

CCDPH / CCH / COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

VACCINE EQUITY



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH



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Cook County DEPT.
Public Health

INTRODUCTION

While everyone has been affected by COVID-19, the pandemic has clearly had a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Many of suburban Cook County's most impacted communities were already experiencing higher rates of unemployment, precarious work, food and housing insecurity, and technology divides, all of which drove higher rates of adverse health outcomes from COVID-19. Many of these same social determinants of health are now driving disparities in vaccination rates. This is compounded by an understandable distrust in government and the medical establishment, resulting in hesitancy to receive the vaccines. Without bold, systemic changes to bridge these societal challenges, we will find ourselves facing the next pandemic with the same inequities we see today.

Cook County Government, together with the Cook County Department of Public Health and Cook County Health are committed to an equitable vaccine distribution plan that prioritizes those most impacted by COVID-19 and that also lays the foundation to address broader issues that are keeping individuals, families and communities from achieving their highest potential.



While focused on CCDPH's suburban jurisdiction and its 2.2 million residents, Cook County has developed a plan to distribute the COVID-19 vaccines as equitably and efficiently as possible across the entire county. Many communities face barriers to vaccination and many of these same obstacles have resulted in disproportionate rates of COVID cases, hospitalizations and death.

In order to be equitable in our vaccination program while addressing the most pressing public health needs, CCDPH analyzed each of the 127 municipalities in its jurisdiction using the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), which measures the expected negative impact of disasters of any type, and the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI), which aggregates various COVID-19 related indicators into seven themes:

- Socioeconomic Status Average;
- Minority Status & Language Average;
- Housing type, Transportation, Household Composition and Disability Average;
- Epidemiological Risk Factors Average;
- Healthcare System Factors Average;
- High Risk Environment Average;

The CCVI was developed by the Surgo Foundation (<https://precisionforcovid.org/ccvi>).

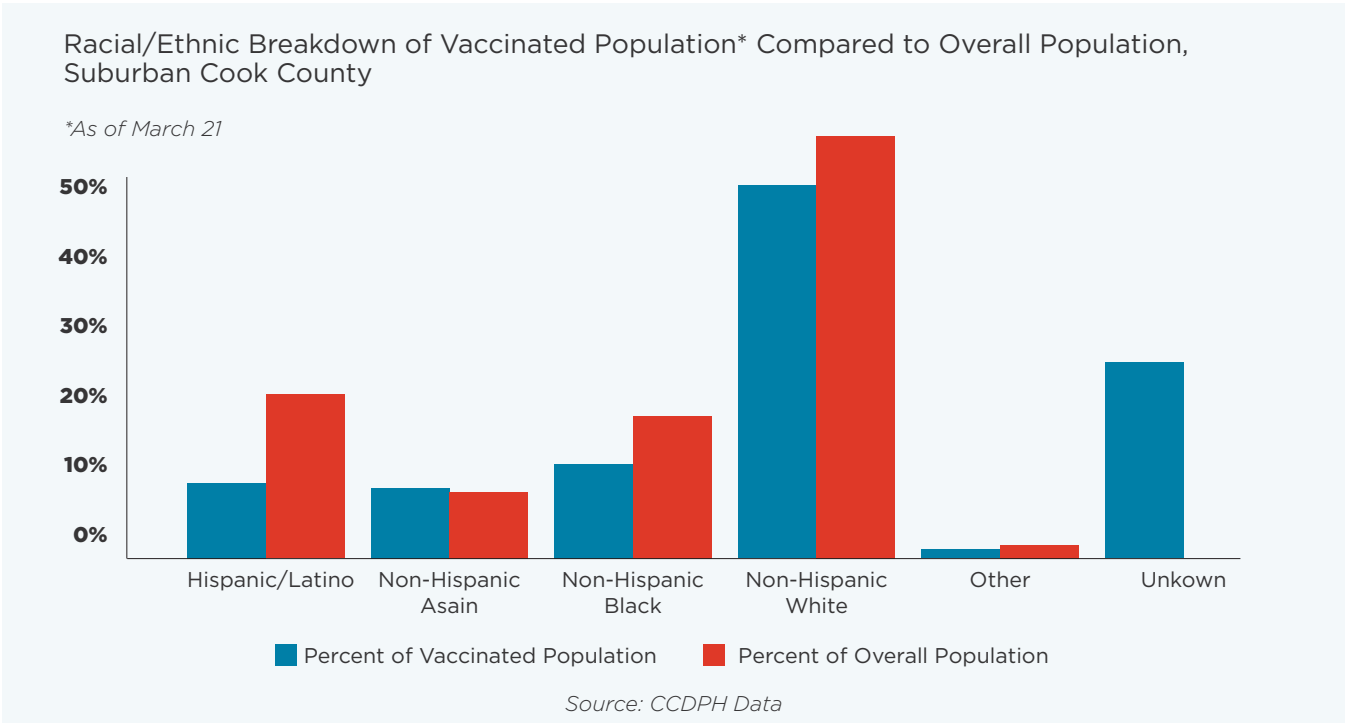
Based on these scores, CCDPH identified 32 Priority Communities where efforts will be focused to ensure access to vaccination, using a variety of methods. In addition to a focus on these 32 municipalities, CCDPH will give priority to members of the following high-risk groups, regardless of location:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Limited access to healthcare | • Low income or low wage workers |
| • Racial and ethnic minorities | • Homebound |
| • Undocumented, refugees, immigrants | • Living in congregate settings |
| • Housing insecure | • Uninsured |
| • Seniors | • Behavioral health challenges |
| • Individuals with disabilities | • Justice-involved |
| • Limited or non-English speaking | • Low technological literacy |

