

COVID-19 Vaccination in Local Health Entities (CARES Act – Round 4)

Request for Funding - Instructions

The Texas Department of State Health Services Immunizations and Vaccines for Children program is offering an opportunity for local health entities (LHEs) to apply for funding to help reduce health disparities in their communities, and to increase access to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine for populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Health disparities are reduced when all individuals can attain their full health potential. Data demonstrate long-standing systemic health and social disparities have put many racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.

Funding is available for execution of all five (5) different COVID-19 Vaccination CARES Act – Round 4 objectives. Funds requested must be used to meet **all 5 required** objectives. The recipient agrees to address and implement the proposed activities, to document, and to submit reports on the required reporting performance measures (quarterly – dates TBA in August 2021). Awarded recipients **must submit quarterly reports** to DSHS Immunization Unit. This document describes the objectives and contains information on applying for funding. All forms are included with the email notification.

Required Documents

To apply for funding for this project, complete the following forms:

1. **Form A: Face Page** Complete one (1) form for all objectives.
2. **Form B: Project Narrative and Workplan** Complete one (1) form for all objectives and clearly label each objective. Provide a brief summary of intended activities for each objective to address the required metrics necessary to achieve completion of the objective.
3. **Form C: Cold Chain Equipment for Vaccine Storage** Complete **only** if requesting funding for Immunization Cold Chain Equipment.
4. **Budget Template: Budget Workbook** Complete one (1) form and clearly label each objective. The Budget Workbook details the requested resources necessary to complete all the objectives in the workplan. The budget should highlight and support the workplan activities.

Additional Information

1. Adhere to the asset purchase rules and regulations under which funds to purchase equipment were acquired.
2. Ensure vaccine storage equipment meets specifications outlined in **2020 TVFC & ASN Operations Manual for Responsible Entities** (Resources page).
3. Submit receipt of purchase to DSHS for reimbursement of vaccine storage equipment. If the equipment price changes during the project period, the reimbursement amount cannot exceed 10 percent of the quote submitted in the application. LHE may be directed to submit a new Equipment for Vaccine Storage Form if the equipment cost exceeds 10 percent of the original estimate submitted in application.

Deadline for submission is August 4, 2021, and should be returned to DSHS by emailing them to DSHS Contracts Management Section (CMS), cms_covidimm@dshs.texas.gov

For questions concerning these instructions and documents, please email: **CMS** cms_covidimm@dshs.texas.gov.

Required Reporting

Recipients must submit quarterly reports based on the Performance Measures. The format and dates of reporting will be discussed in award notifications.

Required Project Objectives:

Objective 1:

- 1.1 The recipient will utilize relevant Census tract data at the zip code level to identify geographic areas within their jurisdiction with increased populations of the following racial and ethnic minority groups:
 - a. Non-Hispanic American Indians
 - b. Alaska Native
 - c. Non-Hispanic Black
 - d. Hispanic

It is an allowable expense for the funding recipient to hire or otherwise contract Data Analysts, Statisticians, Epidemiologists, Social Workers, and Public Health specialists to identify these populations. While recommended and *not required*, the recipient is encouraged to map vaccination coverage within their jurisdiction by ZIP Code using ImmTrac vaccination data and/or

other local programs which capture COVID-19 vaccination data.

1.2 Once identified, the recipient will perform targeted education and outreach regarding COVID-19 vaccination to these communities. Methods of education and outreach can include, but are not limited to:

- a. Door-to-door educational pamphlet placement
- b. Town hall meetings
- c. Neighborhood association meetings
- d. Festival/fair, or other community event

1.3 The recipient will share this data with other organizational entities within the jurisdiction to assist with the outreach. These entities can include health department programs like HIV/STD, WIC, and Rural Health; as well as other agencies who regularly interact with these racial and ethnic minority groups. These groups can include the jurisdictional fire department, police department, public works department, and community services department.

- a. The recipient will investigate pathways to incorporate these external organizations to assist in delivery of outreach and educational messages.

Note: Educational and outreach information regarding COVID-19 vaccination can be accessed through the Texas DSHS Immunizations website: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/tools/vaccine-comm.aspx>

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe work in the past quarter to identify and prioritize disproportionately affected populations for vaccination.

