

NO ONE
IS SAFE
UNTIL
EVERYONE
IS SAFE



WHY SHOULD MIGRANTS BE INCLUDED IN NATIONAL VACCINATION PLANS?

1. Currently, IOM estimates that there are nearly 272 million international migrants, in addition to 80 million forcibly displaced persons, more than two thirds of whom are displaced within the borders of their countries due to conflict or natural disasters.
2. Contrary to popular perception, most of these forcibly displaced persons are in low- or middle-income countries, which often have weaker health systems and struggle to meet the health needs of their population.
3. For migrants and other displaced persons, exclusion from health services happens due to legal requirements, language barriers, prohibitive costs and other factors. IOM has seen it time and again with COVID-19 testing and lack of access to essential health services.
4. The frequently dangerous circumstances that mobile populations face (before, during and after their journeys) often places them at higher risk of falling ill. For example, they may live or work in overcrowded or unsafe conditions, have limited access to clean water and sanitation, or have disrupted continuity of care because of their itinerant status.
5. For migrants, COVID-19 vaccine access remains uneven. In many cases, early eligibility for vaccination depends on factors including place of residence and migration status in addition to the criteria—age, health history, employment—typically assessed for citizens.
6. Public health officials and epidemiologists consistently emphasize the need to vaccinate the entire population within a jurisdiction. Impediments to vaccine access—including visa status, detention, privacy concerns, and distrust of government or health systems—can reduce immunization rates among migrants and create “clusters” of under-vaccinated communities. When migrant populations are not offered access to immunizations, epidemiological forecasts suggest negative effects on the population at-large.
7. No country will be safe from the fallout of the pandemic until all countries are protected. In order to ensure the well-being of everyone, the most vulnerable – including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and other people on the move – must not be left out of global efforts to fight back against COVID-19 and other diseases.

As countries the world over are launching mass COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, IOM stands ready to support national authorities and other international organizations in the roll-out, at the policy, technical and operational level. IOM has been providing vaccinations for decades, and has extensive experience, with trained staff and a robust infrastructure, in reaching people on the move and people in hard-to-reach locations. In 2019, IOM vaccinated over 180,000 refugees and immigrants in the process of migration, and about 450,000 children under the age of five against polio and measles in emergency settings. IOM supports immunization activities in about 80 countries.

IOM calls on Governments to count and include all migrants present in their territories – regardless of legal immigration status – in national COVID-19 vaccine distribution plans.

Learn more at

[RODakar.IOM.int/COVID-19](https://rodakar.iom.int/COVID-19)