To monitor progress in these communities, CCDPH captured data from of the weekend of March 21, when the Priority Communities were first announced. This information provides a baseline against which the progress of the equity programs can be measured. Data is presented for CCDPH's jurisdiction, which includes all municipalities in Cook County except Chicago, Evanston, Oak Park, Skokie, and Stickney Township.

SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY VACCINATION DATA BY ETHNICITY AND RACE

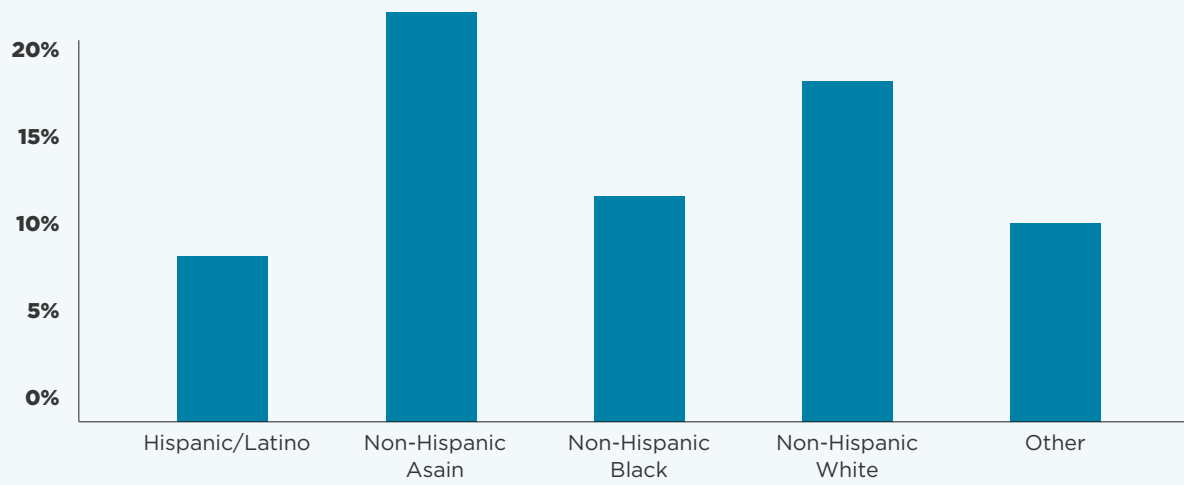
As of March 21, White and Asian residents were being vaccinated at rates much closer to their overall population percentages while Black and Hispanic/Latinx populations trail significantly behind their population percentages. It should be noted that the number of residents with unknown race and ethnicity (which is optional and self-reported) was greater than 20 percent when the Priority Communities were announced.



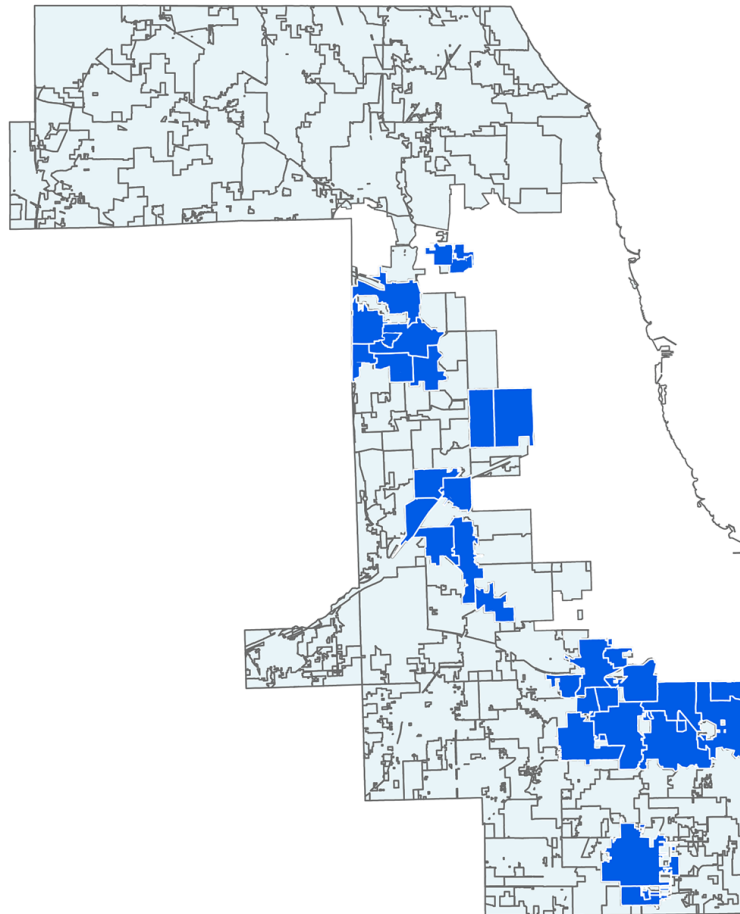
VACCINATION RATES WITHIN ETHNIC/RACIAL GROUPS

