

TEXAS VACCINE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION GRANTS

Inform, connect, and protect your community

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Background and Purpose

Preventing disparities in the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines is important to mitigate the disproportionate impacts of the virus. Reaching high vaccination rates across individuals and communities will be key for achieving broader population immunity through a vaccine. Lower vaccination rates among some groups will leave them at increased risk for infection, particularly as new variants spread.

The populations community-based organizations (CBOs) serve now have access to vaccines to protect them against COVID-19. All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19. Vaccination is the strongest tool communities have to help stop the pandemic.

Some community members may be hesitant to get the vaccine. Before they agree to be vaccinated, they will want answers to their questions about the process for developing these vaccines and information about safety and effectiveness. CBOs can help inform communities about the vaccines and help people feel confident when they decide to get vaccinated.

The purpose of this grant program is to fund strategies that ensure greater knowledge of and access to COVID-19 vaccines by those disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Community-based organizations (CBOs) will be awarded funds to engage their community in proactive COVID-19 vaccine education and outreach activities with the goal of increasing the number of people fully vaccinated for COVID-19 in Texas.

Priority will be given to applicants who focus on reaching

- communities of color
- Texans with disabilities
- rural communities

Activities

All awardees will be expected to complete the following **required** activities:

- Partner with local COVID-19 vaccine providers to ensure vaccine accessibility.
- Conduct community outreach through safe in-person methods, phone, virtual, or other person-to-person communication methods.
- Deliver community-based and culturally and linguistically appropriate education resources.
- Participate in regularly scheduled conference calls with other awardees, Texas A&M Health, and Texas DSHS to share progress on activities and discuss lessons learned.
- Share sample materials, communication products, best practices, success stories, and lessons learned with Texas A&M Health and Texas DSHS via online learning community.

Highly Recommended Activities

- Engage with their local health department in their region to promote collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts. If awardee's area does not have a local health department, awardee should collaborate with Texas DSHS Public Health Region staff.

Optional Activity

- Host Community Conversations to discuss, identify, and address vaccine hesitancy and to identify community-acceptable approaches for improving vaccination accessibility and acceptability. Document and share findings with Texas A&M Health.

Applicants may also propose activities supporting required community outreach and community-based education activities. Below is a list of other activities that could be supported with award funds:

- Collaborate with state, regional, or local health departments – immunization programs in particular – on mobile COVID-19 vaccination clinics, education campaigns, and other vaccination activities in communities with low vaccination rates.
- Work with vaccination service providers to expand the types of health professionals (e.g., community health workers, patient navigators, patient advocates) and administrative staff (e.g., front desk workers) engaged in promoting vaccination and referring individuals to COVID-19 vaccination providers and sites.
- Collaborate with community-level spokespersons/trusted messengers (e.g., faith leaders, teachers, community health workers, radio DJs, local shop owners, barbers) to tailor and share accurate information and materials.
- Develop or adapt education and outreach materials and/or leverage materials from other CBOs to reach underserved populations. Materials can include but are not limited to videos, social media, flyers, talking points, etc.
- Connect vaccination providers with places of worship, community organizations, recreation programs, food banks/pantries, schools and colleges/universities, grocery stores, salons/barber shops/beauticians, major employers, elder housing locations, and other key community institutions to set up temporary and/or mobile COVID-19 vaccination sites, especially in communities with low vaccination rates.
- Build partnerships with health care providers to increase provider understanding of the populations of interest and interventions to increase vaccination rates for these populations. Advocate for dialysis centers, prenatal care centers, well-baby care clinics, family planning clinics, dentists' offices, nursing homes, and other specific provider sites or programs to deliver COVID-19 vaccines where patients are already seeking care for themselves or their family members.
- Address and decrease digital access and literacy gaps for individuals by providing direct support in registering with public health systems or appointment scheduling using the appropriate confidentiality protocols.

Texas DSHS Immunization Unit Public Information, Education, and Training Community Engagement Regional Liaisons will provide consultative services and technical assistance to awardees in support of outreach and education activities.

Reporting

All awardees will be expected to complete the following activities:

- Submit monthly progress reports.
- Submit final narrative report describing stakeholder collaboration, successes, challenges, lessons learned, and event and activity metrics*.

*Potential indicators and performance measures include the following:

- Number and types of people reached by events/campaigns promoting COVID-19 vaccination
- Number of referred vaccination recipients/appointments
- Number and types of partners and community members engaged
- Number and sub-populations reached
- Number and type of community-level spokespersons engaged in outreach
- Number and types of audience-tested and culturally appropriate materials promoting COVID-19 vaccination
- Number and types of events/campaigns held to promote COVID-19 vaccination
- Increased awareness of vaccine opportunities
- Number of vaccination venues supported
- Number of individuals reached by activities (e.g., number of individuals attending community conversations, number of communications campaigns launched)
- Description of work with local health department or public health region and vaccine provider(s)
- Description of work—including successes and challenges—of partnerships supporting vaccine outreach and education
- Description of work with trusted messengers to engage communities
- Story collection from vaccination outreach and engagement efforts
- Event discussion reports

Timeline*

July 28, 2021	RFP Release
August 6, 2021	Applicant Conference Call/Meeting
August 20, 2021	RFP Submission Deadline
August 27, 2021	Selection Notification
August 30 – Sept 10, 2021	Finalize Award Agreements
September 13, 2021	Anticipated Project Implementation Start Date
TBD	Project Kickoff Call/Meeting

*Timeline is subject to change.

Funding

Estimated award amount: \$50,000 to \$150,000

Project Period: 6 to 9 months

Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis, and applicants are encouraged to submit before the deadline.

Priority will be given to organizations that can begin work immediately.

