

# Vaccine Signups Outrun Supply

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cine rollout — overwhelming the hotline.

Health officials have encouraged Oregonians to text, call or email 211 or 1-866-698-6155 for information about receiving the vaccine. People can also text

ORCOVID to 898211 to receive updates.

On Monday, the health authority launched an online tool, [getvaccinated.oregon.gov](http://getvaccinated.oregon.gov), where caregivers or family members of Oregon seniors can go to help their elderly family member sign up for a vaccine.

Elderly people living in Clackamas, Columbia, Marion, Multnomah or Washington counties are urged to use the state's vaccine information chat bot tool, on the [oregon.gov](http://oregon.gov) website, to schedule vaccine appointments.

Along with mass vaccination

sites, vaccines will also be administered to local practices and public health facilities, drive-thru centers, mobile sites and 133 pharmacies across the state.

"In coming days, we know there will be more demand for vaccinations and for answers to questions than we may be able to provide," Oregon Health Authority Director Patrick Allen said Monday. "My promise to older Oregonians is this: if you want a vaccination, you will get one. But it may not be tomorrow, this week or even two weeks from now. But you will get one."

# Officials Respond to Spike in Shootings

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Council getting rid of the Gun Violence Reduction Team axed last year under criticism it targeted Black men. Lovell said he believes it helped prevent shootings.

Wheeler said he supports creating the new 24-hour, seven-day-a-week Portland police team led by a sergeant with four officers and two detectives to respond to shootings. His remarks came more than a month after

Lovell proposed such a team.

The city recorded 55 homicides in 2020, the highest number in 26 years. Forty-one of those resulted from gun violence.

Police efforts to stem the violence have also been hampered by the loss of 100 officers who have left the Portland Police Bureau over the past year. Most of the officer retired and have not been replaced. The department has about 900 officers.

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# Elevating Justice in Portland

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Schmidt said there has been progress in civil rights, but that we still have a long way to go. He pointed to work he had with leaders like the late state Sen. Jackie Winters, a Black representative from Salem who built her roots in business in Portland, to look for solutions to systemic racism.

"This summer drove home for me the fierce urgency we all need to feel around this work, but there is more left to do," he said.

Schmidt, who served as a deputy district attorney in Multnomah County for 12 years before taking on the top job and served as executive director of the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, said Conviction Integrity Units are being used in 45 jurisdictions across the country to improve racial justice outcomes.

According a draft proposal for its creation here, "CIUs are well-established vehicles for reviewing and, when necessary and appropriate, seeking to overturn

convictions when there is evidence of actual innocence, prosecutor or law enforcement misconduct, or other considerations that undermine the integrity of the conviction."

The CIU as Schmidt proposes will add a deputy DA to work on questionable convictions, and a second one to work on expunging records of eligible people and look at fine and fee forgiveness where appropriate.

Schmidt said the unit will also pursue legislative changes to allow petitions to bring people back to court for re-sentencing, allowing the accused to have their sentences reviewed "when they are no longer necessary for public safety and are needlessly long or punitive."

The proposal also includes hiring one paralegal and bringing in law students to help with the extra work, as the draft proposal states, "to promote the concept that the work of pursuing justice for a prosecutor does not stop at sentencing, but continues on in the pursuit of maximizing legitimacy for public safety."

Schmidt said he is also working with Portland Police Chief Chuck Lovell to look at ways to make the criminal justice system more accountable.

"I want to build trust and accountability in the system beyond a conviction and a sentence," he said.

But that doesn't mean Schmidt is soft on crime.

"No amount of property damage or violence is acceptable," he said.

Schmidt is also concerned with excessive juvenile incarceration, pointing to the negative impacts of mandatory sentencing laws as another impetus for the creation of the Conviction Integrity Unit.

In his election acceptance speech, he referred to a clemency petition from a young man who committed armed robbery as a

teenager, and who in the many years since has completed every rehabilitation program available to him. It pointed to someone that will have to spend the last months of his incarceration in an adult prison under current laws, which Schmidt says is just wrong.

He went on to say "Multiple studies have shown that a juvenile who enters the adult system is immediately vulnerable to violence and pro-criminal peer pressure. For this young man, the sentence not only fails to fit the crime, it may make us all less safe."

Schmidt said that before going to law school, he taught high school in New Orleans for two years and observed the "school-to-prison pipeline" first-hand, which opened his eyes and expanded his perspective on justice issues.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, there are 60,000 young people sent to jail by juvenile courts, with nearly half in long-term correctional facilities. "There's compelling evidence that locking up low-risk youth offenders doesn't reduce further offences," the foundation website states. "It wastes taxpayer dollars, and exposes young people to high levels of violence and abuse."

Because studies show that Black children and other children of color are more likely to be disciplined and expelled from school, they become fodder for the prison pipeline. According to the Equal Justice Initiative, as of 2015, African American young people comprised 44 percent of juvenile prison populations, while they are only 16 percent in the general population.

"New Orleans it was very eye-opening, to see that criminal justice system, and growing up, what it meant for me — a white kid in upstate New York — not getting worked up about the principal calling police on me," Schmidt said. "It was just detention."

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