Vaccination rates by race and ethnicity are shown below, illustrating the percentage of the total population in Suburban Cook County (SCC) within each race and ethnicity group that have received at least one dose of vaccine. 22 percent of all Asian individuals, 20 percent of all White individual, 12 percent of all Black individuals, and 8 percent of all Hispanic/Latinx individuals have received one dose. It is important to note that Cook County was in phase 1b on March 21 and as such, the data was specific to essential workers and the age 65 and over population. The numbers reflect all vaccinations given to Cook County residents, without regard to provider or location of the inoculation.

Vaccination Rates* by Race and Ethnicity, Suburban Cook County



MAP OF THE 32 PRIORITY COMMUNITIES



Provisional Data.
CCDPH Epidemiology Program, 03/18/2021

The vaccination percentages for each of the 32 priority communities as of March 21, 2021 are shown below. These indicators will be monitored over time for progress and evaluation compared to the suburban Cook County population as a whole

Vaccination percentages within the 32 Priority Communities in the Equitable Distribution Program (As of March 21 – Announcement of 32 Priority Communities)		
Municipality	% with at least one dose	% complete
Bellwood	14.8	6.4
Berkeley	17.2	8.3
Berwyn	18.4	8.6
Blue Island	11.8	5.7
Bridgeview	15.7	8.0
Burnham	12.1	7.4
Calumet City	11.6	5.4
Calumet Park	14.0	6.6
Chicago Heights	11.5	6.1
Chicago Ridge	13.3	7.7
Cicero	15.1	5.7
Dixmoor	4.7	2.3
Dolton	12.5	6.3
Franklin Park	15.9	7.9
Harvey	8.3	3.7
Harwood Heights	16.3	8.1
Hodgkins	13.5	7.1
Justice	10.2	5.3
McCook	4.4	0.4
Markham	10.3	5.2
Maywood	11.5	5.2
Melrose Park	18.7	8.7
Merrionette Park	15.4	7.7
Norridge	22.7	11.4
Northlake	21.1	9.6
Posen	9.8	4.0
Riverdale	6.8	3.1
Robbins	17.0	9.6
South Chicago Heights	9.9	5.1
South Holland	19.0	9.9
Stone Park	9.1	4.0
Summit	11.8	5.6
Suburban CC Avg	20.6	10.8

OVERALL STRATEGY

Cook County Government, CCDPH and CCH will deploy a number of tactics to achieve an equitable countywide administration of vaccines. The county's activities are not limited to these methods, as new strategies and continuous data analysis guides our day-to-day decisions. The effectiveness of each tool is also being analyzed daily in order to increase effectiveness or to arrive at a better mix of tactics.

To reach the 32 priority communities and vulnerable, high risk, and hard to reach populations, the county will utilize the below strategies to complement its mass vaccination sites which are critical to efficiently vaccinating large groups of individuals.

Mobile and Pop-Up Clinics

The Mobile Unit consist of multiple mobile teams staffed by CCDPH Vaccine Provider Partners, Cook County Health, CCDPH, and the Illinois National Guard. This strategy was first deployed in Phase 1b to vaccinate nursing homes, long-term care facilities, homebound residents, and workplaces that employ essential workers. The mobile program has and will expand its reach in the coming weeks and months to meet people and communities with social, health and socioeconomic barriers to the vaccine.

Equity Appointments and Community Assisted Scheduling

Community Assisted Scheduling refers to Community-Based Organizations working with reserved appointments at CCH clinics and mass vaccination sites. CCH has operationalized six mass vaccination sites throughout suburban Cook County, with a focus on locations near vulnerable populations. Cook County Health (CCH) and CCDPH have worked together to allocate "equity appointments" at large vaccination sites and CCH community clinics. Community Based Organizations (CBO), Federally Qualified Health Centers, and Medicaid Managed Care Organizations have been mobilized to schedule appointments for vulnerable, high risk, and hard to reach groups. CCDPH and CCH are working with trusted CBO partners who can assist with cultural, literacy, language, and/or access challenges.

