

# LINC Commission Meeting

February 22, 2021



Missouri Army National Guard Sgt. Jeromy Eslinger gives a COVID-19 vaccine shot to Opal Saunders at the Morning Star Youth and Family Life center on Feb. 11.

LINC and Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church have partnered with medical professionals to provide COVID-19 vaccination opportunities to the public. LINC is providing staff and other assistance for the ongoing event.

To get more information on the COVID-19 vaccine and more, visit: [kclinc.org/help](https://kclinc.org/help)



# Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

## Our Shared Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

## Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

## Our Guiding Principles

1. **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Provide ready access to a full array of effective services.
2. **PREVENTION:** Emphasize “front-end” services that enhance development and prevent problems, rather than “back-end” crisis intervention.
3. **OUTCOMES:** Measure system performance by improved outcomes for children and families, not simply by the number and kind of services delivered.
4. **INTENSITY:** Offering services to the needed degree and in the appropriate time.
5. **PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT:** Use the needs, concerns, and opinions of individuals who use the service delivery system to drive improvements in the operation of the system.
6. **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Decentralize services to the places where people live, wherever appropriate, and utilize services to strengthen neighborhood capacity.
7. **FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS:** Create a delivery system, including programs and reimbursement mechanisms, that are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to respond to the full spectrum of child, family and individual needs.
8. **COLLABORATION:** Connect public, private and community resources to create an integrated service delivery system.
9. **STRONG FAMILIES:** Work to strengthen families, especially the capacity of parents to support and nurture the development of their children.
10. **RESPECT AND DIGNITY:** Treat families, and the staff who work with them, in a respectful and dignified manner.
11. **INTERDEPENDENCE/MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Balance the need for individuals to be accountable and responsible with the obligation of community to enhance the welfare of all citizens.
12. **CULTURAL COMPETENCY:** Demonstrate the belief that diversity in the historical, cultural, religious and spiritual values of different groups is a source of great strength.
13. **CREATIVITY:** Encourage and allow participants and staff to think and act innovatively, to take risks, and to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
14. **COMPASSION:** Display an unconditional regard and a caring, non-judgmental attitude toward, participants that recognizes their strengths and empowers them to meet their own needs.
15. **HONESTY:** Encourage and allow honesty among all people in the system.



**Monday, Feb. 22, 2021 | 4 – 5:30 pm  
Online Meeting**

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## **Agenda**

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- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
  - a. January 2021 minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports**
- IV. LINC Return to School**
  - a. Update**
- V. COVID-19**
  - a. Community Outreach**
  - b. Vaccination Sites**
- VI. Other**
- VII. Adjournment**



## THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – JANUARY 25, 2021

The Local Investment Commission met online via Zoom. Treasurer **David Ross** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bert Berkley  
Sharon Cheers  
Tom Davis  
Aaron Deacon  
David Disney  
Mark Flaherty  
SuEllen Fried

Rob Givens  
Anita Gorman  
Tom Lewin  
Ken Powell  
Marge Randle  
David Rock  
Marj Williams

Ross announced that he is chairing today's meeting because **Jack Craft** is recovering from surgery.

*A motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2020, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.*

### Superintendents Reports

- **Dan Clemens**, Superintendent (North Kansas City School District) reported the district is working on a vaccination plan for teachers and is preparing for students to return to in-person class full-time. The new early childhood center opened in phase one at the new year; it will have capacity to serve 1,000 children ages 3-4. Next year freshmen will enroll in one of four career pathways; the goal is to have 1,600 students participating in internships. District activity is focused on construction, instructional improvement, and student engagement. School board member **Terry Ward** reported the district monitors Covid occurrences carefully and has found the infection rate in schools is half the county rate. Kindergarten enrollment this year was 200 below what was expected; the district is planning for what to do with those students next year.
- **Joana King**, Assistant Superintendent (Grandview School District) reported the district is planning for more students to return to in-person classes, enlisting librarians and reading specialists to teach classes in order to keep classroom sizes down, partnering with Visiting Nurses Association to vaccinate district and LINC staff. The district is moving forward with the Pathways program, planning for students to take on internships and earn credits.
- **Steve Morgan**, Assistant Superintendent (Fort Osage) reported grades K-4 are doing in-class learning, grades 5-12 hybrid. The district's Covid dashboard has shown improvement, with no increase since Christmas and only 12 current active cases among staff and students. The district is planning to bring students back full-time, partnering with Truman Medical Center to vaccinate district and LINC staff. The district will present a no-tax-increase bond issue on the April ballot for main campus traffic decongestion and other projects. The girls' wrestling team (a new activity this year) won the conference title. There followed a discussion of staff interest and resistance to getting vaccinated.
- **Christina Medina**, Director Public Relations (Center School District) reported the district is planning to bring students back to in-person learning on a hybrid model on Feb. 17; students include grades pre-K-5 and certain higher-grade students in need of engagement. The district is planning on-site vaccinations with Truman Medical Center.

- **Kevin Foster**, Executive Director (Genesis School) reported grades K-4 have been attending school in person since August; grades 5–8 continue to do hybrid learning. Covid monitoring has shown no increase after the holidays, and zero contacts traceable to school. Staff are being encouraged to sign up for the vaccine using all available sources; **Jim Nunnely** will encourage staff and families to get vaccinated. Genesis is one of 40 Missouri school districts selected to receive a federal grant to support a comprehensive community-based literacy support program.
- **Vivian Roper**, Superintendent (Tolbert Academy) reported Tolbert is following Kansas City Public Schools’ lead on returning to in-person learning, hoping to have students back in school in March. Tolbert is a pilot school for LEAN Lab to work with grades 3–5 to improve math scores. Tolbert is one of four charter schools to receive diversity, equity and inclusion training through Lively Paradox.
- **Christy Harrison**, Director of Extended Learning (Kansas City Public Schools) reported the district is making a vaccination plan with Truman Medical Center and hopes to have students back in school in March. Other recent district activities include: opening the Newcomer Center to support immigrant and refugee families with English language learning and family supports; finishing interim assessments of student learning during distance learning; partnering to support students writing essays for scholarship programs; providing daycare programs at eight sites. KCPS will open learning centers on Feb. 1 for students who need help will hold a virtual career fair on Feb. 20 for people interested in working in KCPS.

