



Request for Proposals

Supporting Social Media Activities to Combat Vaccine Misinformation

Date Issued: April 23, 2021

Date Due: May 10, 2021

CDC FOUNDATION CONTACT

RFPQuestions@cdcfoundation.org

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

About the CDC Foundation

The CDC Foundation is an independent nonprofit and the sole entity created by Congress to mobilize philanthropic and private-sector resources to support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's critical health protection work. We are a catalyst for unleashing the power of collaboration between CDC and philanthropies, private entities and individuals to protect the health, safety and security of America and the world. The government has unique capacities as well as limitations. The same is true for the private and philanthropic sectors. We believe that people, groups and organizations have greater positive impact and can accomplish more collectively than individually. By aligning diverse interests and resources and leveraging all parties' strengths, our focused collaborations with private and philanthropic partners help create greater impact than any one entity can alone. Since 1995, thanks to our donors, we have launched more than 1,200 health protection programs and raised over \$1.2 billion to support CDC's work. To keep people healthy, safe and secure, we managed hundreds of CDC-led programs in the United States and in more than 140 countries.

Background

Vaccination is considered one of the most important public health achievements of the 20th century and continues to offer great promise. Vaccines save lives and improve quality of life by preventing serious infectious diseases and their consequences. However, the benefits of vaccination are not realized equally across the population of the United States. Adult vaccination coverage remains low nationally and significant racial and ethnic disparities exist. Additionally, the groups experiencing disparities are also disproportionately affected by COVID-19, at risk for serious illness from COVID-19, and/or at high risk for complications from influenza infection.

In February 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a grant program, *Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Adult Immunization*, providing funding and technical assistance to national, state and local community-based organizations. Made available by CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases' (NCIRD) Immunization Services Division (ISD), the program invests in new and existing partnerships to support tailored COVID-19 vaccine awareness, access, and confidence activities among various populations and communities in the U.S. The program will also support similar activities for the 2021–2022 influenza season and continue to engage national and community-based partners in this work in the years ahead.

It is critical to address misinformation specifically within communities of color where there are different or additional drivers of mistrust in vaccines than in the general American public. The goal is to work in concert with CDC's existing efforts, especially around social media and COVID-19, to select and work with new partners that bring divergent approaches. This will ensure an active presence on social media, including:

- Monitoring and combatting misinformation that spreads myths about vaccine safety or effectiveness, and
- Promoting digital health literacy among communities of color experiencing immunization disparities.

Funding Opportunity

The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to support efforts to increase vaccine confidence and uptake for adults in racial and/or ethnic populations experiencing disparities by assessing and combatting social media misinformation that targets communities of color.

[*Vaccinate with Confidence \(VwC\)*](#), CDC’s strategic framework to strengthen vaccine confidence and prevent outbreaks of Vaccine Preventable Diseases in the United States, advances three key priorities:

- *Protect Communities* by supporting states, cities, and counties to find under-vaccinated communities and take steps to protect them.
- *Empower Families* by expanding resources for health care professionals to support effective vaccine conversations with parents and community members.
- *Stop Myths* by working with local partners and trusted messengers to improve confidence in vaccines among at-risk groups.

This funding opportunity aims to support creative, cross-collaborative social media activities that combat and dispel vaccine misinformation by funding organizations that specialize in public health communications and marketing, with demonstrated expertise in multicultural social media engagement. These partners will work to continuously detect and assess misinformation on mainstream and niche digital media platforms to understand what is being said, by whom, and to whom. Both reactive messaging and preemptive affirmative messaging will be developed to counter misrepresentations and deliberate malicious falsehoods targeting Black and Latinx populations. The messaging that is developed will complement the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) plans, including unveiling new social media profile frames which enable Americans to display and promote their choice to get vaccinated and encourage their friends and family to do the same. HHS is also supporting the first TV ads, in both English and Spanish, that will encourage Americans to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible with the message – *We Can Do This*. Examples of activities that would be supported through this funding opportunity include, but are not limited to:

- Employment of datasets, surveillance techniques, and social listening analytics tools on mainstream and niche digital media platforms to understand what is being said, by whom, and to whom. Social media platforms may be engaged to share information and insights.
- Development of branded social media campaigns to educate and respond to misinformation.
- Address misinformation at the source. Encourage media organizations (e.g., social media platforms, tv stations/networks, radio stations/networks) to do more to avoid spreading misinformation, including de-platforming content creators, de-emphasizing content

algorithmically in display feeds, or adding warning labels and other contextual information.

