

Frequently Asked Questions about the Bridge Access Program

January 2024



National Center for Immunization
and Respiratory Diseases
Immunization Services Division

Table of Contents

Bridge Access Program General FAQs	3
Bridge Access Program FAQs for Healthcare Providers	8

Bridge Access Program General FAQs

What is CDC's Bridge Access Program?

CDC's Bridge Access Program provides free COVID-19 vaccines to adults without health insurance and adults whose insurance does not fully cover a COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network. This program will end by December 31, 2024.

Why is this Program important?

In Fall 2023, the U.S. Government COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program ended. CDC's Bridge Access Program is a public-private partnership to help maintain access to free COVID-19 vaccines for adults who are underinsured or uninsured through their local pharmacies, the existing public health infrastructure, and their local health centers.

COVID-19 vaccines are still covered at no cost for most people living in the U.S. through their private health insurance, Medicare and Medicaid plans. However, there are 25-30 million adults without insurance and additional adults whose insurance does not fully cover COVID-19 vaccines from a provider in their network.

What types of COVID-19 vaccines are covered by this program?

All CDC-recommended COVID-19 vaccinations are included the Bridge Access Program. This includes updated COVID-19 vaccines from BioNTech-Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax.

How long will free COVID-19 vaccines be available through this program?

The Bridge Access Program will end by December 31, 2024.

How can someone get a free COVID-19 vaccine after this program ends?

The Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program, proposed in the FY 2023 and 2024 Presidential Budgets, would be a long-term solution to ensure all adults have access to recommend vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccines, at no cost to them.

How can someone find out if their insurance plan covers an updated COVID-19 vaccine?

Check your insurance plan coverage details to see if COVID-19 vaccines are covered. You may be able to visit your insurance provider's website for coverage details. You may need to register and/or log-in to view your specific insurance plan coverage details. Alternatively, you can call your insurance provider to ask about coverage. This number might be listed on your insurance card. Your insurance provider may be able to provide a list of in-network providers in your area.

If you would like to get your updated COVID-19 vaccine from your preferred provider, please call that provider to ask if they accept your insurance plan, and if they are in your network. If the provider is out-of-network, there might be a co-pay or other costs not covered by your insurance plan. If your insurance plan covers COVID-19 vaccine costs in-network, you are not eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccine from an out-of-network provider participating in the Bridge Access Program.

Who can get a free updated COVID-19 vaccine through this program?

Adults 18 years and older without health insurance can get a free COVID-19 vaccine through the Bridge Access Program. Additionally, adults with health insurance that does not cover COVID-19 vaccines from a provider in their network can get a free updated COVID-19 vaccine through this program.

Can an adult with a health insurance plan that does not fully cover a COVID-19 vaccine get a free COVID-19 vaccine through this program?

Yes, adults with health insurance that does not cover the entire cost of COVID-19 vaccines from providers in their network can get a free COVID-19 vaccine through the Bridge Access Program.

If an adult's insurance plan covers COVID-19 vaccine costs in-network, they are not eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccine from an out-of-network provider participating in the Bridge Access Program. Adults whose insurance plan covers COVID-19 vaccine costs in-network, can get a free COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network.

Are Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities and populations covered by the Bridge Access Program?

Any adult living in the U.S. who does not have insurance or whose insurance does not fully cover COVID-19 vaccines from providers in their network, including adults who receive care through IHS facilities, is eligible to receive cost-free access to COVID-19 vaccines through the Bridge Access Program. IHS clinics will need to become enrolled providers under their state's adult vaccine program to be eligible to order and administer the vaccine through this program. Members of Federally-recognized Tribes can also get no-cost COVID-19 vaccines at Indian Health Service, Tribal or Urban Indian Health Program facilities, regardless of the provider's enrollment status with CDC's Bridge Access Program. All children who are members of Federally-recognized Tribes can also get free COVID-19 vaccines through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

How does a patient enroll in the Bridge Access Program?