Caring Communities Administrator **Janet Miles-Bartee** introduced a discussion of family support provided by LINC site staff during the pandemic. The slideshow “LINC in Photos 2020” was shown.

Caring Communities Supervisor **Sean Akridge** reported coordinators provided support to many food distributions, including weekly and monthly events in the Center and Hickman Mills districts and four large distributions in December done in partnership with the Church of the Resurrection where over 1,200 families received groceries and \$50 grocery store gift cards.

Caring Communities Program Specialist **Carl Wade** reported LINC staff supported the U.S. Marine’s Toys for Tots project this year. Because of Covid the Marines faced a shortage of volunteers, so LINC staff stepped up to assemble and distribute the toys to families. A video on Toys for Tots was shown.

Caring Communities Supervisor **Jeff Hill** reported families have faced increasing needs and lack the knowledge of existing resources. LINC staff have reached out to families to identify needs and connect them to supports such as utility and housing assistance and job training.

President **Gayle A. Hobbs** reported Missouri Dept. of Social Services Acting Director **Jennifer Tidball** has given LINC the flexibility to use TANF money to provide utility and rental assistance.

LINC Deputy Director **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported LINC produced a special 10th anniversary addition of its annual Black History book in partnership with the Kansas City Public Library and Black Archives of Mid America. The book includes writing by local authors including poet Glenn North. A video of North reading his poem was shown.

LINC Human Resources Director **Trent DeVreugd** report LINC has been working hard to create a safe work environment for staff and has monitored info on vaccine availability and is encouraging staff to get vaccinated. Discussion followed.

The meeting was adjourned.

# Morning Star Baptist, LINC take Covid-19 vaccines to the people

February 16, 2021

Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



Hattie Lewis was in vaccination purgatory.

Her age and health conditions put the Kansas City woman squarely in the vulnerable population who were to be among the first in line for Covid-19 vaccinations.

But day by day she still waited for a reply from the official online waiting lists she'd filled out. Anxiously she had tried searching the Internet in vain for clues on how she might get a shot.

Then, she said, "Pastor Miles called."

The Rev. John Modest Miles, pastor of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, shared welcome news. The Missouri Army National Guard was bringing doses of a Covid vaccine to the church's community center at 27th Street and Prospect Avenue.

The church's collaboration with the National Guard, Gov. Mike Parson's office and LINC was meant to reach infection-vulnerable people in the heart of Kansas City just like her.

"We are trying our best to get our community vaccinated," Miles said from the floor of Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center Feb. 11. "Because Covid-19 is so serious — so serious — in our community. So many lives have been lost."

In all, the special vaccination effort over three days Feb. 11-13 expected to administer 500 doses in the first round of the two-dosage vaccination process.

Morning Star is in Kansas City's 3rd City Council District, a portion of the city that is majority Black and which has suffered a disproportionate number of Covid cases and Covid deaths. The area also has a high concentration of low-income residents who are less likely to have access to health care or their own transportation.

Gov. Parson has deployed National Guard units to help distribute vaccinations, and the team at Morning Star was eager to help the church and LINC bridge the vaccination gap, said Sgt. Jeromy Eslinger.

"We are helping . . . people (who) cannot normally get out very much, who don't have vehicles," Eslinger said, "so they can come here to the Morning Star center to get their vaccine."

James and Theresa McCoy came to get vaccinated, but were most concerned to bring McCoy's 96-year-old aunt, Juanita Mitchell, to get her first shot.

"She's 96 and she understands this is a serious matter and we're not going to take any chances with it," James McCoy said.

"Everyone should try to do their job keeping everybody safe," said Theresa McCoy, who, same as her husband and his aunt, was wearing a mask and social distancing. "I came so I could do my part keeping everybody safe, and myself and my family."

Currently, in Missouri's phased rollout of the vaccine, the state is offering vaccines to anyone in Phase 1B, Tier 2 or above. Tier 2 includes anyone 65 or older and anyone with medical conditions that put them at severe risk if infected with Covid.

The church and LINC worked the phones, reaching out to people in Tier 2 to help them take advantage of the vaccination program in their neighborhood.

It was an exciting opportunity, said LINC Caring Communities Administrator Janet Miles-Bartee, that the state and the National Guard agreed to work with Morning Star and LINC.

"They came to the heart of the community," she said. "We have a lot of our seniors who have really struggled to be able to go online and navigate the systems to be able to get the vaccine. So being able to get them to a neighborhood or community place that they are familiar with has been extraordinary."

The neighborhood location also makes it easier for vaccine recipients to make the return trip, since the vaccination process will require a second shot within a few weeks.

It's not painful, recipients said, and it is important. You can get the vaccine to protect yourself, or, as Opal Saunders said after her shot, you can get it to protect those around you.

"I'm here," she said, "to get my shot to get vaccinated because I don't want to be the one to give it to the rest of the family."



*Missouri Army National Guard Sgt. Jeromy Eslinger gives a Covid-19 vaccine shot to Opal Saunders at the Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center Feb. 11.*

# Vaccines and how to beat Covid: 'The answer is in us'

February 10, 2021

Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



*Nunnelly is a retired public health administrator — five decades in the field, including being the original chief operating officer of the Samuel U. Rodgers Health Clinic in Kansas City.*

So many people were coming into the Black Kansas City churches to get Covid-19 vaccinations that messengers sent for television stations.

