

Benton-Franklin Health District
www.bfhd.wa.gov

Kennewick
7102 West Okanogan Place

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412 West Clark Street

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington State moves to Vaccination Phase 1B-1

Benton-Franklin Counties, Wash. – Governor Jay Inslee and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has announced the state has moved to Vaccination Phase 1B beginning Monday, Jan. 18, 2021. There are several tiers in Phase 1B and the initial focus will be on Phase 1B Tier 1 (1B-1). Moving to the next vaccination phase now allows counties, who are ready, to maintain vaccination flow while encouraging other counties to move swiftly through Phase 1A-1 and 1A-2 - with 1B-1 individuals ready so vaccine allocation is used efficiently by all local providers.

Who Qualifies Now

According to the DOH, “Phase 1B phase generally includes people who are high to moderate risk against the four risk criteria,” as listed below:

- Risk of acquiring Infection
- Risk <severe> of morbidity and mortality
- Risk of negative societal impact
- Risk of transmission to others

Some counties, including Benton and Franklin, will prioritize vaccinating those who are eligible under Phase 1A and have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine. However, this does not preclude providers from beginning vaccinating the following individuals in Phase 1B-1 (phases are additive and individuals in previous phasing still qualify):

- All individuals age 65 years and older
- People 50 years and older in multigenerational households (two or more generations)
 - Those in this age group would be vulnerable or at risk because they are not able to live independently AND
 - have a caregiver residing in the home **OR**
 - have a relative living in the household who works outside the Home **OR**
 - is a caregiver for grandchildren
 - This does NOT include individuals age 50 years and older who are able to live independently regardless of others in the household

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Washington Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov

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How Do People Get Vaccinated

[Phase Finder](#) is the first step for community members to determine if they are eligible now for vaccination. For those who qualify, it will list providers who have been approved by the DOH to receive vaccine, although some providers listed *may not* have vaccine available. BFHD urges those who are in Phase 1A and Phase 1B-1 to work with their employers and/or their medical provider to schedule their vaccination with one provider only. For those who do not qualify now, the application collects email and phone numbers so they can be notified when their phase time is released.

Yesterday's briefing from Governor Inslee included an announcement of four mass vaccination sites in the state staffed with members of the National Guard and DOH volunteers. The Benton-Franklin Co. Fairgrounds was listed as one of the locations. BFHD is not currently resourced to meet the demand of mass community immunization, so we are encouraged that this site will be available for those who qualify in our counties. As of today, there are not details on when the site will be deployed, the Health District's role, or how individuals will sign up. The Health District will notify the public as soon as details are available, which could be as soon as later this week.

Everyone Is Important

BFHD recognizes everyone in our area has circumstances which put them at risk for contracting and spreading COVID-19. **Currently, there is not enough vaccine to meet the demand.** Area providers are working through the logistics of ordering, storing, and administering vaccine, and monitoring individuals who have received it. Additionally, the Governor announced new distribution and reporting timeline requirements for providers administering vaccine, and private entity logistics partners, which should move vaccine through our community more quickly.

BFHD understands community members' urgency to receive the vaccine. People are encouraged to remain patient while individuals who are at highest risk for hospitalizations and death from COVID-19 infection, and those who are at highest risk of spreading the virus because of their working or living circumstances, are vaccinated first.

Eventually, everyone who wants a vaccine will get one. As a community, we have remained patient while vaccines are under development and we must exercise patience as vaccine prioritization takes place. In the meantime, county residents are encouraged to continue mitigation measures like masking, washing hands often, avoiding gatherings, and physically distancing.

More Information

Vaccine information is changing rapidly. BFHD is keeping the pandemic website up-to-date with answers to frequently asked questions specific to our area. The District also puts real time messaging out on social media channels. Additionally, the DOH has a hotline and email address to ask questions or send feedback on the vaccination plan. The community is encouraged to view these resources before calling the BFHD office so the District can prioritize urgent COVID-19 needs and resources over phasing questions. Resources are listed below.

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BFHD COVID-19 Website: covid19.bfhd.wa.gov

Phase Finder: FindYourPhaseWA.org (high demand may cause page loading issues)

DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Website: CovidVaccineWA.org

DOH Coronavirus Website: coronavirus.wa.gov

DOH Vaccine Questions Email: covid.vaccine@doh.wa.gov

DOH COVID-19 Assistance Hotline: 1-800-525-0127

DOH Plan and Feedback Form: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/opinio/s?s=WACOVIDVax>

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