

Equity and Prioritizing COVID-19 Vaccine Access for Populations Disproportionately Affected by COVID-19

Background

Conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, play, and worship affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes, such as COVID-19 disease, severe illness, and death. As evidenced by the available data to date, populations that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 include, but are not limited to:

- People in racial and ethnic minority groups
- People living in communities with high social vulnerability index
- People living in rural communities
- People with disabilities
- People with who are homebound or isolated
- People who are underinsured or uninsured
- People who are immigrants and/or refugees
- People with transportation limitations

Purpose

To address these disparities, the purpose of this is to fund strategies that ensure greater equity and access to COVID-19 vaccine by those disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The intent is to leverage existing and cultivate new community-based partnerships to extend reach to vulnerable populations. This funding should be used to support COVID-19 vaccination education, outreach, and/or administration.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants: Nonprofit organizations, for profit organizations, tribal organizations, or governmental entities registered or incorporated to do business in the United States.

Individuals **are not** eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.

Available Funds

The Iowa Department of Public Health anticipates up to \$10 million will be available to support awards under this funding opportunity. **An applicant may apply for any amount up to \$250,000.** The funds requested by an applicant must be appropriate for the project proposed and the Department reserves the right to award an amount less than requested by the applicant.

Allowable Activities

Funding must be used for one or more of the following activities. Activities must be implemented in Iowa and **must be completed by June 30, 2024.**

1. **Vaccination clinics:** Plan and implement pop-up, mobile, or other vaccination clinics with COVID-19 vaccine providers. Coordinate planning with existing community events (e.g., food drives/pantries, health fairs, adult education programs, religious services, special-interest clubs and community organization events). Ensure access to vaccination sites and appointments by using multiple types of locations, including community-based sites, and with flexible hours that are accessible to and frequented by the identified communities of focus.

2. **Increase cultural competence:** Support increased staffing of culturally competent medical personnel that reflect the identified community who may administer COVID-19 vaccine at mobile or pop-up vaccination sites/clinics organized through community-based organizations. This could include partnering with minority community health workers.
3. **Support transportation:** Support free or subsidized transportation options to access vaccination appointments either directly or indirectly through community partners (e.g., partner with local transportation services or transportation network companies to provide no-cost transport to vaccination sites in communities of high social vulnerability).
4. **Simplify vaccination operations:** Simplify or assist COVID-19 vaccine patient registration procedures. Prioritize offering vaccination options that do not require pre-registration (e.g., at local community centers, schools, houses of worship, or other highly frequented and trusted sites in the community). Ensure patient registration options do not require the internet or digital platforms (such as phone or in-person registration). Ensure registration is accessible to those with limited English proficiency or limited literacy. It should be made clear registration does not require nonessential documentation, such as proof of citizenship, likely to deter individuals from immigrant communities from seeking vaccination.
5. **Develop messaging:** Develop and implement community-based and culturally and linguistically appropriate messages that focus on COVID-19 prevention and benefits of vaccination.
6. **Engage trusted messengers:** Engage communities by identifying trusted messengers that represent the population to promote vaccination and have bidirectional conversations about vaccine hesitancy. Collaborate with trusted messengers to develop testimonial campaigns. Testimonials could include representation from diverse groups of people including millennials, physicians, elderly, frontline workers, someone who lost a loved one, individuals who experienced a reaction following vaccination (or did not have a reaction), local or national celebrities of color, etc.
7. **Promote vaccine confidence:** Conduct outreach activities to promote vaccine confidence.
8. **Support grassroots-style outreach:** Support grassroots-style outreach campaigns through text messages, phone-banking, and/or safely conducted in-person to share information such as vaccine availability, vaccine education, appointment sign-up options, and appointment and COVID-safety reminders.

Reporting

Awarded organizations will be required to report on activities upon completion of each activity and as determined by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Application Process

Eligible applicants seeking available funds through this funding opportunity must:

1. Review this entire funding guidance document and draft contract.
2. Submit an application, including contact information and a brief description of the proposed project.
3. After submitting the application, you will receive a confirmation email with a copy of your application.
4. You will receive an email from Iowa Department of Public Health staff regarding your application submission, including required clarification, if needed.
5. The Iowa Department of Public Health will coordinate execution of service agreements with successful applicants.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until further notice.