You see? Jim Nunnelly, a self-described impatient man, brings up the recent vaccination efforts between Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church and St. James United Methodist Church with Truman Medical Centers to show that his community is likewise urgently determined to beat back the pandemic.

“There is this incorrect thinking that our community is powerless,” Nunnelly said.

In those churches, seeing the pastors working their connections and their clergy’s wide influence, Nunnelly saw the same drive that has propelled his work of connecting people who want the Covid vaccinations to the health agencies that have them.

“The answer is in us,” he said. “We have assumed Black people don’t know anything — don’t want to do anything . . . and that is so untrue. There is great capacity in our community. Great capacity.”

The work Nunnelly does, through his popular Facebook page and a constant regimen of phone calls, is overwhelmed just getting people who want the vaccine connected to providers. He’s not arguing against those who don’t trust the vaccines. He said he understands the history of neglect and abuse of Black communities that can fuel doubt for some.

Just watch what he does to make his case for vaccines. And why.



Nunnelly is a retired public health administrator with five decades in the field, including being the original chief operating officer of the Samuel U. Rodgers Health Clinic in Kansas City.

While earning his master's degree in public health at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, he served a three-month rotation at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and saw close-hand the CDC's relentless pursuit of a global understanding of health threats, including pandemics.

So when he chases after vaccination opportunities for others, he does so with conviction.

"When these people (the CDC) speak in favor of this vaccine, knowing my relationship with public health, and knowing their expertise — which is tremendous — I'm a little more advanced in moving the needle along," he said. "I'm assured this is the right thing to do."

He rushes to make the connections to vaccination opportunities because he feels we are in a race against Covid-19's isolating despair. Mental health is deteriorating and where communities doubt the vaccines or feel they are beyond their reach, they lose the light that can help see them out.

"Hopelessness kills more people than Covid will," he said.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

"One of the reasons I push so hard for the Covid vaccination," he said, "is that we can do something about this."

The state has set up a survey for Missourians to get in line and get notified about vaccination opportunities as the state works through a tiered system of prioritizing those residents who are most vulnerable physically and those whose jobs are essential or put them more at risk.

Residents can sign up as well on the Jackson County site and the Kansas City Health Department site. And Kansas City residents who can't get online can call 3-1-1 to get signed in. See other area county sites here.

People who are under the care of health systems or clinics can also check with their health care providers for vaccination opportunities.

Nunnelly, who was also the founding director of Jackson County's COMBAT anti crime and drug program in 1989, values partnerships and strengthening communities by using the building blocks already in place. It's a model he championed as one of the early architects of LINC's community programs.

And the work against Covid should follow the same course, he said, matching people in need with the resources in their communities and helping them do their work better.

Those are the kind of calls Nunnelly is making in aid of others, many of them listeners to his weekly radio show on KPRT 1590 AM and 106.1 FM, Plain Talk About Diabetes, Mondays at 1 p.m.

"I just don't want to see people die needlessly," he said. "I've lived long enough to see a lot of people die . . . I've seen polio as a child. I've seen flu epidemics. I've seen diabetes run rapidly through our community."

"Am I vocal? Yes. Am I impatient? Yes."



*Truman Medical Center registered nurse Raquel Garcia administers a Covid-19 vaccine to 80-year-old Virginia Davis at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church Jan. 25. Photo for KCUR 89.3 by Carlos Moreno.*

## Kansas vaccine divide: While WyCo struggles to get shots, rural county gives it away

FEBRUARY 14, 2021

BY STEVE VOCKRODT AND KEVIN HARDY

Wyandotte County could put 20,000 Covid-19 vaccine shots in the arms of its residents a week. If only it had that many to give.

Instead, the county is getting between 2,000 and 3,000 total doses a week, with most of those going to the health department of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas.

As vaccine doses trickle into the fourth-largest county in Kansas, with a population of more than 165,000, health officials have prioritized, among others, school teachers, grocery store employees and food processing plant employees — those vulnerable to the worst effects of the novel coronavirus.

That leaves a few shots a week left over for those 85 or older, also at high risk, as Kansas enters phase two of its vaccine distribution plan, which allows Kansans age 65 and up to get their shots.

“That’s really small numbers,” said Juliann Van Liew, director of the UG Public Health Department. “I think from our community perspective it’s our lack of ability to provide for our 65 and older folks right now that’s particularly frustrating.”

Meanwhile, in western Kansas, the Stanton County Health Department advertised on social media a vaccination event on Thursday at the 4-H building in Johnson, Kansas.

“For anyone who is 18 years old and over,” the Facebook flyer read. “No appointments necessary! First Come First Served.”

That news came as a surprise to Marci Nielsen, chief adviser for Covid coordination for Gov. Laura Kelly.

“This is the first time I’m hearing about it,” Nielsen said. “It doesn’t comport with what our recommendations are.”



Public health officials say vaccine availability has been limited in urban counties of both Kansas and Missouri, while supplies in rural counties have been more plentiful. Leon Slaughter of Kansas City received a first dose of the Moderna vaccine from Sgt. Jeromy Eslinger of the Army National Guard at a vaccination clinic Friday at Morning Star Family Life Center in Kansas City. TAMMY LJUNGBLAD TLJUNGBLAD@KCSTAR.COM

The health director in Stanton County, population just over 2,000, told a reporter she could not discuss vaccines.

