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Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Expansion of Eligibility for New Jersey's COVID-19 Vaccination Program

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Expansion Includes Educators, Childcare Workers, Transportation Workers, and Other Frontline Essential Workers and High-Risk Groups

TRENTON – Governor Murphy today announced the expansion of eligibility for more frontline essential workers and high-risk groups in New Jersey's COVID-19 vaccination program. Eligible groups include educators and staff in pre-k through 12th grade settings, childcare workers, and transportation workers, among others.

"Our administration has built the infrastructure – including nearly 300 vaccination sites across the state – needed to support New Jersey's COVID-19 vaccination demand," **said Governor Murphy.** "As the federal government continues to make more vaccine doses available, we are confident in our ability to expand our vaccination program to reach more of our essential workers and vulnerable populations. Our goal is to provide every New Jerseyan with a vaccine when it is available and they are eligible."

"As vaccine supply increases, this phased expansion of new eligibility groups keeps New Jersey moving forward toward our goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the eligible adult population," **said New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli.**

Beginning Monday, March 15, the following categories are eligible for vaccination:

- Educators, including support staff, in pre-K through 12th grade settings;
- Childcare workers in licensed and registered settings;
- Public and local transportation workers, including bus, taxi, rideshare, and airport employees; NJ TRANSIT workers; and Motor Vehicle Commission staff;
- Public safety workers who are not sworn law enforcement or fire professionals, including probation officers and fire safety inspectors;
- Migrant farm workers;
- Members of tribal communities; and,
- Individuals experiencing homelessness and those living in shelters, including domestic violence shelters.

Additionally, beginning on Monday, March 29, frontline essential workers in the following categories are also eligible for vaccination:

- Food production, agriculture, and food distribution;
- Eldercare and support;

- Warehousing and logistics;
- Social services support staff;
- Elections personnel;
- Hospitality;
- Medical supply chain;
- Postal and shipping services;
- Clergy; and,
- Judicial system.

Additionally, the eligibility list will indicate that all individuals ages 16-64 with certain medical conditions, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/t.e2ma.net/click/jc33ae/j83xrcb/f9l9vn__;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!abO8V2wQoP2y2iKx2-jaj0G6S747J-7h-dbxOXnV3vSBhwHvhSTG4O2B6Y3Mco8VUklEkH9k$), that increase the risk or might increase the risk of severe illness from the virus, are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination.

For more information about eligibility, statewide vaccination site locations, and to preregister for a vaccination, visit https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/t.e2ma.net/click/jc33ae/j83xrcb/v1m9vn__;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!abO8V2wQoP2y2iKx2-jaj0G6S747J-7h-dbxOXnV3vSBhwHvhSTG4O2B6Y3Mco8VUtamu9QH$)

For more information on CDC criteria for eligibility, please click here (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/t.e2ma.net/click/jc33ae/j83xrcb/bun9vn__;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!abO8V2wQoP2y2iKx2-jaj0G6S747J-7h-dbxOXnV3vSBhwHvhSTG4O2B6Y3Mco8VUp0sKW6n$).

“A healthy workforce is of critical importance for agriculture and the food industry supply chain,” **said New Jersey Department of Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher.** “We appreciate that Governor Murphy has prioritized the vaccination of our essential farmworkers as we ramp up for New Jersey’s growing season.”

“We appreciate Governor Murphy for recognizing the importance of keeping safe New Jersey’s front-line employees who are working in daily, face-to-face vital roles that protect and support our state’s children and families,” **said New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer.** “For almost a full year now, childcare, child welfare and domestic violence shelter staff have remained in the field and on-the-ground, facing and overcoming their own pandemic fears, and loss, in service to others. Expanding distribution to these categories helps to ensure that they can continue their essential work, safely.”

“Governor Murphy and I are committed to both reopening schools as soon as possible and making sure that our educators and students are safe. By expanding vaccination eligibility to educators, we advance both goals," **said New Jersey Department of Education Acting Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan.** “Schools are an integral part of our communities, and everyone in the school community needs to feel safe and secure as we work to safely reopen schools. The expansion of vaccine eligibility being announced today is another step to demonstrate our commitment to our school staff and students, and their families.”

“New Jersey has made great strides in opening vaccination to more and more residents, and we are very pleased to be able to expand availability to vulnerable communities such as individuals experiencing homelessness and critical workers such as those caring for older residents, children and providing social services supports,” **said New Jersey Department of Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman.** “We cannot express enough thanks to frontline essential workers for their commitment throughout this entire public health crisis and look forward to more and more of them getting protection against this virus and to further protecting our most vulnerable residents.”

“We are incredibly grateful that MVC workers will soon be eligible for COVID-19 vaccines,” **said Motor Vehicle Commission Chief Administrator Sue Fulton.** “Our employees have been working hard to serve

NJ's drivers, on the frontline, amidst the many challenges created by COVID-19's threat to public health and safety. We're thankful for Governor Murphy's leadership throughout the Public Health Emergency, and the MVC is proud to be part of NJ's push to get vaccines in the arms of essential workers in an effort to beat this virus."

"NJ TRANSIT is extremely grateful to Governor Murphy and his Administration for prioritizing our state's indispensable transit workers," **said Kevin S. Corbett, NJ TRANSIT President & CEO.** "Our dedicated frontline transit employees have been keeping our region moving, delivering service for essential workers and all those who depend on public transit, since the onset of this pandemic. The vaccine will add yet another layer of safety to the numerous measures we already have in place to provide the safest possible travel environment for our employees and customers."