Objective 2

2.1 Using the data from the identified disproportionate population identified under the announcement, the recipient will develop and implement outreach campaigns to identify and train trusted messengers to deliver COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness to these communities and populations. These trusted messengers can include; but are not limited to:

- a. Faith leaders
- b. Teachers
- c. Community health workers
- d. Radio DJ's
- e. Barbers

- f. Local Proprietors
- g. Community and civic leaders

2.2 These trusted messengers will deliver their COVID-19 vaccine promotion material and information through local media outlets, social media, faith-based venues, community events, and other culturally appropriate venues.

2.3 Within the jurisdiction, the recipient will contact and engage the following entities to develop and operate temporary or mobile COVID-19 vaccination sites; especially in high-disparity communities. The following are suggestions, but not exclusive to the responsibility of the funding recipient:

- a. Places of worship
- b. Community-based centers (libraries, event centers)
- c. Recreation centers
- d. Food banks
- e. Schools/colleges
- f. Grocery stores
- g. Salons/barbershops
- h. Major employers

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Provide a description of the work and successes/challenges of health department partnerships in reaching the high risk and underserved populations in the past quarter.

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Provide a description of the work and successes/challenges of local partnerships in supporting community engagement and vaccine promotion in the past quarter.

Objective 3

3.1 The recipient will continue to increase access to vaccination sites and appointments throughout the jurisdiction by using multiple locations and with flexible hours (evening hours) which are accessible to and frequented by the identified disproportionate populations. Sites should include, but are not limited to:

- a. Pharmacies
- b. Healthcare facilities
- c. Community-based sites
- d. Mobile sites

- 3.2 The recipient must coordinate with local community-based organizations to plan and implement mobile vaccination clinics; and the recipient is encouraged to work with minority community health workers, nursing students/schools, and historical black colleges and universities, applicable.
- 3.3 The recipient is required to simplify the COVID-19 vaccine patient registration procedure through the following avenues:
- a. Prioritize options which do not require pre-registration
 - b. Ensure patient registration options do not require the internet or digital platforms
 - c. Registration is accessible to those with limited English proficiency or limited literacy
 - i. Registration does NOT require nonessential documentation, such as proof of citizenship.
- 3.4 The recipient is encouraged to support free or subsidized transportation options to access vaccination appointments either directly or indirectly through community partners.

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe mobile COVID-19 vaccination efforts in the past quarter in communities facing disparities, including the number of events and the number of days the events were held.

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe the vaccination services available through CBOs and other local partners in the past quarter.

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe work in the past quarter to partner with community organizations, and other trusted sources to promote vaccine awareness and uptake.

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe the work in the past quarter to simplify COVID-19 vaccine registration processes, including successes and challenges. Describe existing non-digital options for COVID-19 registration.

Objective 4

- 4.1 The recipient will fund and hire a dedicated health communicator to support and implement the jurisdiction's specific vaccine communication, education, and outreach. This position will assist the local jurisdiction in:

- a. Developing and implementing community-based and culturally and linguistically appropriate messages which focus on COVID-19 spread, symptoms, treatment, and prevention, AND benefits of vaccination
- b. Fund communications strategies that accommodate different levels of health literacy, digital literacy, and science literacy
- c. Develop toolkits, checklists, quick guides, etc., to increase vaccine education
- d. Continue training of local trusted messengers to deliver messages regarding vaccine hesitancy and misinformation
- e. Develop localized testimonial campaigns

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe work in the past quarter to work with trusted messengers to develop messaging campaigns, engage their communities, and build vaccine confidence.

Objective 5

5.1 The recipient will fund and hire an adult immunization coordinator to focus on COVID-19, influenza, and other necessary vaccines for these disproportionate populations within their jurisdiction to serve as a safety net for at-risk individuals. The coordinator will focus on:

- a. Quality improvement
- b. Reminder recall
- c. Other relevant activities to improve adult coverage rates

REQUIRED REPORTING Performance Measure: Describe work in the past quarter performed by the hired adult immunization coordinator in terms of increasing quality improvement, reminder recall, and other relevant activities to improve adult coverage rates.

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