The disparate experiences between Wyandotte County, which has three mass vaccination sites ready but struggles to get enough vaccine to administer it to its senior population, and Stanton County and its ability to invite anyone 18 years or older to get a shot, illustrates part of the difficulty facing Kansas as it tries to find its footing early on in its vaccination program.

Missouri has experienced a similar uneven distribution of the vaccine.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention early last week placed Kansas, along with Missouri and Alabama, as the three lowest-ranking states in the number of vaccine doses given.

(Kansas officials dispute the CDC’s conclusions, saying the state’s lagging ranking is attributable to delays in reporting

as opposed to foot-dragging in giving out doses.)

Missouri data show that many rural counties have vaccinated at a faster pace than their urban and suburban counterparts.

In the far northwestern corner of the state, about 20 percent of Atchison County residents have received at least one dose so far. That's more than double the rate of vaccination in St. Louis and Kansas City-area counties. On Friday, the state reported Jackson County had vaccinated about 7.1% of its residents.

Across Missouri, 9.7% of residents had received at least one shot by Friday, the state reported.

With criticism mounting, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson on Thursday rebuffed concerns that the vaccine rollout was disproportionately benefiting rural residents. State leaders said mass vaccination events held by the National Guard in rural parts of the state were meant to offset the high output of vaccines from big hospitals in Kansas City, St. Louis and Springfield.

"The idea that because I come from rural Missouri and there's some kind of magical divide, that I'm taking care of rural Missouri more than I am urban areas is just false," Parson told reporters.

The situation in both states may improve soon.

Kelly said on Friday that her discussions with the Biden administration indicated that Kansas should receive 90,000 doses of the vaccine this week, a doubling of what it got three weeks ago.

Missouri officials said recently that they, too, were told they would be receiving a bump this month.

A recent report in Missouri found that "vaccine deserts" — areas with limited-to-no access to the vaccine — were expanding in the state's biggest cities despite shrinking for the rest of the state.

In Kansas, an analysis of state data shows that larger counties tend to receive fewer doses per 1,000 residents than less populated rural counties.

Johnson County, the largest county in Kansas, received the lowest number of Covid vaccine doses per capita in the state's weekly shipment last week. Johnson County got

5,850 doses, according to KDHE data, and has 602,000 residents. That works out to 9.71 residents per 1,000 receiving a dose.

By comparison, Pawnee County, with 6,629 residents, got 500 doses, or 75.43 doses per 1,000 residents.

Sanmi Areola, director of the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment, said the county received 13.75% of the state's overall vaccines, while its population is nearly 21 percent of the number of people who live in Kansas.

"We should be getting, in our opinion, slightly more than we are," he said.

Public health officials in Kansas' larger counties say they're having a difficult time getting information from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment about how it makes decisions on where and how many vaccines to distribute.

Interviews with those health officials suggest frustration, a feeling shared with residents who aren't sure when they can get their vaccine, that the initial distribution of vaccines has not been adequate.

"Clearly not," Van Liew said. "Or we would have millions more people vaccinated, unfortunately."

## COUNTIES SAY THEY'RE PREPARED

Last fall, the Wyandotte County Health Department paid \$24,442 to order ultra-deep freezers.

It wanted to prepare, knowing that trials for Covid-19 vaccines were well underway and there would be a need to store vials at temperatures far colder than the arctic air currently settling over the Midwest.

When those freezers arrived in December, they were part of a larger mass vaccination program that the Unified Government wanted to have ready to reverse the worst pandemic in more than 100 years. The UG had three locations, including the former Kmart across Interstate 635 from the old Indian Springs Mall that's equipped to administer more than 20,000 vaccine doses a week.

With vaccines coming to Wyandotte County in a trickle, UG officials decided to keep one of the sites closed.

The county's readiness has been frustrated by a slow and

opaque response from Kansas government, which is responsible for allocating doses of vaccine it receives from the federal government.

In some cases, the state is approaching Wyandotte County with vaccine tasks it has already completed.

“The fact that right now that it’s February and now the state is asking us if we need some sort of system for registering and scheduling people, that shouldn’t be how it is, right?” Van Liew said. “We have already now invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into the technology we need because we couldn’t wait until February to do that kind of work.”

Pawnee County health officer Cheryl Hoebrecht, whose county had the highest per capita rate of vaccine doses last week, has a sunnier outlook.

Hoebrecht said the list of people wanting a vaccine is lengthy, but said the county gets by with what it receives from the state.

“Do we wish we had more? Well, yeah,” Hoebrecht said. “The more we have the more we have to give. We’re not stressed with the amount we are getting.”

In Lane County, nearly 300 residents have received at least one vaccine dose, said county health department director Arlene Doll. That’s not a huge number, but in one of Kansas’ least populated counties with about 1,500 residents, it represents nearly 20% of those who live in Lane County.

At the current pace, Doll hopes to have everyone on the county’s waiting list vaccinated in the next week or two.

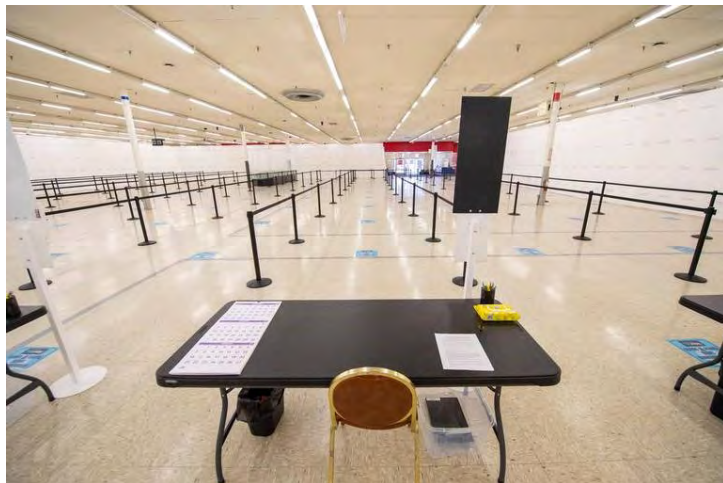
“When you know everybody in your county it’s easier,” she said. “We feel very fortunate.”

She said she could but has not requested more than the weekly 100 doses sent by the state. The only nurse in the health department, Doll said she would struggle to give more than that amount in a week.

The health department is reserving its first doses for those who live or work in Lane County.

“To me, you’ve got to protect your own,” Doll said.

That includes folks like the UPS driver who lives out of the county. Doll said she offered the vaccine to him, because he’s in and out of local businesses five days a week.



A former Kmart store in Kansas City, Kansas, is the site of a Covid-19 vaccination clinic. But limited supplies of vaccine means health officials haven’t been able to give out as many shots as they would like. TAMMY LJUNGBLAD TLJUNGBLAD@KCSTAR.COM

Still, Lane County gets plenty of requests. People with some connection, whether they used to live there or own local property, have tried to get on the waiting list. Doll said one man in his 70s called from Newton, more than three hours away. He was apparently trying to call every local health department across the state to secure a shot for himself and his wife.

“I feel like people are desperate,” Doll said. “KDHE is telling them to call the smaller surrounding counties where they live because they may be able to get their dose quicker than they can in bigger counties. I’ve had more than one person tell me that when they call in.”

KDHE doesn’t publicize its formula for how it allocates the vaccinations it receives from the federal government to different parts of the state. It provides a summary instead.

“The number one is per capita ... for the allocation,” said KDHE secretary Lee Norman at a press briefing last week. “But there’s other metrics. There’s some counties that in terms of the social determinants of health that have worse health outcomes and nutritional status and the like that have weighted a little bit higher.”

Another complication is how vaccines are packaged. The Moderna vaccine, which arrives in little pallets of 100 doses each, tends to go to rural counties because it does not require as deep a freeze as the Pfizer vaccine.

That means the state can’t parcel out doses with precision.

Norman said if a smaller county needs 240 doses, it might

get 300 because the shipment of vaccines can't be broken up. The next week, it might get 200 to even things out.

Nielsen, the governor's adviser, said the KDHE formula also takes into account vulnerable people who are likelier to die from a Covid infection, as well as how willing counties are to accept vaccines.

Nielsen said she understood concerns from people in larger counties — she lives in Douglas County — who have anxiety about getting the vaccine.

"I guess the first thing I would say is remember there's a shortage, so that's the big problem is not everybody is going to get vaccine," Nielsen said. "Even the way a county might choose to prioritize their vaccine could potentially impact what their inventory is at any point in time."

### **TARGETING HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES**

Wyandotte County shares many of the characteristics reflected in KDHE's prioritization plan. It's one of the largest counties, it's been battered by Covid infections, it is ready to administer large numbers of vaccines and it has areas that are densely populated with low-income and minority populations that are most vulnerable to the coronavirus.

The slow distribution of vaccine to the county has meant public health officials initially prioritized certain professions like health care, education, postal workers and child care providers — all jobs that tend to skew white and middle- to upper-middle class.

Mindful of unequal distribution of the vaccine, Van Liew said the county plans to target three zip codes it has identified as the most vulnerable to the coronavirus, based on the rates of infection and the number of residents who lack health insurance coverage, an indicator of income and health outcomes.

"There are portions and people in our community who by the nature of where they live and their employment situation and their comorbidities are at higher risk so it is our job as a health department to figure out who those people are and to get the vaccine to them," Van Liew said.

Those zip codes are:

66101 — generally downtown Kansas City, Kansas, east of 10th Street between Fairfax and Armourdale.

66102 — a long stretch from 10th Street west to College Parkway, between Parallel Parkway and Interstate 70.

66105 — Armourdale.

The county worked on its own social vulnerability index, a way to identify not only who is likely to get the coronavirus, but to go further and identify who was also likely to die if they got it. Among those likelier to die were those who had less access to health care and lower income to manage if they had an infection.

Jason Glenn, an assistant professor at the University of Kansas Medical Center's department of history and philosophy of medicine, said that, for example, in healthcare emergency room and family doctors have a high risk of contracting the coronavirus, but also have a lower risk of dying

"So your lowest wage earners, like your CNAs (certified nursing assistant), your orderlies and whatnot, those folks had a much higher vulnerability of mortality if they were exposed to the virus," Glenn said. "There's a number of reasons behind that: The lower the income you make, the more likely you are to be a person of color, and the more likely you also are to have any of the comorbid conditions that Covid likes to eat up."

*The Star's Katie Bernard contributed to this report.*

# Vaccine Signups Cater to the Tech-Savvy, Leaving Out Many

STATELINE ARTICLE February 10, 2021 By: [Jenni Bergal](#) Topics: [Business of Government](#) & [Health](#) Read time: 8 min



Mary Chrisan, 71, spent hours on both her cellphone and iPad trying to arrange an appointment online for a COVID-19 vaccination through the Mississippi State Department of Health website and on its listed registration phone line. Older adults across the country who can't easily navigate online technology are finding it difficult to sign up for appointments.

Rogelio V. Solis/The Associated Press

Like millions of older adults across the country, Allan Potter and his wife, Vicki, are eager to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Potters, who live in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, are prime candidates. They're both 73. He suffers from a neuromuscular disorder. She has multiple myeloma. They hoped to sign up for the shots and get them quickly.

But they don't have a computer or a smartphone. And, as in many states and counties, that's a problem because most of the registration and appointment-sending is being done online.

"Not all of us have a computer or are on the internet," Allan Potter said. "We're old-school. We've got a landline and that's it. It's very frustrating."

While many older adults have access to the internet and are tech-savvy, others are not. And even some of those who are used to going online are having a hard time navigating complicated registration websites. Others who are being left out include low-income residents who may not have the technology and people in rural areas with poor internet connections.

Many older people are turning to adult children, other family members or friends to help them. Others are just left out.

"People are so frustrated because nobody is taking the time to explain how the system is working," said Cindy Piotrowski, director of the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Portage County in Wisconsin. "The ageism and the societal disrespect for people who are aging is more pronounced now than ever before."

Some states have set up websites where residents can register to get vaccines. So have county health departments, hospitals, pharmacies and grocery stores. But the websites typically require email addresses or a cellphone that can receive text messages. That doesn't help older adults like the Potters, who have neither.

"The irony is that the people who most need quick access to the vaccine may be those who are least likely to have internet skills or access to make an online appointment," said Susan Nash, a consulting research scholar at the Stanford Center on Longevity, a research center at the university.

Some states and counties have launched telephone hotlines that residents can call to register, and in some cases, get appointments. But for now, most require online signups.

Tammy Taylor-Bufford, a cardiology nurse practitioner in Clarksdale, Mississippi, knows that means a lot of people are being missed, including some of her patients.

"The majority of the patients in our clinic are African American. Many of these older people don't have computers or smartphones," she said. "Those are the kind of people who get left behind, left out."

Taylor-Bufford decided to take it upon herself to help them. So far, she has registered about 18 patients for vaccines online, sometimes using her email address for confirmation. She

searches the state's website for any appointments that might pop up locally and tries to grab them.

Even some of her patients who use the internet need her help, Taylor-Bufford found, because they were confused or put off by the online registration process.

Arthur Allen, 75, of Courtland, Mississippi, was one of them. He has a smartphone, which he tried to use to register online for a vaccine.

"Once I finally got on the website, it told me the wait time was something like 120 minutes. I said, no, I can't do that," Allen said. "I'm not as good on the technology as my grandkids, and this was such a hassle."

Allen turned to Taylor-Bufford, who registered him and his wife, Ever. They got their first shot Feb. 1.

"When they pushed out this thing, they were thinking about the younger folks. But what about the older folks who don't have that technology, like some of the ones at my church?" Allen said. "And I live in a rural area, where many people who do have computers can't even get good internet service."

## Digital Divide

The digital divide between older and younger people isn't new, but the pandemic has made that gap clearer than ever. Older adults who don't use technology couldn't get emails or video-chat with their grandchildren. They couldn't search online for COVID-19 test sites.

And now, when the vaccine has become available to people their age—who are at higher risk of contracting the virus—many can't figure out how to access it.

A 2017 Pew Research Center report [found that](#) while 82% of people aged 65 to 69 were internet users, just 44% of those aged 80 and up were, and only 28% of those residents had broadband service. (The Pew Charitable Trusts funds the research center and *Stateline*.)

Just 17% of those aged 80 and older owned smartphones.

"The last 10 months without internet access have been very hard for those people," said the Stanford Institute's Nash.

And for older people who do use technology, Nash said, there's a second digital divide between those who are completely competent using it and those who have only basic skills and find it difficult to figure out something new.



"The irony is that the people who most need quick access to the vaccine may be those who are least likely to have internet skills or access to make an online appointment."

**Susan Nash, consulting research scholar at the Stanford Center on Longevity**

Lucille Koschmann, 96, said she can receive and send email on her computer, but that's about it. Her adult children have been trying to help sign her up online for a vaccine appointment but have had no luck.

"It's difficult with a capital D," said Koschmann, a retired teacher in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. "My family is very concerned. They've tried and they haven't gotten any kind of answer that satisfies."

Koschmann turned to her local senior center. A staffer ultimately got her placed on a waiting list for an appointment at a local hospital.

"I called the hospital to see if I could come. They said, 'No, we'll call you when you can come.' But they are out of vaccine and are waiting for it," Koschmann said. "It's very draining. What more are we supposed to do?"

## State Sites

In some states, such as Wisconsin, where Koschmann lives, there is no statewide online vaccine registration site. Medical systems, pharmacies and public health departments each are doing their own registrations.

Other states have created online registration sites. Some also have set up phone lines, though residents still need to go online to book appointments for vaccines.

But some states, such as Indiana and Vermont, have phone lines that older adults without technology can dial to set up appointments.

The Vermont Department of Health has scheduled nearly 12,000 of its 26,500 appointments for residents aged 75 and up [through a state phone call-in system](#), according to spokesperson Kae Warchut. It's now getting about 800 calls a day, and the average hold time is about one and a half minutes, she said.

In Minnesota, residents 65 and older who only have a landline and registered through a call center late last month will get a call if they are randomly selected for an appointment from a vaccination registry, according to Jesse Stock, a state Department of Health spokesperson.

And in Connecticut, state health officials turned to the United Way of Connecticut, which already operates its 211 information system. The organization set up a toll-free vaccine appointment [assistance line](#) for those who don't have access to technology or aren't fluent in using it.

Hospitals, health departments and federally qualified health centers allot a certain number of vaccine appointment slots for residents who use the phone registration system, said Lisa Tepper Bates, the group's president and CEO.

So far, the United Way has scheduled about 16,250 call-in appointments for vaccines, according to Tepper Bates.

When the phone registration started in mid-January, staffers could only book appointments at a drive-thru mass vaccination site near Hartford, which was a problem for those who lived far away.

"The biggest challenge was the fact that when it was announced, we had a gigantic typhoon of calls. That's hard for any call center to manage," she said. "We have a call-back option if we can't get to them pretty quickly, and we had a big queue of people who wanted to be called back."

But the organization has committed to add locations, Tepper Bates said, and starting this week should be able to make about 10,000 appointments a week at nearly a dozen sites. While the center had been able to answer calls within three minutes of hold time, that changed after the state recently announced it was expanding eligibility to those ages 65 through 74.

The call center is being inundated and hold times are "very long," Tepper Bates said, noting that callers still can opt for a callback. United Way is doubling its call center staff of 125 to manage the added demand.

"This is already a time when so many of them are stressed and feeling anxious," she said. "They're incredibly grateful that they're getting a human being on the phone who can help them get an appointment."

## Local Help

Some local governments also are trying to reach out to those who don't—or can't—use the internet.

In Bucks County, Pennsylvania, residents without smartphones or online access can phone a call center and pre-register. The call center sends their information to the local health

department, which will call them when an appointment opens, said county spokesperson Larry King.

The county launched the call center last month, and about 100 people a day are pre-registering, he said.

In St. Lawrence County, New York, workers at the Office for the Aging are using their own cellphone numbers and county emails [to register](#) older adults. Staffers then mail or deliver appointment information and forms to them in person.

In Knox County, Tennessee, the health department reserved about 400 appointments for people who called an information line because they didn't have internet access, according to spokesperson Kelsey Wilson. The county will continue offering a dial-in option for registration and appointments.

In Greenburgh, New York, a suburban area outside of New York City, town officials have created a volunteer network called the Greenburgh Covid Angels to help older adults register for vaccines online. Town Supervisor Paul Feiner said many older adults had contacted him and were confused about the process, so he put out the call for volunteers. About 180 have signed up.

"When people try calling the New York state hotline to get help, they can't get through," Feiner said. "It's very frustrating for seniors. One person told me that they thought they'd get a heart attack just trying."

The idea behind the network, Feiner said, is not just to register older adults but also to let them know that they're not alone, that someone is there to help them.

"These people are really worried," he said. "They feel if they don't get the vaccine they may not live."

At the center on aging in Portage County, Wisconsin, Piotrowski said three staffers on each shift take calls from older adults without internet access and help register them for vaccines online.

Between a third and 40% of older adults in Wisconsin do not use the internet, she said. Many are calling various locations that are administering shots and being told they need to go online to register.

So far, the center has registered 44 people, including the Potters and Lucille Koschmann, though none have gotten appointments yet, Piotrowski said.

# LINC Before & After-School Program



## Center School District

**Mon. – Fri., 7 a.m. until school begins  
After school until 6 p.m.**

LINC will offer a FREE, high-quality before and after-school program.  
at Boone, Center and Indian Creek elementary schools.

Space is limited and enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Based on public health department guidance, LINC programming, hours and activities may be revised.

**Pre-enroll online at [kclinc.org/preenroll](http://kclinc.org/preenroll)**

### What you'll need to enroll:

- Contact information (full address/phone) for emergency contacts/authorized pick-up persons, child's doctor
- Immunization records
- If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, an ICP (Individualized Care Plan) from your child's doctor.
- 5 to 10 minutes for parent interview

### For more information or an appointment:

**Indian Creek** Carl Wade, (816) 918-8306 or [cwade@kclinc.org](mailto:cwade@kclinc.org)  
**Boone** Dr. John Herrera, (816) 349-3695 or [jherrera@kclinc.org](mailto:jherrera@kclinc.org)  
**Center Elem.** Richard Williams, (816) 349-3469 or [riwilliams@kclinc.org](mailto:riwilliams@kclinc.org)



# 'What can I do?'; LINC rushes to aid families in devastating apartment fire

January 20, 2021

Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

The overnight news footage, just days after Christmas, swept like the fire itself through LINC's communities.

A devastating fire had fully engulfed one of the large residences at the Waldo Heights Apartments at 80th Street and Troost Avenue in south Kansas City.

As the morning after dawned with a chilling snow over the charred ruins, LINC Site Coordinator Calvin Wainright at Melcher Elementary Schools and his wife, the Rev. Cassandra Wainright, took in the news.

So did Danisha Clarkson, LINC's site coordinator at Banneker Elementary School.

At least 30 families, in the care of the Red Cross, had lost their home and everything in it.

The families were nameless in those first reports, but the LINC coordinators saw remembered faces — families like the ones Clarkson had just visited there in the weeks just before Christmas to check on their welfare for the Kansas City Public Schools, and to hand out grocery gift cards from LINC.

Urgency overwhelmed her as she saw the images of the terrible flames.

"Wow," she exclaimed to herself. "What can I do?"

The Wainrights immediately were mobilizing action. Cassandra, program director of the Calvary Community Outreach Network and the president of the Concerned Clergy Coalition, was on the phone with other Kansas City pastors, coordinating multiple churches' aid.

And Calvin thought of something LINC had in store. He'd helped Clarkson earlier in the fall when LINC's site at Banneker Elementary School took on the trove of clothing items and goods when a neighborhood church had to close its charity closet.

Clarkson and her staff member, Sheronda Luckado, had sorted the motley collection, and laundered it at the school.

Wainright texted Clarkson that morning: What about those clothes?

Clarkson texted back: I'm already on it.

Kansas City's schools were closed for the holiday break, but Clarkson had called Banneker's principal, Harrison Neal. And he quickly met LINC's team at the school to open the building so they could get to the clothes closet.

At least three site coordinators plus lead LINC staffers would join in the relief effort.

Neal knew what Clarkson knew, Clarkson said, that there were school families suddenly homeless.

Clarkson previously had been out into the community to check on families that the school was having trouble reaching. LINC site coordinators at schools across Kansas City were taking on this role as the pandemic and remote learning left so many families feeling isolated.

