

Subject Line: Our Road to Reopening and an Equitable Recovery Starts with Vaccinations

Dear City employees,

There's no denying that 2020 was a difficult year. We faced so many overlapping crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic devastation, to the greatest civil rights reckoning in decades, to wildfires that choked our communities.

While we had a difficult start to 2021, I believe we have so much hope on the horizon with vaccinations. Seattle has proven we can take bold collective action as we faced the pandemic and the COVID-19 vaccine is a testament to the intelligence and ingenuity of the global scientific community, and some of the top medical experts in our great city have contributed to its success.

Even still, there's so much at stake to quickly get our community vaccinated. Across the country and in Washington state, so many people have lost their jobs and had their livelihoods profoundly disrupted – more than 1 million people have collected unemployment benefits in Washington state since the pandemic began. In Seattle alone, our most loved small businesses have been forced to close their doors for good, including more than 600 restaurants and bars. Most somberly, more than 375,000 people have lost their lives in our country due to the COVID-19 virus. And the burden of the pandemic has fallen disproportionately on our Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities.

We have and will continue to do everything we can to combat this virus and its impact. We know that Seattle's road to recovery starts with vaccinations. While there have been initial challenges to vaccine distribution at federal and state level, I've been working with the Biden-Harris Transition Team, Governor Inslee and Executive Constantine to accelerate distribution. Our City employees will play a key role to significantly increase the vaccination rate and ensure the vaccines are easy and accessible to our City's workers and residents.

This week, Seattle Fire Chief Scoggins and I were pleased to announce the first milestone in that ongoing effort: The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has approved the City to serve as a vaccine distributor, meaning the City is eligible to receive weekly shipments of vaccine from DOH and can administer vaccine to Seattle residents and workers. Today, the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) will launch two mobile vaccination teams to vaccinate nearly 1,000 residents and staff at Adult Family Homes within the next two weeks. Per DOH and public health guidance, residents of long-term care facilities are at the highest risk with limited access to vaccines. That's why the City is focusing our initial efforts on meeting the overwhelming need for vaccinations in Adult Family Homes. [You can find more information on this effort here.](#)

I want to take a moment and recognize the incredible work of Fire Chief Harold Scoggins and his entire Seattle Fire Department team. As soon as the COVID-19 pandemic touched down in Seattle, SFD worked quickly with the Department of Finance and Administrative Services to create a testing infrastructure that residents across our city and state trust and rely on. We're going to build on that community trust and existing good work as we work to vaccinate our residents and workers.

Right now, vaccine supply is still limited with many doses reserved for individuals at long term care facilities. As we work to make sure between 70-85% of our Seattle residents and workers get vaccinated, I know many of you are wondering how you fit into the state's [vaccination timeline](#). As we develop plans to ensure our 12,000 City employees have access to the vaccine, I encourage you to use [the state's](#)

[online tool](#) to find out when you qualify for the COVID-19 vaccine and where you can get vaccinated, which will be updated in the coming days as the state opens up the next phase for individuals 70 and older or individuals 50 and older who live in multigenerational households For more information on vaccination phases, please visit <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/vaccine.aspx>.

I understand there are outstanding questions about access and availability of vaccines. We'll have more information on vaccination access in the coming days and weeks, and I'll be updating our workforce regularly as new developments become available. In the meantime, even as more of us begin to get vaccinated, we'll need to continue wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and following all public health guidance.

Stay safe and healthy,

Jenny