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## Language Translation, Interpretation, and Accommodations at Vaccination Locations in the State of Connecticut

### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to make sure that COVID-19 vaccination locations are aware of the needs of diverse communities so they can access vaccination sites. ***Reliable, equitable and accessible vaccination locations remains one of the Lamont administration's highest priorities during this public health emergency.***

This document is a joint product between the Department of Public Health, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as well as the Department of Developmental Services.

#### *Connecticut's Diversity*

Connecticut is home to many cultures and many spoken and written languages: the most common are Spanish (over 500,000 - many in dual language households), Polish (over 30,000), and Portuguese (over 10,000 in Danbury alone, and more than 30,000 statewide).

There are other, primarily geographically isolated languages spoken in the state: Italian, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, French, French Creole, Thai, and others spoken in smaller communities.

It is important to remember that it is not just the translation of individual words, but the ability to address the individual cultural references as well. The State has developed a listing of [Languages spoken by County](#) in Connecticut to assist in your planning efforts.

#### *The Undocumented Community*

Undocumented residents of Connecticut are deeply affected by this pandemic. Not only might there be an underlying mistrust of government, but limited knowledge of where to find truthful information about their rights to health care, social service assistance, housing and education. The State of Connecticut encourages all individuals, regardless of immigration status to receive the COVID-19 vaccine once eligible.

## *Older Adults and People with Disabilities*

Older adults and those who need accommodations may be among the most vulnerable during the COVID-19 public health emergency. It's critically important that they have access to the healthcare information, including vaccination related material they need to stay healthy and make appropriate health care plans.

## **ACCESIBILITY PRACTICES FOR VACCINE LOCATIONS**

- Sites should be prepared to provide interpretation and translation services at vaccination sites. For support finding translation or interpretation services including Sign Language interpreters, please call 2-1-1 or visit [www.ct211.org](http://www.ct211.org). If your organization already has video or telephone remote interpreting at your vaccination location, you can continue to use those existing services.
- Be prepared to communicate in different ways, and remember to always ask someone how they would like to communicate:
  - Consider printing standard questions, instructions, and descriptions of procedures. Have these documents available in large print, in multiple languages and include pictograms when possible. ***Any written instructions should include what someone should do if they feel a reaction following a vaccination.***
  - Identify bilingual staff members and volunteers with verified language skills who are competent with assisting persons though the vaccine process.
  - Give clear instructions, both verbal and written, with step-by-step procedures.
  - Have a small, dry erase board for interactive conversations.
    - A phone or tablet can be used to download and [access communication apps and cards](#).
  - Consider the feasibility of having clear masks available to assist with communications efforts.
  - Have pictures available or demonstrate vaccine procedures using visual cues.
  - Provide written materials in high-contrast large print (16-point font or larger) or in electronic format.
  - Be prepared to read instructions aloud, if needed.
- It's important to remind all staff to communicate with the utmost respect and patience for individual needs, including compassion for the spectrum of responses to vaccines which may include historical concerns by communities of color, people with histories of trauma, general anxiety about vaccines, etc.
- Vaccination site planners should consider physical ease of access, sensory ease of access, cognitive ease of access and technological ease of access inside and outside vaccination locations during the planning process. Guidelines to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can be found in Title III of the ADA at <https://www.ada.gov/>.

## RESOURCES:

- **Connecticut COVID-19 Resources for Individuals with Disabilities Webpage:**
  - <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Information-For/Individuals-with-Disabilities>
- **Connecticut Pre-Vaccination Checklist with Pictograms for Patients and Vaccinators:**
  - [Pre-Vaccination Checklist for COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
  - [Lista de verificación pre-vacunación para vacunas COVID-19](#)
- **Show-Me Web Application:** Show Me for Emergencies is an essential free app for emergency workers and people with communication needs - like difficulty understanding English, hearing impairments, and cognitive disabilities. It uses easy-to-understand icons for two-way communication during an emergency.
  - [Download for Apple](#)
  - [Download for Android/Google](#)
- **State of Connecticut Vaccine Site Planning Guide**
  - <https://portal.ct.gov/DEMHS/Vaccine-Site-Planning-Guide>
- **Best Practices for Virtual Communications for People with Disabilities:**
  - <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMHAS/COVID-19/Resources/BestPracticesforAccessibleCommunications.pdf>
- **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreter Registry:**
  - <https://portal.ct.gov/AgingandDisability/Content-Pages/Programs/Deaf-and-Hard-of-Hearing-Interpreter-Registry>
- **Connecticut United Way/211 Interpreter Database:**
  - <https://uwc.211ct.org/sign-language-interpretation/>
- **FEMA Civil Rights COVID Vaccine Checklist for Site Planning:**
  - [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_civil-rights-covid-19\\_vaccine\\_checklist\\_02-11-2021.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_civil-rights-covid-19_vaccine_checklist_02-11-2021.pdf)
- **Relay Connecticut- Videos about Relay Etiquette**
  - <https://www.relayconnecticut.com/videos>
- **FEMA Ensuring Equitable Access to the Vaccine:**
  - <https://www.fema.gov/blog/fema-takes-action-ensure-equity-vaccine-distribution>
- **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services CT Stronger Campaign:**
  - <https://ctstronger.org/coach/>
- **Department of Aging and Disability Services: ASL Vaccination Video on YouTube**
  - <https://youtu.be/v82pGmjcBM0>

*Thank you for working to ensure your COVID-19 vaccine locations are accessible to all Connecticut residents during this challenging time.*