In addition, the CCH call center assists residents without Internet access or those with low technical literacy to make appointments over the telephone and prioritizes the 32 priority communities.

Priority PODs

CCH and CCDPH are planning points of distribution (PODs) specifically designed to serve at-risk individuals and those who live or work in the 32 Priority Communities. This work is expected to include community organizations, houses of worship, municipalities and larger workplaces. Each site will vaccinate those who live and work in nearby municipalities that are in the 32 Priority Communities.

Homebound Services

The county has been conducting homebound vaccinations for several months, mostly through community partners. As suburban Cook County moved through Phase 1B, Phase 1B+ and Phase 1C, efforts to reach this critical group of residents have been expanding. The County's capacity continues to increase as more vaccine provider partners offer in-home vaccination. Individuals or their caregivers can sign up for in-home vaccination by calling the appointment hotline.

Closed PODs in Priority Communities

CCH currently has two closed PODs to serve essential workers, many of whom live or work in the 32 Priority Communities. Thornton Fractional High School South in Lansing and Morton East High School are reserved for select priority populations such as school personnel, first responders, public transit workers, etc. These sites have been very successful in equitable vaccination in our priority communities.

**(Morton East is a closed POD 5 days/week).*

CCDPH Vaccine Provider Partners

CCDPH has worked with over 150 Approved Vaccine Provider sites throughout suburban Cook County, including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), hospitals, pharmacies, and private clinics since the beginning of the vaccination effort. CCDPH continues to seek out organizations that are located in the 32 priority communities as well as organizations that target vulnerable, high risk, and hard to reach groups as defined above.

Vaccine Partner Equity Guidelines

In addition, CCDPH has developed Vaccine Partner Equity Guidelines to help CCDPH Vaccine Provider Partners equitably distribute vaccine allocated to them by CCDPH. CCDPH takes into account how closely partners follow these guidelines when distributing vaccine. These guidelines include such things as having a telephone option in addition to any online scheduling platform, prioritizing appointments in the 32 priority municipalities and other vulnerable groups, and avoiding asking for identification that could deter groups such as undocumented individuals from getting vaccinated. CCDPH convenes a Healthcare Collaborative at which information including updates to the guidelines and strategies to integrate equity into their vaccination efforts is routinely reviewed.

Transportation

A key component of these equity appointments is also providing support via transportation to and from vaccination appointments whenever needed. CCH, CCDPH, and Cook County Government are exploring partnerships with transportation vendors and working with CBOs to assist individuals in need of transportation to vaccination sites. Medicaid MCOs also provide transportation to their members to and from vaccination centers.

Outreach

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND MOBILIZATION

CCDPH and CCH are partnering with community-based organizations from across suburban Cook County to create a network of community partners that will assist in community outreach, addressing vaccine hesitancy, promoting vaccine readiness and literacy, creating access points for vaccine distribution, and implementing vaccination events. Tours of vaccination sites are also provided to community members by CBOs to encourage individuals to use them and dispel any rumors. With an emphasis on the 32 hardest-hit municipalities, the county recognizes that partnering with local organizations and meeting individuals where they reside and/or helping them break barriers to accessing mass vaccination sites is critical to effectively vaccinate all eligible and ready individuals in underserved, under-resourced communities.

Media & Communications Campaigns

CCH, CCDPH, and Cook County Government created and launched a multi-language media campaign, supported by a vaccine communications toolkit to expand outreach, education and overall messaging to address vaccine hesitancy. The Outreach Toolkit contains social media posts, posters, and vaccination information. Community based organizations can host a Vaccine Corps Partnership (VCP) speaker who is a healthcare professional who can address COVID-19 vaccine community concerns, vaccine hesitancy, and education through open dialogue, acknowledging a history of government/medical mistrust, and answering questions about vaccine access, science, and research. The campaign can be viewed, and downloadable materials can be found at myshotcookcounty.com

Assessing Outcomes

CCDPH staff are working to track vaccination coverage rates throughout its jurisdiction daily. The teams will focus on the 32 Priority Municipalities. The CCDPH epidemiology team will also track numbers of individuals reached specifically through the Mobile Unit, Homebound Services, Community Assisted Scheduling, Priority PODs, and CCDPH Vaccine Provider Partners. Additional resources will be targeted where vaccination rates appear to lag or vulnerable unvaccinated groups are identified; plans and strategies will be adjusted as needed.

Ensuring access to vaccines by vulnerable communities is a critical strategy in our comprehensive effort to end the pandemic. Cook County, Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health have worked to build a model that prioritizes vulnerable communities but remains flexible in adapting to new or changing needs.