Priority will be given to organizations that propose to host a Community Conversation.

In the event additional funding is made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), awardees will be given the opportunity to propose potential additional activities to their scope of work.

The final award amount is contingent upon approval of the proposed work and detailed budget by Texas Department of State Health Services.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible applicants are community-based organizations (CBOs), community coalitions, nonprofit organizations, associations, education agencies, faith-based organizations, and government entities.

Local health departments and entities that are deemed a 501(c)(4) organizations engaged in lobbying activities are **not** eligible for funding under this project.

Applicants providing women's health services must certify they meet eligibility requirements as defined in [Texas Administrative Code Title 1, Part 15, Chapter 382, Healthy Texas Women](#); specifically, Section 382.17(b)-(d).

** Entities already receiving Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 funding from either the CDC or Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) are not precluded from applying.*

SECTION III: APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Organization Information

- Organization Name, Address, Website, and Mission
- Type of organization
- Non-profit status (if applicable)
- Year established

2. Project Description

- **Describe your organization**, the services you typically provide and the community(ies) and population you typically serve. Describe organization and proposed staff experience in engaging community stakeholders in the development of community-driven, culturally appropriate initiatives. Describe prior experience or progress with providing science-based information to at risk populations.
- **Describe the under-vaccinated population(s)** your organization aims to reach through the proposed strategies and provide some context for why you are focusing on them, e.g., geographic information; demographic information; impact of COVID-19; knowledge and beliefs about vaccination (if known); or other relevant data and information related to vaccine access, e.g., vaccination rates.
- **Describe the work that will be done using these funds.** Be specific, include key activities, and tie the work to the results you expect to achieve. Outline the role of vaccine providers, local health department or public health region, and other partners in

proposed work. Community partners could include health care providers, community health center outreach teams, mutual aid organizations, faith community leaders, civic leaders, vaccination sites, or others.

- **Describe your outreach and education strategies.** How will you ensure you are reaching members of the identified populations who are experiencing the greatest barriers and hesitancy? Provide details about what you know about the unique needs of reaching this population. How will your organization engage the community through all aspects of the project?

3. Tracking and Measuring

Clearly document a detailed plan for tracking and measuring project progress including the results of the project in terms of achieving expected project outputs (activities), outcomes (difference or effect that has occurred as a result from carrying out an activity), and performance indicators and measures.

4. Provide a timeline for expending funds.

5. Budget and Budget Narrative

Provide a detailed budget with supporting narrative for all anticipated costs not to exceed \$150,000 with an expected implementation period not to exceed 9 months. The requested funds can include the following costs: salary, fringe benefits, supplies, equipment, travel (meals and incidental expenses), contractual, other direct costs, and indirect costs. A Budget Narrative Template and Budget Preparation Guidelines are available on the Applicant Resources webpage.

Submitting a Proposal

Application materials should be submitted by 5:00 PM CDT on Friday, August 20, 2021, through the online application form. To access the online application form, click on “Apply Now” on the Texas Vaccine Outreach and Education Grants home page. Notification of receipt of the application will be sent.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Domain	Selection Criteria	Score
<p>Programmatic Capability and Population Served</p>	<p>Describes ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed work considering applicant’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational experience • Staff expertise and qualifications • Prior experience or progress with providing science-based information to at risk populations <p>Demonstrates experience in engaging community stakeholders in the development of community-driven, culturally appropriate initiatives</p> <p>Describes target population</p>	<p>40 points</p>

	Demonstrates an understanding of the reasons for which the target population has been identified for COVID-19 vaccine outreach and education	
Community Engagement Approach and Activities	<p>Describes how applicant will deliver culturally appropriate outreach and education to target population</p> <p>Describes role of vaccine providers, local health department or public health region, and/or community partners</p> <p>Describes strategy to engage the community through all aspects of the project</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of the specific needs of the target population</p> <p>Describes how proposed outreach and education will address gaps in awareness, knowledge, and understanding of vaccines and vaccinations among target population</p> <p>Feasibility of proposed plan</p>	25 points
Tracking and Measuring	<p>Describes anticipated outputs, outcomes, and performance measures</p> <p>Describes how outputs and outcomes will measure the effectiveness of the project</p> <p>Describes plan to measure progress and achievement of the project outcomes</p> <p>Describes plan to ensure timely and successful completion of the project with a reasonable time schedule for execution of tasks and expending funds</p>	25 points
Budget and Budget Narrative	Includes complete, detailed, and reasonable budget and budget narrative aligned with the proposed approach	10 points
Total		100 points

Review and Selection Process

Completed eligible applications submitted by the deadline will be evaluated and scored by a Review Panel (Panel) in accordance with the review criteria stated above.

The Panel will use a point system to rate each application, awarding a maximum of 100 points. Each application will be reviewed by at least two members of the Panel. Panel members will review and score all submitted applications. The Panel will numerically score and rank each application. Funding recommendations will be based on the Panel's rank score. The Panel will provide recommendations to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Final funding decisions will be made by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

All applicants will be notified electronically of their application status when selections have been made. Unsuccessful applicants will not receive scores or specific review feedback to their applications.

SECTION V. APPLICANT CONFERENCE CALL

Texas A&M Health and Texas DSHS Immunization Unit will host an applicant conference call to answer questions related to the RFP on August 6, 2021, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM CDT. Applicants are encouraged to submit questions by 12:00 PM on August 4, 2021, via email at vaccinegrant@tamu.edu.

Please register in advance here: [Texas Vaccine Outreach and Education Grants Applicant Conference Call](#).

SECTION VI. APPLICANT RESOURCES

Texas A&M Health encourages applicants to review resources located on the Applicant Resources webpage to help inform and prepare an application.