The Bridge Access Program is designed to remove patient barriers to COVID-19 vaccines. The burden of patient eligibility verification will be on our healthcare systems, not on patients. There is no enrollment process for eligible adults to get free COVID-19 vaccines through the Bridge Access Program. Providers will ask patients whether they have health insurance at the point of care to determine eligibility. The provider may ask for identification at the point of service, but identification and proof of residency are not required to get a free COVID-19 vaccine through this program.

Are correctional facilities and populations covered by the Bridge Access Program?

The public health infrastructure component of CDC's Bridge Access Program works through the state and jurisdiction immunization programs. State correctional facilities should contact their state's immunization program to discuss which correctional facilities, if any, are included in Bridge Access Program COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Federal correctional facilities should contact Bureau of Prisons for any questions regarding funding for COVID-19 vaccines.

Are children who do not have health insurance able to get a COVID-19 vaccine through this program?

The Bridge Access Program will cover adults 18 years or older without health insurance and adults whose health insurance does not fully cover COVID-19 vaccines from providers in their network. Pediatric populations under 19 years of age who do not have insurance or who are members of Federally-recognized Tribes will be covered by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

Will recommended vaccines, other than COVID-19 vaccines, be offered through the Bridge Access Program?

The Bridge Access Program only supports COVID-19 vaccinations and does not provide access to other vaccines routinely recommended for adults, such as flu, pneumonia, and Shingrix.

Where can someone get a free COVID-19 vaccine through this program?

COVID-19 Vaccines through this program are available at participating healthcare providers, HRSA-supported health centers, and pharmacies. These facilities will be listed on the [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) website and include:

1. Local Healthcare Providers

CDC is purchasing and distributing COVID-19 vaccines to health departments. Health departments will work with local providers to provide free COVID-19 vaccines to adults who are uninsured or whose insurance doesn't fully cover a COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network.

2. Local Health Centers

Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)-supported health centers partnered with state and local immunization programs provide free COVID-19 vaccines to adults who are uninsured or whose insurance doesn't fully cover a COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network. HRSA provides funding to HRSA-supported health centers to support services that will help ensure equitable access.

3. Pharmacies

CDC established new contracts with select pharmacies through existing [Increasing Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\)](#) contracts to provide free COVID-19 vaccines. CVS, Walgreens, and pharmacies contracted through eTrueNorth are providing free COVID-19 vaccines to adults who are uninsured or whose insurance doesn't fully cover a COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network. A list of pharmacies partnered with eTrueNorth to provide free COVID-19 vaccines through the Bridge Access Program can be found on the [eTrueNorth COVID-19 Access](#) website.

How do I search for a provider participating in the Bridge Access Program?

You can find an updated COVID-19 vaccine and providers participating in the Bridge Access Program at [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

- First select 'Find COVID-19 Vaccines'.
- Then you will need to type in your 5-digit zip code and which vaccine option(s) you're interested in finding.
- Then select 'Search for COVID-19 vaccines'.
- You can then filter locations by providers and pharmacies participating in the Bridge Access Program by selecting "Bridge Access Program Participant" under "only show locations with:" section.
- Once you have found a location that is convenient, we recommend contacting them by telephone to ensure that they understand that anyone eligible for COVID-19 vaccine through the Bridge Program will not be charged for the vaccine nor for an administration fee.

Providers and pharmacy locations are continuing to be added. Additionally, a list of pharmacies partnered with eTrueNorth and participating in the Bridge Access Program can be found on the [eTrueNorth COVID-19 Access](#) website. If you can't find a provider or pharmacy participating in the Bridge Access Program near you, please check back later.

What pharmacies are participating in this program?

CDC established new contracts with select pharmacies through existing [Increasing Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\)](#) contracts to provide free COVID-19 vaccines. CVS, Walgreens and pharmacies partnered with eTrueNorth are currently providing free COVID-19 vaccines through the Bridge Access Program.

