

Biden: 200 million Americans have been vaccinated

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President Joe Biden speaks Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at the White House in Washington. | Evan Vucci/AP

President Joe Biden announced on Wednesday that his administration had achieved its target of 200 million coronavirus vaccinations during his first 100 days in office.

“This is an American achievement — a powerful demonstration of unity and resolve, what unity will do for us, and a reminder of what we can accomplish when we pull together as one people to a common goal,” Biden said at a White House event.

Biden, speaking on what was the 92nd day of his presidency, reported that more than half of all U.S. adults had received at least one shot as of last Sunday and that more than 80 percent of Americans 65 and older will have been partially or fully vaccinated by Thursday.

The administration also unveiled a new tax credit designed to encourage businesses with fewer than 500 employees to give paid time off to workers for getting vaccinated — a policy included in Biden’s \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, which was [signed into law](#) last month.

Businesses and nonprofits may receive a tax credit for up to \$511 per day of paid sick leave that employees take to get the shot or recover from its side effects from April 1 through Sept. 30.

Biden is also calling on all employers, regardless of size, to offer paid leave for their workers to get vaccinated — as well as urging companies to provide information about the shots and incentives to get them, such as product giveaways or other rewards.

The announcements come as the administration is reaching a [new turning point](#) in its campaign to vaccinate over 300 million Americans: Supply is beginning to exceed demand, and appointments are going unfilled in both rural areas and big cities.

The problem goes beyond vaccine hesitancy and extends to Americans who have neither easy access to the shot nor the motivation to get vaccinated. State and federal officials say the focus is now on meeting people where they are.

“We are now approaching groups of people who are — just by the fact that they’re younger, they are less at risk, and therefore, the urgency might be a little bit lower,” an administration official told reporters on Wednesday. “It doesn’t mean that they’re hesitant to get the vaccine. It just means it needs to be more convenient for them.”

Before he took office, Biden pledged in December to administer [100 million vaccinations](#) in his first 100 days, along with an objective of opening most schools nationwide.

Later that month, the Food and Drug Administration authorized emergency use of two vaccines from drugmakers Pfizer and Moderna, and public health experts predicted Biden’s vaccination target [would be achievable](#) given the government’s supply of shots.

But Biden [expressed frustration](#) with his coronavirus response team in January as transition officials became increasingly concerned about the 100-day timeline, citing internal divisions and the shortfalls of the Trump administration’s vaccine accelerator, Operation Warp Speed.

After Biden [rolled out his own plan](#) for a large-scale vaccination program, the immunization effort received another boost from the FDA’s authorization of drugmaker Johnson & Johnson’s single-shot vaccine, opening up a third option for U.S. use in February.

By March, Biden had [easily surpassed](#) his goal of 100 million vaccinations in 100 days, and he later announced a new mission to [double the target](#) in the same time period.

In recent weeks, the administration has had to contend with unexpected challenges in its vaccination campaign — chiefly, federal health agencies’ recommendation [to pause the Johnson & Johnson vaccine](#) as they investigate rare incidents of blood clots in recipients.

Administration officials are also grappling with the stubborn issue of [vaccine hesitancy](#), particularly among Republicans and younger, white Americans who live in rural communities.

On Monday, however, all 50 states — as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico — met Biden’s deadline to make the vaccine available to U.S. adults 16 and older, marking what the president called “a new phase of this historic vaccination effort.”

“To Americans 16 years and older, it’s your turn now. Now. So go get your vaccine before the end of May,” Biden said. “We can do this. And we’ll do this as long as we don’t let up.”

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