and other key groups.
- » There are 56 DD Councils. DD Councils are in every state and territory. They identify gaps in services and implement strategies to address needed system-level changes. [Find a local DD Council.](#)
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include creating plain-language materials; hosting Q&As about vaccines with local and state agencies, developing vaccine site accessibility checklists, reaching out to and educating individuals with disabilities, and providing information and referral services.

State Grants for Assistive Technology (AT) Programs

- » Serve individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families.
- » AT programs in every state and territory help make AT devices/equipment and services available. Their efforts range from “low tech” (e.g., built-up handle on spoon to improve ability to grasp) to “high tech (e.g., computers controlled with eye movement). Other examples of supports are home automation solutions and services to obtain and use devices. AT support can also include assessment, customization, repair, and training. [Find a local AT program.](#)
- » This national network quickly distributes AT to people in need.
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include assisting with accessibility of vaccination sites, registration processes, websites, and outreach materials; supporting vaccination hotlines for people with disabilities; and providing subject matter expertise and technical assistance related to accessibility and AT.

State Units on Aging (SUAs)

- » Serve older adults (age 60+) and family caregivers.
- » Governor-designated state government agencies that advocate for and assist older adults, their families, and, in many states, adults with physical disabilities. Located in each state and territory. To find an SUA, visit [Eldercare.gov](#) or call 800-677-1116.

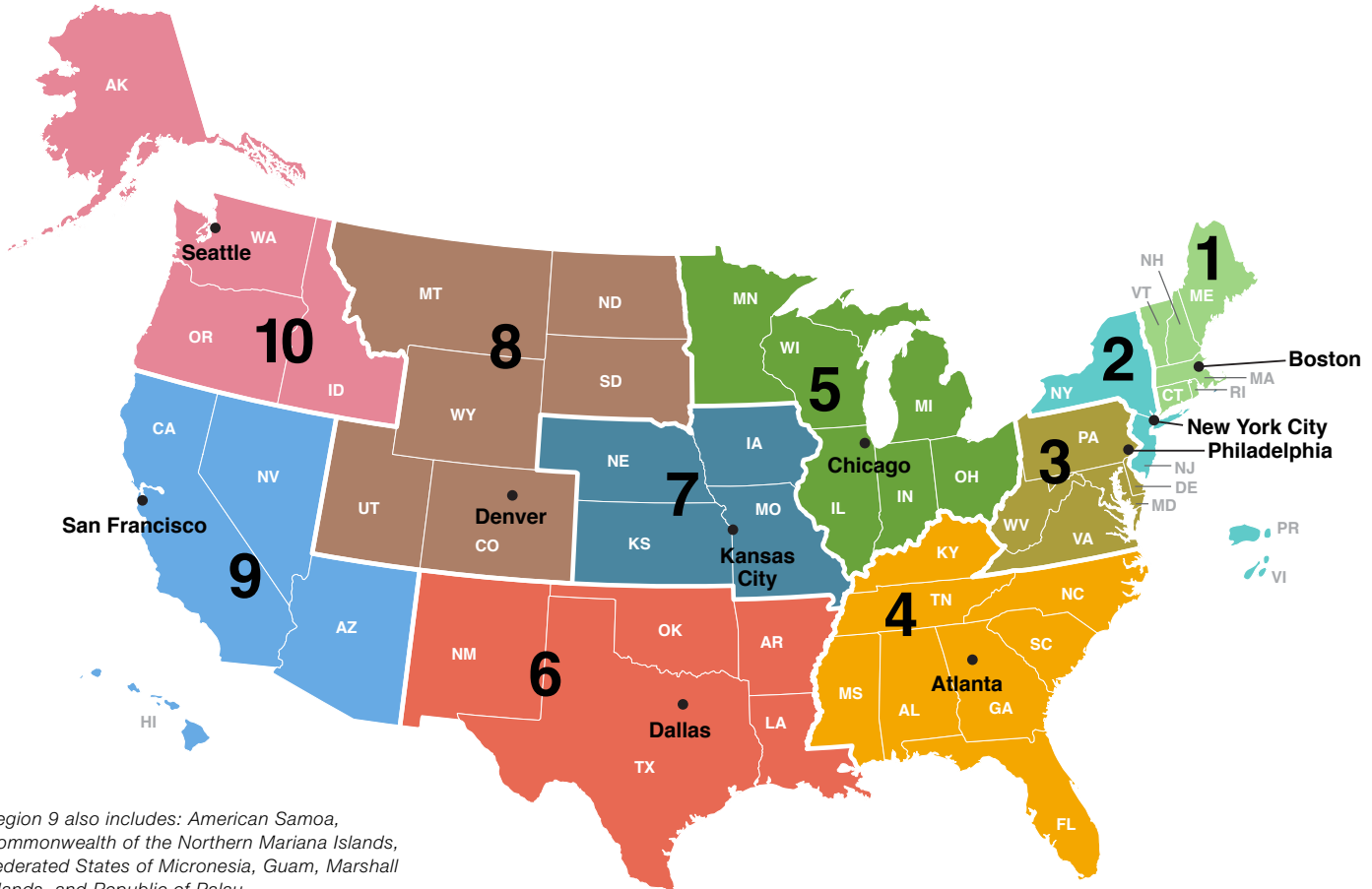
- » Provide funding to AAAs to provide home- and community-based services and programs including meal programs, case management, transportation, home care, and caregiver respite.
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include collaborating with state emergency response agencies to identify high-risk communities and support targeted vaccination efforts; working with paratransit agencies, nursing groups, and other partners to identify individuals who might benefit from mobile vaccination clinics; coordinating with state emergency management agencies; providing situational awareness to ACL; identifying gaps and coordinating information; and coordinating with AAAs to restore and limit service disruptions.

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)

- » Serve individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- » There are 68 UCEDDs nationwide that conduct interdisciplinary training, community services, research, and knowledge translation in a range of areas, including emergency management. [Find a local UCEDD.](#)
- » **Vaccine-related activities** include scheduling vaccine appointments for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; working with state Medicaid agencies to support Medicaid-funded transportation to vaccine appointments at non-medical locations, hosting town halls on vaccines for people with disabilities, developing drive-thru vaccination sites, hosting targeted vaccine clinics, and providing vaccinations to group home residents through mobile clinics.

Regional Administrators

Regional Administrators are the primary contacts within ACL to help in contacting and coordinating with the aging and disability organizations that receive ACL grants. [More details on ACL's Regional Offices.](#)



Region 9 also includes: American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau