

# SERVICE COORDINATORS CONNECT OLDER ADULTS TO LIFE-SAVING VACCINES



A CASE STUDY PRESENTED BY

# ABOUT AASC

The American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) is a professional membership association and a national resource for service-enriched housing professionals. AASC's more than 4,000 members assist elderly and disabled residents and families living in affordable housing communities to identify, locate, and acquire the services and supports necessary to become and remain self-sufficient. Established in 1999, AASC provides education, advocacy, best practices, leadership, and networking opportunities for its members.

## BACKGROUND

***Vaccines are a key component of healthy aging.*** Older adults are most at risk for negative outcomes from contracting the flu and COVID-19 because immune systems weaken with age, making it more difficult to fight off illness. In response, service coordinators who support older adults living in affordable housing prioritize providing residents with reliable health information and access to vaccines.

Service coordinators regularly organize clinics and health fairs on their properties, connect residents to care providers and support better understanding of vaccines. This work ramped up during the COVID-19 pandemic as service coordinators worked on the front lines to protect our nation's most vulnerable and ensure their

continued wellbeing. As a result, researchers with the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University determined that service coordinators promoted resiliency among the older adults they served during the pandemic.

These efforts are especially necessary to meet the heightened needs of the residents they serve. Service coordinators report that residents living in their communities are older (average age of 74) and sicker (average of four chronic health conditions) than the average population, which leaves them more at risk to be hospitalized or die from complications of vaccine-preventable illnesses. A large share of the population they serve (49%) are also facing health disparities that further increase their risks.

## Vaccines are Vital to Healthy Aging

90% of influenza-related deaths and 50%–70% of influenza-related hospitalizations occur in Americans ages 65 and older.

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81% of COVID-19 deaths in 2020 occurred among those aged 65 years and older.

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90% of people hospitalized with influenza in recent years had at least one underlying health condition.







## VACCINATION SUPPORT

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services signaled concerns about older adults accessing the COVID-19 vaccine in early 2021. These risk factors for not being able to access the vaccine included being without transportation and lacking technology. Older adults living in HUD-assisted housing face these same challenges, however those with service coordination programs onsite have the support to overcome them. Service Coordinators support residents in the following ways:



Hosting on-site clinics through partnerships with local health care providers and pharmacies.



Educating residents about vaccinations by organizing health programs and distributing educational materials.



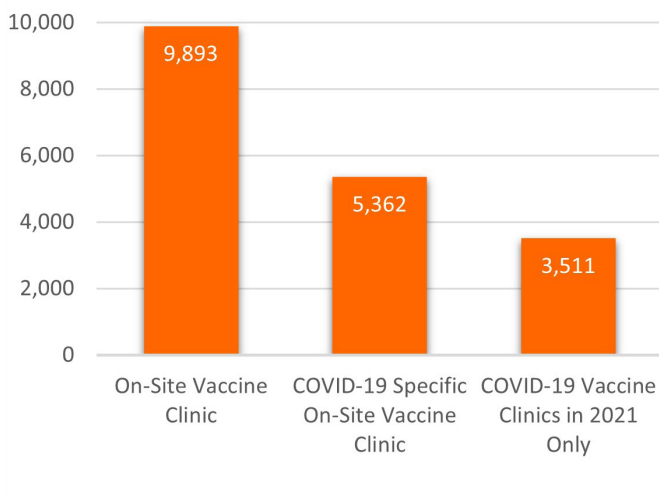
Connecting residents to off-site vaccinations by scheduling appointments and transportation.



Maintaining residents' vaccine information to ensure they remain on schedule.

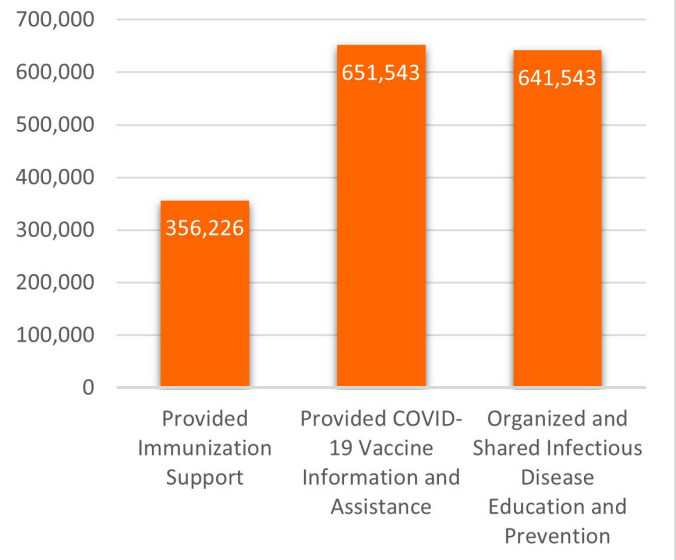
### *Programs and Services Facilitated by Service Coordinators*

**On-Site Vaccine Clinics**



\*Data represent interactions reported in AASC Online from December 2020-November 2023. Approximately 65% of HUD-funded service coordinator programs track resident interactions in AASC Online.

**Direct Vaccine Support**



AASC is proud to be part of the Aging and Disability Vaccination Collaborative (ADVC). The Collaborative, led by USAging, distributes funding to organizations across the aging and disability networks to support an array of vaccination education and promotion activities, including community vaccine clinics, in-home vaccinations, transportation to vaccination sites, and outreach and education for older adults and people with disabilities. The ADVC is funded through a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living.

 **AGING & DISABILITY**  
**Vaccination**  
**Collaborative**  
*powered by* **USAging**

# ON-SITE VACCINE CLINICS

Service coordinators are knowledgeable leaders in their communities, connecting older adults living in affordable housing to vital resources and supports that keep them aging in place. As part of this work, service coordinators prioritize building community partnerships and facilitating programming focused on healthy choices, managing chronic diseases, and improving overall wellness.

Many collaborate with local pharmacies, colleges and health care providers to bring reliable vaccination information to residents and host annual on-site vaccination clinics.



*Photo: Vaccination clinic at Village de Memoire*

## *Making Vaccines Accessible Through Partnerships*

Each year, service coordinator Rebecca Beene collaborates with a local pharmacy to bring flu, pneumonia, COVID-19 and shingles vaccinations directly to her residents. She also partners with a home health agency to speak to residents about the importance of up-to-date vaccinations.

Prior to the clinics, Rebecca works closely with the pharmacist to review residents' vaccination records in the Louisiana LINKS registry.

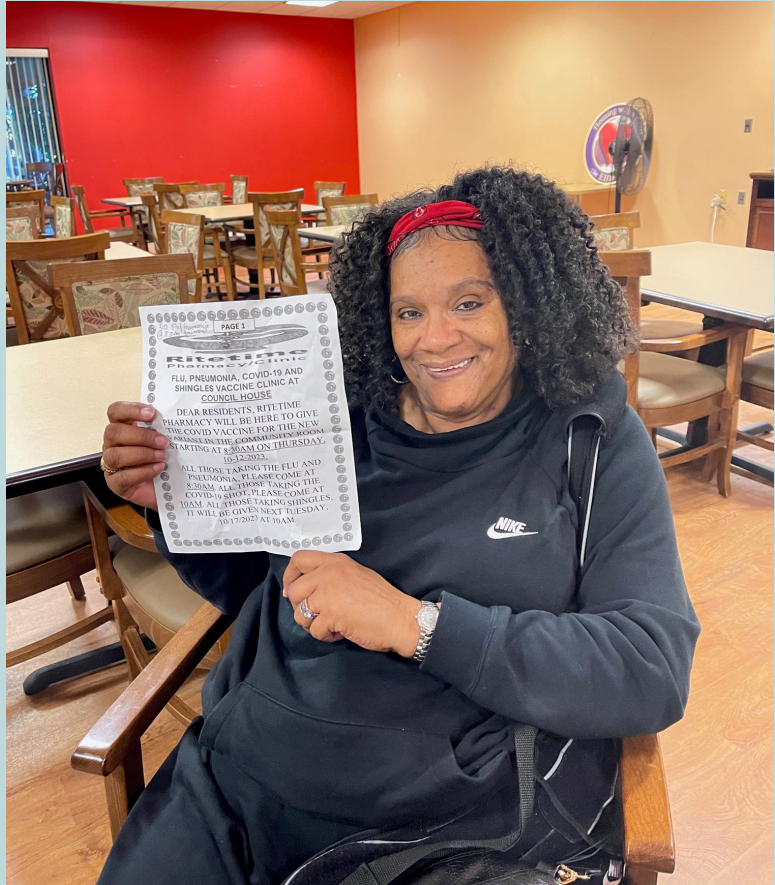
"The relationship with the local pharmacy for vaccines is very important for the health of the residents of Village de Memoire because we are a rural area and transportation is limited and is not free unless the resident is a Medicaid recipient. Another important reason is because many of our residents would not otherwise receive the vaccinations for various reasons, such as: they forgot to speak to the doctor about it during their visit or they do not see a doctor on a regular basis," she says.

## *Meeting Residents Where They Live*

"We hold annual vaccination clinics at my property in the doorway of residents' units. For staff and board members, in the Community Room. I have found this to be the easiest way to hold the clinic for our residents since we have one elevator and many residents cannot use the stairs. Therefore, pharmacists move from resident to resident with a cart. Residents are already sitting in their doorway; all paperwork is pre-completed, and color coded with which shot each resident (with name and unit #) is receiving. Insurance information is given to the pharmacy one week prior, but another is given on the day of the clinic. I have partnered with one of the pharmacists at Walgreens who is reliable and cares about the residents at Loyal Heights Manor and the residents remember and like her."

