

# How to Make the COVID-19 Vaccine More Inclusive of People with IDD

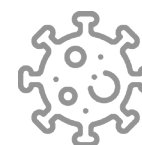
## THE PROBLEM

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) were facing enormous disparities in health care systems. Inequity, injustice and inconsistent policies led to glaring gaps in health care, social exclusion and isolation in the community and at home. These disparities were horrifying enough and the pandemic has only deepened the divide.

Across the board, **people with IDD are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic** and are at a higher risk of experiencing severe forms of COVID-19 infection.



In spite of vaccine access and availability, it is important to ensure that all resources are available to caregivers to ensure individuals with intellectual and developmental disability are given priority for COVID-19 vaccination and encouraged to consider booster doses to protect themselves.



## 5 WAYS TO MAKE THE COVID-19 VACCINE MORE EQUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH IDD

- 1 PRIORITIZE PEOPLE WITH IDD FOR VACCINES:** Advocate for people with IDD about the benefits of a COVID-19 vaccination to stay safe and healthy. Special Olympics advocacy efforts revolve around creating awareness and encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations for people with IDD. **Join Special Olympics' advocacy efforts and visit [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org) for more information!**
- 2 EDUCATE PEOPLE WITH IDD AND THEIR CAREGIVERS:** Develop COVID-19 vaccine education resources that respond to specific concerns and share them in multiple accessible formats to reduce vaccine hesitancy and create demand. **Visit [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org) and use their accessible education materials!**
- 3 MAKE VACCINE DISTRIBUTION INCLUSIVE:** Provide online resources and tool kits about COVID-19 accessibility. Special Olympics has decades of experience hosting low barrier, high quality, mobile health experiences through our Healthy Athletes program. **Partner with Special Olympics to host a vaccination event targeting people with IDD!**
- 4 TRAIN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:** Require health care providers, who give vaccines, to complete training about treating people with IDD. Share the useful training resources at [learn.specialolympics.org](http://learn.specialolympics.org) or contact [COVID@specialolympics.org](mailto:COVID@specialolympics.org) to learn more about how you and Special Olympics can work together to increase the reach of this training.
- 5 GATHER DATA:** Encourage health systems to gather information about the number of people with IDD who receive the COVID-19 vaccine. **Continue to raise awareness and advocate for those with disabilities!**