

Designing equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine

"Seattle has become the first major American city to reach its goal of fully vaccinating 70% of residents 12 and older, helping push Washington toward its overall vaccination and reopening targets." - Seattle Times, 6/9/2021 ([link](#)).

THE NEED

The City observed vaccine allocation being rolled out by the Federal and State governments was leaving behind Seattle's highest at risk for death, hospitalization, and sickness - particularly BIPOC communities. The vaccine model used across institutions was a 'first-come, first-serve' model, in a time when supply was short and difficult to find. First-come, first-serve during high demand is an inequitable design because it relies on people having the time and access to technology to hunt down scattered appointments. Seattle knew this design wasn't going to reach our most vulnerable communities and developed a more equitable way to do vaccine outreach.

OUR APPROACH

The Mayor's Office (MO) and Seattle Fire Department (SFD) worked closely with Aging and Disability Services (ADS) and Public Health: Seattle & King County (PHSKC) to vaccinate elderly and caregivers living in long-term care and adult family homes that were missed by the federal pharmacy program, as well as other congregate living situations, affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing.

MO and SFD also worked with Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), and Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) to set up community vaccination events to serve in-home healthcare workers, BIPOC elders, grocery workers, childcare workers, and others who were unaffiliated with broader vaccine efforts.

Once supply increased, we invited community-based organizations to register clients in advance of the public having access at fixed sites in Rainier Beach and West Seattle. The City invited the public to sign up for a notification list to learn of appointments as they came available. The notification list notified people in order of eligibility (highest impact) and social vulnerability index as defined by the CDC.

THE RESULTS

By June 2021, the City of Seattle became the first U.S. city to fully vaccinate 70% of eligible residents. Roughly half of those vaccinated by the City identify as BIPOC, and into Fall 2021 the City continues to facilitate community-based pop up events to ensure easy access to COVID-19 vaccinations.

READ MORE

To learn more about Seattle and King County's vaccination levels, visit the Public Health - Seattle & King County COVID-19 vaccine dashboard: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/vaccination.aspx>.

DEPARTMENT PARTNERS

Mayor's Office
Seattle Fire Dept
Human Services Dept
Office of Emergency Management
Seattle IT
Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
Dept of Neighborhoods

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Public Health - Seattle & King County
Signetic
Rockefeller Foundation

PROJECT DURATION

December 2020 - April 2021

IMPACT

Vaccines for those at highest risk for death, hospitalizations and sickness from COVID-19

KEY DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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