LINC was also distributing grocery store gift cards to help families through the winter, especially during the holiday



*Twitter photo from U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives*

weeks when the schools' breakfast and lunch delivery programs were closed.

Some of Clarkson's visits had been to the Waldo Heights Apartments, including the building that burned. That's who she saw in her mind as she rallied others to help after the fire.

She saw the mother who stepped out to meet her days before Christmas after Clarkson reached her on the phone and told her she was coming by with another LINC site coordinator, Jason Ervin.

Clarkson had a gift card for her. Clarkson asked her how her family was doing, gave her the card and wished her a happy holiday.

"She thanked us," Clarkson said. "And she said, 'You all just don't know . . . I appreciate this.'"

The day after the fire, LINC's team gathered clothing items, plus collections of toys from the Marines Toys for Tots program that were left over from Christmas and packed up 15 boxes that they loaded into three vehicles.

St. Elizabeth School, a little more than a mile northwest of the Waldo Heights Apartments, had stepped up as the hub for organizations bringing aid for the displaced families. The community response seen inside St. Elizabeth's, including the churches Cassandra Wainright and helped rally, plus so many others who came, was mighty, Calvin Wainright said.

He was not surprised.

"A lot is going on in the city a lot of people don't know about," he said. "When you see the partnerships, you don't talk race, you don't talk politics, you just do the work of God and keep moving."

Many organizations came forward quickly to help the families, said Angie Springs, spokesperson for the American Red Cross, the non-profit disaster relief agency. The Red Cross made sure families had a place to stay, helping them with emergency housing plans, including providing hotel rooms for those that had no place to shelter. The Red Cross also provided purchase cards to help families with essential needs.

The Westport Salvation Army, Avenue of Life, the Concerned Clergy Coalition and St. Elizabeth School were major partners among many that joined to help the Red Cross with aid, Springs said.

"No one can do it alone," Springs said. "It takes all of us doing our part."

The work goes on, Clarkson and Wainright said. LINC will continue working with its school partners, following up with families, helping each other.



*Kansas City Star photo by Rich Sugg*



*A collection of storage bins, boxes and bags hold relief clothing and goods in LINC's office at Banneker Elementary School in Kansas City Public Schools.*



*Some 15 boxes of relief clothes, toys and goods from LINC's office at Banneker Elementary School were packaged and delivered to help victims of the fire.*

# Raghuveer, Nunnelly to be honored at SCLC's Martin Luther King Interfaith Service

January 8, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

Two community crusaders very well known to LINC will be honored Sunday as part of Kansas City's tribute to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Tara Raghuveer, who has become a champion of tenants' rights, and long-time community activist Jim Nunnelly will receive the 2021 Evelyn Wasserstrom Awards at Kansas City's annual MLK Jr Interfaith Service.

The service will be virtual this year, appearing live on Facebook, Jan. 10 at 2 p.m. on the Facebook pages of event sponsors Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Kansas City and Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee.

The Interfaith Service kicks off more than a week of events celebrating King through Martin Luther King Jr. Day Jan. 18.

Raghuveer is a Shawnee Mission East alum and Harvard graduate whose research into evictions led her to back to Kansas City to take on the cause of tenants' rights, protecting vulnerable families from eviction and housing abuses, creating the non-profit advocacy organization KC Tenants.

As a researcher and analyst, Raghuveer collaborated with LINC in the creating the KC Eviction Project. Among its work, the project has partnered with the Kansas City Public Schools and Legal Aid of Western Missouri to use housing court eviction data to help vulnerable families avoid eviction and strengthen school attendance.

Nunnelly was one of the architects of LINC's Caring Communities service model. The career public health administrator was a civil rights activist from his college days protesting segregated diners as a student at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Nunnelly's community activism included helping create the Jackson County Drug Court to help provide treatment-based intervention, and as a radio host giving voice to Kansas City youth, and advocating for health with his program, Plain Talk About Diabetes.

The service will also honor Operation Breakthrough, the non-profit created 50 years ago by Sister Corita Bussanmas and Sister Berta Sailer to provide quality child care for children of the working poor. Today the program serves hundreds of families.

The service will feature guest speakers the Rev. Dr. Traci Blackmon of the Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Rabbi Michael Zedek of the Temple B'nai Jehudah in Kansas City and the Congregation Emmanuel in Chicago.



*Tara Raghuveer, far left, and Jim Nunnelly, inset right, will be honored for their work this weekend.*



# LINC Chess

*Online Tournament!*

**Saturday, March 6**

5 Rounds. Every hour starting at 9:00 a.m.

***First-time players must complete all steps!***

***Returning virtual tournament players only need to complete Step 4.***

**Step 1:** Create an account at lichess.org

***To Participate!***

**Step 2:** Join the LINC team.

- At lichess.org, go to the menu "Community" and select "Teams".
- Search for and join "**LINC Virtual Chess Program**"
- Solve the checkmate puzzle to join the team.
- Team approvals will be approved daily at noon.

**Step 3:** Submit your online info at [kclinc.org/chess](http://kclinc.org/chess)

**Step 4:** After approval, join the tournament on lichess.org.

- At lichess.org, go to the menu "Community" and select "Teams".
- Click the team "**LINC Virtual Chess Program**"
- Click the appropriate division in the list to join.

## **Schedule:**

5 Rounds. Each round starts at the top of the hour beginning at 9:00 a.m.

## **Divisions:**

K-2, K-5, K-8, K-12, and Adult!

## **More information:**

Ken Lingelbach, LINC Chess Coordinator  
[klingelbach@kclinc.org](mailto:klingelbach@kclinc.org), (816) 650-7525



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