*-Chris Louie, Service Coordinator at Loyal Heights Manor in Seattle, Washington*





*Photos: Annual on-site vaccination clinics organized by Service Coordinator Kate Acquah are well attended by the residents of Council House in Maryland.*

## *Eliminating Barriers*

“Most of our residents do not have transportation to access the needed vaccinations. Community Pharmacy comes out to the property offering everything from flu to shingles vaccinations and files all the necessary paperwork to insurance companies for the resident. We have led this community vaccination clinic for several years now and the residents at Point Villa Apartments are very thankful and grateful for the community advocacy from both the Service Coordinator and Community Pharmacy.”

*-Celena Regan,  
Service Coordinator at  
Point Villa Apartments in Louisiana*

“My residents are so grateful to the pharmacist and nurses that take time to come to them. The majority of my residents do not own a vehicle and it costs them to take a cab if the local Council on Aging van is unavailable.”

*-Jessie Messerschmidt,  
Service Coordinator at  
Sunshine Center in Louisiana*





## *Highlighting the Importance of Vaccinations*

Educating residents about the importance of up-to-date vaccinations and making overall healthy choices during flu and cold season is often a precursor to hosting on-site clinics at most properties. This ensures residents are knowledgeable about their options when it's time to sign up for vaccinations.

Pictured above, Sage Health staff provides an overview of the current flu season expectations and the new COVID-19 booster shot to Jacksonville Towers residents in Jacksonville, Arkansas. Service Coordinator Luciana Ridgel also partners with the Jacksonville Senior Center, Cornerstone Pharmacy, and Oak Street Health to help educate residents on the importance of vaccinations.

At South Boston Elderly Apartments & Robert A. Georgine Towers, Service Coordinator Tracy Campbell provides information and updates about vaccinations year round through educational pamphlets and discussions. She also partners with the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, which comes to the property to answer residents' questions about diseases and vaccinations.

"I'm always encouraging my residents to learn about how important vaccines can be for their health," she says, adding "The residents are very comfortable with Osco Pharmacy and Massachusetts College of Pharmacy because

of the long-lasting relationship which is very important to build trust and comfortability."

Meanwhile, the pharmacy partnerships fostered by Stefanie Streib, a Service Coordinator at Essex Co-op in Maryland, resulted in health-related trainings for service coordinators led by the Executive Director of the Peter Lamy Center on Drug Therapy and Aging. "It was a privilege to have such an expert provide us with valuable information to help us in the course of our work with our members," she says.

*Photo: Vaccine clinic for South Boston Elderly Apartments & Robert A. Georgine Towers.*





## Providing Ongoing Support

Like many service coordinators, Cherene McFadden worked quickly and tirelessly to ensure her residents were included among the first older adults in the country to receive COVID-19 vaccinations when they rolled out in December 2020. She now regularly organizes clinics for the booster and other vaccinations for the residents she serves at Steelworkers Towers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the photo on the left, Steelworkers Towers residents complete registration forms ahead of their vaccinations.

Building partnerships to provide regular vaccinations and health education is just one part of the equation when it comes to keeping residents protected against illnesses.

Service coordinators motivate residents to make healthy choices from the moment they complete the first intake assessment. Many report inquiring about vaccination history and interest at that time.

Once vaccination clinics and educational programs are on the calendar, service coordinators support residents by helping them to gather documentation and complete paperwork necessary for vaccination. They also assist partners by submitting relevant resident information.

## Preparing for Clinics

In preparation for the Los Angeles Department of Health administering vaccinations at Steel Plaza, Service Coordinator Angela Larios supports residents by assisting them with gathering registration items such as their California IDs and COVID-19 vaccination cards. In anticipation of the annual clinics, Angela says she also “reviews infectious disease wellness status and reinforces general medical recommendations for vaccines during initial or annual assessments.”







*Top: Service Coordinators at Pines of Edgewater in Illinois serve a large and diverse population. Vaccination education requires cultural knowledge and careful consideration for personal beliefs and attitudes. They partnered with Walgreens, Rush Medical Center and the Chicago Department on Public Health to host COVID-19 vaccine clinics in 2021.*

*Left: Pharmacists work to provide any vaccinations requested by residents at Torre Jesus in Puerto Rico. Service Coordinator Sylvia Garcia says they've recently included Hepatitis B, tetanus and shingles.*

*Right: All Diocese of Camden service coordinators host at least two vaccination clinics annually at their New Jersey properties. "We are so thankful for these partnerships," Service Coordinator Team Leader Alisa Erdman said of the pharmacies that lead the clinics. "They have grown to know to our residents which is comforting when residents may be hesitant on a vaccine."*