"Gov. Murphy's announcement that he is adding educators to the vaccine priority list is an important step toward New Jersey's emergence from this pandemic," **said Marie Blistan, President, NJEA.** "With nearly 1.4 million students and over 200,000 adults, one out of every six New Jersey residents is connected directly to our public schools. Count the families they go home to and no institution in our state directly connects to more individuals than our public schools. The sooner educators are vaccinated, the sooner our entire state is safer. We call on the administration to immediately extend that access to employees in higher education who are equally as exposed and equally as critical to fully reopening our state for in-person instruction. At every level, New Jersey educators have worked tirelessly to educate our students and have advocated tirelessly to protect them and our communities throughout this pandemic by demanding high standards for health and safety. We stand ready to work with the Murphy administration, other elected leaders, school districts and colleges to ensure that our members can access the promised vaccinations quickly and efficiently."

"Governor Murphy's announcement today recognizing the value of all prekindergarten-to-12 educational and support staff is a good first step in reopening our schools," **said AFTNJ President Donna M. Chiera.** "We welcome this news, and our educators look forward to having in-person instruction soon with their students. But let's remember that the vaccines are just one tool in reopening schools safely. They're not a substitute for regular testing, proper social distancing, thorough cleaning and appropriate ventilation. Vaccine availability must be aligned with these important mitigation strategies."

"Warehouse workers, often immigrants and people of color, have kept our communities safe and our economy running during the pandemic," **said Lorenza Garcia, Worker Organizer, Make the Road New Jersey.** "Too many have lost their lives to COVID-19. We thank Governor Murphy for extending vaccine eligibility to this critical population."

"Many thanks to Governor Murphy for prioritizing vaccinations for teachers and school personnel," **said Betsy Ginsburg, Executive Director, Garden State Coalition of Schools.** "This moves us closer to the happy day when all our students can be back in our classrooms."

"Our members have been on the frontlines moving the people of NJ around the clock, seven days a week during this pandemic and having the means to get our folks vaccinated is of the highest priority," **said Ray Greaves, Vice President, ATU International.** "We appreciate the Governor for his steadfast commitment to seeing to it that our most vulnerable workforce gets the help they need to combat this virus that has already taken a huge toll on us."

"As our state reopens, it is critical to ensure our hospitality employees are a priority in the vaccination process," **said Marilou Halvorsen, President, NJ Restaurant & Hospitality Association.** "The hospitality industry is the state's largest private sector employer, employing over $400,000 people and is critical to the state's economic recovery. I appreciate the Governor prioritizing the industry and protecting our employees so that they can return safely return to work while protecting the public. By vaccinating the employees of this important industry, public health will truly create economic health."

"We want to thank Governor Murphy for being steadfast and pushing our members to be eligible for COVID-19. We thank the Governor for knowing that we are the essential workers at the frontline of the pandemic," **said Jerome Johnson, President of SMART-TD Local 60.** "It is also great that the Governor realizes that we come across fellow employees and citizens of the state of NJ that are more susceptible to

COVID-19. We have to work amongst each other. The vaccination is a great asset for all of our members at SMART TD Local 60.

“We commend Governor Murphy for prioritizing drivers for vaccine access,” **said Dara Khosrowshahi, Chief Executive Officer, Uber.** “Over the last year, alongside others on the front lines, drivers have been a lifeline to their communities and an essential part of the infrastructure keeping our cities moving."

"Throughout the pandemic we have seen the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on people of color and those on the front lines of keeping our state going," **said Renee Koubiadis, Executive Director of the Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey.** "We applaud the expansion of vaccine distribution to social services support staff and teachers who are critical to public health and safety. We also call for frontline warehouse, retail, and other essential workers to be prioritized to realize racial equity in our recovery."

“Through the pandemic, Operating Engineers were considered essential workers and remained on projects which improve New Jersey’s infrastructure. It is no secret that infrastructure projects have an overall positive effect on the economy,” **said Greg Lalevee, Business Manager, IUOE Local 825.** “We are grateful Governor Murphy has made these workers eligible for Covid -19 vaccinations so that they may continue this work in good health.”

"Expanding vaccine access to rideshare drivers is an important step in putting an end to this terrible pandemic, and we want to thank Gov. Murphy for his vision and leadership throughout this trying time,” **said Doug Mehan, Senior Public Policy Manager, Lyft.** “Rideshare drivers play an essential role in helping people access vital healthcare services and will be crucial in ensuring New Jerseyans can get to a vaccination site and receive their shot as quickly as possible."

“We have continued to feed the community and our first responders throughout the pandemic; our restaurant employees have been on the frontline since day one,” **said Carmen E. Mendiola, President, Jersey City Restaurant Association.** “The New Jersey restaurant industry has been devasted by COVID-19; but we have continued to serve the people of New Jersey. We welcome Governor Murphy’s direction and recognition of food production and food distribution workers as front-line workers. The Jersey City Restaurant Association supports this much needed assistance and we are excited that we will be in the ranks to get our vaccines.”

“The ATU NJ State Council has been working tirelessly along with NJ Transit and the NJ Department of Health to put together a plan to distribute the COVID vaccine to our frontline heroes who have been hit hard by this pandemic,” **said Orlando Riley, Chairman, ATU NJ State Council.** “To the Governor’s credit he has delivered on his commitment to ensuring that transit workers get the much needed support they need to protect themselves and the public they proudly serve.”

"This is great news. Our MVC workers, our Child Protective Services workers, our workers from the Department of Health, and so many others, are helping others every single day under the most challenging circumstances," **said Hetty Rosenstein, President, CWA-NJ. "**It is so important that these frontline and essential workers have the chance to take care of themselves and their families, while they are caring for the public."

Governor Phil Murphy

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