How can a community-based organization inquire about coordinating an onsite vaccine clinic with a Bridge Access Program site?

If you are interested in learning about possible opportunities to coordinate with a public health site, please contact your [State/jurisdictional immunization program](#). If you are interested in learning about opportunities to coordinate pop-up vaccine clinics with a participating pharmacy, please contact them directly:

- eTrueNorth (communityBAP@etruenorth.com)
- Walgreens Community Outreach (wagsoutreach.com/contact-us)

Will the Bridge Access Program cover COVID-19 testing?

The Bridge Access Program does not provide additional funds for COVID-19 testing. However, access to free COVID-19 testing is available through the [Increasing Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\)](#) program. Through this program, CDC provides free COVID-19 testing for uninsured people who are [symptomatic](#) or have been [exposed](#). Find a free COVID-19 testing site on the [COVID-19 Testing Locator](#) website.

Are therapeutics covered by the Bridge Access Program?

The Bridge Access Program does not provide additional funds for COVID-19 therapeutics. Access to free therapeutics will be maintained through current government supplies and manufacturer patient assistance programs.

What should someone do if they are having trouble getting an updated COVID-19 vaccine?

If someone has had trouble getting a free COVID-19 vaccine before, we encourage them to check with their preferred provider or pharmacy again. Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a COVID-19 vaccine near you. CDC is working closely with vaccine manufacturers, distributors, and providers to improve COVID-19 vaccine access. CDC recommends that you call your provider and ask about the cost and availability of a COVID-19 vaccine before scheduling an appointment.

What can someone do if they think they were incorrectly turned away from a provider or pharmacy participating in the Bridge Access Program?

If someone thinks they were incorrectly turned away from a provider or pharmacy participating in the Bridge Access Program, they should contact that provider or pharmacy directly.

Additionally, they can report the incident to [CDC INFO](#). Please provide information including the date and location of the incident.

What can someone do if they think they were incorrectly charged for a COVID-19 vaccine?

If someone with health insurance thinks they may have been incorrectly charged for a COVID-19 vaccine administered by an in-network provider, they should contact their insurance provider and ask about coverage details and confirm that their provider is in-network. If the provider is out-of-network, there might be a co-pay or other costs not covered by their insurance plan.

If someone without health insurance thinks they may have been incorrectly charged for a COVID-19 vaccine from a provider participating in the Bridge Access Program, they should contact that provider directly. Additionally, if someone with health insurance that doesn't fully cover a COVID-19 vaccine thinks they have been incorrectly charged for a COVID-19 vaccine from a provider participating in the Bridge Access Program, they should contact that provider directly.

Visit the CDC's [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) for more information about COVID 19 vaccinations.

For more questions, visit [Bridge Access Program](#) or contact [CDC INFO](#).

Bridge Access Program FAQs for Healthcare Providers

How do I know if a patient is eligible for COVID-19 vaccines through this program?

Providers participating in the Bridge Access Program will ask patients whether they have health insurance at the point of care to determine eligibility. If their patient has health insurance, they will check their plan coverage for COVID-19 vaccines to determine if their insurance plan covers a COVID-19 vaccine in-network.

If a patient's insurance plan covers COVID-19 vaccine costs in-network, they are not eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccine from an out-of-network provider participating in the Bridge Access Program. Patients whose insurance plan covers COVID-19 vaccine costs in-network, can get a free COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network.

How will providers ensure that people served do not have health insurance or do not have access to cost-free coverage of vaccinations?

The Bridge Access Program is designed to reduce patient barriers to COVID-19 vaccination. The burden of patient eligibility verification will be on our healthcare systems, not on patients.

What do I do if my patient is not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine through this program?

Most people with health insurance can get a free COVID-19 vaccine through their insurance plan. People whose insurance plan covers COVID-19 vaccine costs in-network, can get a free COVID-19 vaccine from a provider in their network. Children under 19 years of age who do not have health insurance or who are members of Federally-recognized Tribes will be covered by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

Where can I find guidance on COVID-19 administration?

