

ASPR TRACIE Technical Assistance Request

Request Receipt Date (by ASPR TRACIE): December 13, 2021

Response Date: December 14, 2021

Type of TA Request: Complex

Request:

ASPR TRACIE received a request for best practices, toolkits, or guidance on the distribution of at-home COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) tests in the community. In particular, the requestor sought information on mechanisms to focus the distribution to those who are most in need (financial and/or access) while weighing distribution to those who are most at risk of transmission (e.g., service workers).

Response:

ASPR TRACIE reviewed several documents, including those on our [COVID-19 Resource Page](#), and conducted an online search for information on how free, at-home tests are distributed. Section I provides examples of distribution strategies in several states. Section II includes information about a federal pilot program and one state's library partnership.

NOTE: This response focuses on at-home rapid antigen tests. Other programs exist that distribute at-home PCR tests or offer non-home-based SARS-CoV-2 testing. These options are not addressed in this response.

I. Examples of Approaches

The following list includes examples of how at-home rapid antigen tests are being distributed. Many local jurisdictions are using libraries, health department offices, and other public buildings as distribution sites. Other jurisdictions are partnering with non-profit and other community-based organizations to direct tests to at-risk populations, while others are using home delivery to those who request test kits.

Eligibility varies widely. Some jurisdictions do not appear to have restrictions. Others are limiting distribution to those residing in specific difficult-to-reach zip codes or require proof of residence in the jurisdiction. Certain jurisdictions are offering the test kits on a first come, first served basis while others are limiting quantities by person, household, or other criteria.

When making decisions about where to focus distribution, local officials should collaborate with response partners to identify underserved populations and geographic gaps. Other state, federal,

and private sector programs may already be reaching certain segments of the community, such as the federal program to distribute at-home test kits to community health centers and food banks.

- Alaska: The [City and Borough of Juneau](#) is distributing up to two test kits per family at all Juneau public libraries and four other public locations.
- Colorado: The [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#) allows individuals to order test kits for home delivery through its website.
- Hawaii: The [Hawaii Department of Health](#), which participated in the federal pilot program, home delivered eight rapid tests to 125,000 residents of Oahu residing in eligible zip codes upon online request.
- Indiana: The [Marion County Public Health Department](#) allows residents in target zip codes to request home delivery of test kits.
- Maryland: The state of Maryland is distributing test kits to local health departments, which will determine how to distribute the kits within their counties. According to a [press release](#) from the governor, one county is distributing the kits to the public through local public libraries and two community food pantries. Another county health department is also using its public libraries as well as federally qualified health centers for public distribution. The [Baltimore City Health Department](#) is initially providing 60 test kits each to up to 45 community-based organizations that serve VALUE communities or are located in zip codes with lower vaccination rates. The health department is providing kits to these organizations on a first come, first served basis with plans to expand to additional organizations if supply allows. A limited supply of at-home test kits is also available to the public at Baltimore City Health Department COVID testing sites.
- New York: [Monroe County](#) is distributing kits to residents of five towns in the county. Days and times differ by location as well as the number of kits given to individuals or households. [Ulster County](#) is distributing kits through schools, towns, and non-profit agencies.
- North Carolina: [Mecklenburg County](#) is offering curbside pickup at designated library branches and public health offices at various days and times.
- Ohio: The state of [Ohio](#) is also using its library system to distribute test kits to the public. The [Tuscarawas County Public Library System](#) is offering contactless delivery of up to four test kits per household per day through drive-up windows or curbside service to those who call the library ahead of time to schedule pick up. Non-contact curbside service is also available to those who schedule pick up from the six [Perry County District Library](#) locations, the [East Palestine Memorial Library](#), and the [Germantown Public Library](#). [Franklin County](#) Public Health and Franklin County Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security allow organizations that would like to distribute up to 500 test kits to complete an online registration form. Up to four kits per vehicle are being distributed via drive through at the Canfield Fairgrounds in [Mahoning County](#).
- Virginia: The [Commonwealth of Virginia](#) is distributing at-home test kits through 18 libraries and library systems. This pilot program is intended to reach rural, remote, under-

resourced, and other vulnerable populations. [Fairfax County](#) is offering the kits through its eight regional and 13 community library branches.

II. Additional Resources

Bender, M. (2021). [Three Lessons for the Effort to Scale Up COVID-19 Rapid Tests](#). STAT.

This article shares some of the early lessons from the “Say Yes! COVID Test” initiative.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health. (2021). [Say Yes! COVID Test](#).

This webpage provides information on the federal pilot with nine local jurisdictions to increase access to free, rapid, at-home testing.

Fleurence, R., DiNenno, E., Riley, W., et al. (2021). [CDC-NIH Initiative Provides Free COVID-19 Rapid Home Tests in North Carolina, Tennessee](#). Health Affairs Blog.

This blog post describes the initial federal pilot in two states to distribute rapid antigen tests. Kits were available through online ordering or direct shipment. A survey found that a third of the free tests were unused and some individuals did not want them, continued public education and messaging is needed about the tests, and online ordering and community distribution were both important to reach different segments of the population.

Goldberg, C. and Court, E. (2021). [Hard-Hit New Hampshire Snaps Up Free Home Covid Tests as U.S. Dawdles](#). Bloomberg.

This article provides information on New Hampshire’s experience as part of the “Say Yes! COVID Test” pilot, noting that residents requested all 800,000 available tests within a day of the state’s offer.

National Institutes of Health. (2021). [CDC and NIH Bring COVID-19 Self-Testing to Residents in Two Locales](#).

This news release describes the federal “Say Yes! COVID Test” pilot in North Carolina and Tennessee.

Ohio Department of Health. (2021). [Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Home Tests Guidance Document](#).

This document provides information on the state of Ohio’s distribution of at-home antigen tests outside of clinical settings in every Ohio county. It includes a figure showing the distribution and testing process for Ohio libraries.