- Recruiting medical practitioners (e.g., doctors, nurses, other healthcare and healthcare-adjacent practitioners), community leaders (e.g., local faith leaders, political leaders, community organizers), and celebrities in various fields (entertainment, arts, sports, etc.), who represent and come from communities of color themselves, to debunk misinformation in real time.
- Use principles of behavioral science, multicultural marketing, and culturally competent messaging to educate BIPOC communities on how to appraise and recognize false and misleading information and where to find trusted sources of medical information related to vaccines.
- Provide and support the distribution of tools and social media messaging that Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) can link to and use in their community engagement activities.
- Produce videos, ads, and other outputs to share widely via social media and other outlets in order to combat misinformation and share correct, trustworthy information with the public.

The CDC Foundation will partner with external organizations who have specific expertise in and/or across racial and ethnic minority populations experiencing immunization disparities to:

1. **Continuously detect and assess misinformation:** Use datasets, surveillance techniques, and social listening analytics tools on mainstream and niche digital media platforms to understand what is being said, by whom, and to whom. Where possible, data and insights will be obtained directly from platforms such as Google, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc. to garner insights.

Customized approaches must be designed with an understanding of the target audiences' unique attributes, preferred channels, and patterns of communication and dissemination. Integrated use of existing resources, such as VwC's biweekly State of Vaccine Confidence reports, can be a useful supplement to more tailored assessments of communities of color.

2. **Address misinformation at the source through media and social media platform policy:** Media organizations (e.g., social media platforms, tv stations/networks, radio stations/networks) can do more to avoid spreading misinformation, including de-platforming content creators, de-emphasizing content algorithmically in display feeds, or adding warning labels and other contextual information. Implementing policy changes on these platforms can establish an infrastructure for sustainable, high-quality health information on digital media platforms.
3. **Reactively intervene on misinformation:** To address misinformation effectively, the CDC Foundation and partners will also use the relevant analyses and social media relationships described above to drive real-time intervening and fact-checking. The aim is to use the most effective, trusted voices in the right places and right times to intervene,

debunk myths that contribute to poor health outcomes, and empower people with accurate information.

Effective messages can include a combination of several trusted and credible community voices. Medical practitioners (e.g., doctors, nurses, other healthcare and healthcare-adjacent practitioners), community leaders (e.g., local faith leaders, political leaders, community organizers), and celebrities in various fields (arts, sports, etc.), who represent and come from communities of color themselves, can achieve wide reach and strong persuasiveness in their messaging. Debunking misinformation in real time will help keep it from spreading or being shared and prevent it from taking root.

4. **Develop effective, affirmative communication and outreach strategies.** In addition to reactive messaging, preemptive affirmative messaging must understand and respond to high-priority misinformation that has been getting traction, in order to inoculate people against future misinformation. Principles of behavioral science, multicultural marketing, and culturally competent messaging must be used to conduct communication effectively and engage with communities of color and create sustainable vaccine acceptance for both the COVID-19 vaccine and vaccination more generally.

Deliverables

Potential outputs/outcomes include:

- Number and types of local leaders and community members trained
- Number and sub-populations reached by community-level spokespersons
- Number and types of audience-tested and culturally appropriate messages promoting COVID-19 vaccination
- Number and types of outputs for engagement and messaging (e.g. videos, shareable posters for social media use, celebrity messages, photographs, animation, music, etc.)
- Number and types of people reached by social media messaging promoting COVID-19 vaccination
- Number and types of events/campaigns held to promote COVID-19 vaccination
- Number and types of people reached by events/campaigns promoting COVID-19 vaccination
- Survey: Number and degree to which people’s vaccination sentiments changed

Timeline **Please note that the timeline is subject to change*

April 23, 2021	RFP Release
May 3, 2021	Applicant Conference Call
May 10, 2021	RFP Submission Deadline
May 19, 2021	Selection Notification
June 1, 2021	Project Implementation Start Date
June 1, 2021-April 29, 2022	Implementation period of up to 11 months

Funds Available

CDC Foundation intends to make three to four awards ranging from \$2-\$3 million each. The final award amounts are contingent on submission of a detailed and reasonable budget proposal to be approved by the CDC Foundation.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are organizations with branding, marketing, production, and digital/social media expertise working with communities of color in the United States.