Guidance on COVID-19 vaccine administration specific to the Bridge Access Program will be available on the CDC Bridge Access Program website. Additional information related to COVID-19 vaccine administration is available on the CDC website at the following links:

- COVID-19 Vaccination Clinical & Professional Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>
- Clinical Guidance on COVID-19 Vaccine Administration: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html>
- Vaccine Administration Protocols: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/admin-protocols.html>
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Requirements and Support: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccination-provider-support.html>

Will providers participating in the Bridge Access Program be required to report to Vaccines.gov?

All providers participating in the Bridge Access Program will be required to indicate vaccine availability (not report inventory) on Vaccines.gov. CDC is working with providers and pharmacies to add locations to Vaccines.gov. Alternatively, people can find a list of pharmacies partnered with eTrueNorth and participating in the Bridge Access Program can be found on the eTrueNorth COVID-19 Access website.

Can new providers be enrolled in the Bridge Access Program?

Jurisdictions may use their existing processes to enroll new providers. New providers interested in becoming a Section 317 provider under the Bridge Access Program should reach out to their state/local immunization program for enrollment details. Any provider or health center enrolled as a 317 adult

provider is eligible to order CDC-procured COVID-19 vaccines and administer them to adults who are un- and underinsured as part of the Bridge Access Program.

Are awardees required to enroll more providers in the 317 Program?

There is no requirement to enroll providers nor a quota for the number of providers to be enrolled. CDC encourages awardees to establish provider networks in areas with high numbers of uninsured adults.

What is the process for a health center to register to become a Section 317 Provider?

Health centers interested in becoming a section 317 provider under the Bridge Access Program can reach out to their state/local immunization program for enrollment details and processes. States are using their existing enrollment processes.

How do participating pharmacies receive COVID-19 vaccines for this program?

Pharmacies procure vaccines directly from the manufacturers under this program.

How do participating pharmacies be reimbursed for administration fees?

Pharmacies procure vaccines directly from the manufacturers under this program. Administration costs will be covered by the federal government. The Bridge Access Program will provide a per-dose payment to pharmacies in order to facilitate the administration of any COVID-19 vaccines at no cost for adults without health insurance coverage or those whose coverage does not provide cost-free coverage of COVID-19 vaccines.

What is the billing code for pharmacies to be reimbursed for administration fees?

Patients do not need to provide billing codes to receive COVID-19 vaccines at Bridge Access Program vaccination sites. CDC is reimbursing pharmacies for the administration fee based on vaccine administration data reported to the CDC, however no billing code is required for this reimbursement to take place. In general, CDC does not develop or publish codes for medical services. If pharmacies have questions about billing codes, they can refer to the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) coding system on the American Medical Association (AMA)'s website: [COVID-19 CPT vaccine and immunization codes | American Medical Association \(ama-assn.org\)](#).

CDC is working closely with Bridge Access Program pharmacy vendors to make sure all of their pharmacy locations are aware of the requirements of the Bridge Access Program and are consistently offering COVID-19 vaccines to eligible adults at no cost, as is required by their participation in this program. This includes helping to clarify for pharmacies that no billing codes should be required from eligible patients to access these vaccines.

How can a provider inquire about coordinating an onsite vaccine clinic with a Bridge Access Program site?

If you are interested in learning about possible opportunities to coordinate with a public health site, please contact your [State/jurisdictional immunization program](#). If you are interested in learning about opportunities to coordinate pop up vaccine clinics with a participating pharmacy, please contact them directly:

- eTrueNorth (communityBAP@etrueorth.com)
- Walgreens Community Outreach ([wagsoutreach.com/contact-us](#))

Visit the CDC's [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) for more information about COVID 19 vaccinations.

For more questions, visit [Bridge Access Program](#) or contact [CDC INFO](#).