SECTION III. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Content and Form of Application Submission

The online application can be accessed at this [link](#). The below information will be requested on the application form.

1. Organization Information
 - Organization Name, Address, Website, and Mission
 - EIN/Tax ID
 - DUNS Number - To request a DUNS number, visit <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html>. It can take up to 2 business days to receive a DUNS number.
 - Non-profit status
 - Year established
2. Project Description
 - Project Title and Problem Statement with Objective(s)
 - Describe the proposed strategies/activities
 - Describe how your organization will collaborate to achieve project objectives. With whom will you collaborate and how?
 - Describe experience with developing culturally appropriate initiatives.
 - Describe prior experience or progress with providing science-based information to at risk populations.
3. Outputs/Outcomes
 - Estimate the number of individuals who will be reached by the proposed activities
 - Describe direct, tangible results of activities
 - Describe changes anticipated to occur in people or conditions as a result of the activities and outputs by the end of the grant term.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative

- Provide a detailed budget with supporting narrative for all anticipated costs. The requested project funds can include the following direct costs: Salary, Fringe Benefits, Supplies, Equipment, Travel (meal and incidental expenses), Contractual, and Other Direct Costs. Indirect costs are allowable at a rate of 10%.
- The budget narrative should conform with the [CDC budget preparation guidelines](#).
- Upload a copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statement. If one is not available, upload a copy of your most recent annual report.
- Upload a copy of your organization's annual budget.

Submitting a Proposal

Application materials should be submitted by **11:59 PM EDT on May 10, 2021**. Notification of receipt of the application will be sent. Please note that there is a character limit of 4,000 characters per question field. Recommended internet browsers for submitting this application are Google, Chrome, or Firefox. Please note that there is no option to save your work. Applicants may want to copy/paste your application from a word processing application (ex. Microsoft Word).

SECTION IV: APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Domain	Selection Criteria	Score
Organizational Mission, Populations Served and Past Experience	Project title, problem statement, and objectives Demonstrated experience in the development of culturally appropriate initiatives. Prior experience or progress with providing science-based information to at risk populations.	25 Points
Well-defined Social Media Approach and Activities (Project Plan)	Feasibility of proposed plan. Detailed proposed strategies, activities, and timeline for completing work. Description of how and with whom your organization will collaborate to achieve project objectives.	25 Points

<p>Clear outputs, outcomes, and impact (M&E)</p>	<p>Detailed deliverables specific to the proposed project.</p> <p>Estimated number of individuals who will be reached by the proposed activities</p> <p>Describe direct, tangible results of activities</p> <p>Description of changes anticipated to occur in people or conditions as a result of the implemented activities and outputs by the end of the grant term.</p>	<p>25 Points</p>
<p>Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative</p>	<p>Detailed budget and narrative that follows CDC budget preparation guidelines.</p>	<p>25 points</p>
		<p>100 points</p>

Review and Selection Process

Completed applications submitted by the **11:59pm EDT, May 10, 2021** deadline will be evaluated in accordance with the review criteria stated above. A review panel of CDC Foundation staff will score each application. The selected applicants will be made based on the highest proposal scores. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified, but the CDC Foundation will not provide scores or specific review feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

SECTION V. APPLICANT INFORMATIONAL CALL

The CDC Foundation will host an applicant informational call to answer questions related to this RFP on **May 3, 2021 from 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM Eastern Time**.

Register in advance of the for meeting: [Registration Link](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Applicants must submit questions ahead of time by **10:00 AM EDT on May 3, 2021**. All questions are to be directed to the following email address: RFPQuestions@cdcfoundation.org. Please write "Questions RFP Social Media" in the subject line. All submitted questions will be addressed on the conference call and will be made available on the CDC Foundation website the following day. The CDC Foundation will not respond to additional questions during or after the applicant call.