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Resource Guide for Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations Fighting COVID-19

Faith-based organizations (FBO) and community-based organizations (CBO) are playing essential roles in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. These critical community pillars are meeting the needs of the populations they traditionally serve, while also assisting millions more people who have been dealing with serious health and economic hardships caused by the pandemic. Local trusted leaders and institutions have been on the front lines of addressing people's needs, including communicating about how to stay safe during the pandemic; providing the facts about how, where, and why people should get vaccinated; and breaking down barriers for families to get the testing, treatment, and assistance they need.

The American Rescue Plan, signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, is providing substantial new support, much of which can help expand these efforts. Whether it's building on work your organization is already doing or broadening your efforts to help every community in America get vaccinated, what follows is a variety of ways that CBOs can access funding or engage in partnerships.

Most of the funding described in this document is being distributed through state, local, territorial, and Tribal health departments, and these departments are at different stages of awarding or spending these dollars. **We strongly encourage CBOs and FBOs to work closely with local, state, Tribal, and territorial partners—as well as local Community Health Centers and other public health institutions—with the understanding that each community will put federal resources to work in unique ways and on different timelines that are shaped by local needs.**

Partner with State, Territorial, and Local Health Departments

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have recently awarded billions of dollars that can be spent over the next 3 years to support state and local efforts to increase vaccine uptake. These awards include:

- **\$3 billion to bolster broad-based vaccine distribution, access, and administration** that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) granted to 64 jurisdictions, particularly to reach underserved communities and those at highest risk from COVID-19. To learn more about accessing these funds, please contact your state, territorial, and/or city [Immunization Manager](#).
- **\$250 million for CBOs to hire and mobilize** community outreach workers, community health workers, social support specialists, and others to increase vaccine access for the

hardest-hit and highest-risk communities through high-touch, on-the-ground outreach. The first of two funding opportunities was released on May 4, with applications due by May 18, 2021. This program will invest in national and regional organizations with broad geographical reach to support vulnerable and medically underserved individuals. The second funding opportunity is coming soon and will focus on smaller CBOs.

- **More than \$130 million to improve vaccine education and information, and reduce health disparities in underserved communities.** Funding will support organizations with deep community relationships and a long track record of commitment to supporting underrepresented racial and ethnic populations, rural populations, and people with disabilities. Both national organizations and community-level organizations will be eligible for this funding. Please stay tuned for more information as this funding is made available;
- **\$332 million to [support community health workers](#)**—frontline public health workers who have a trusted relationship with the community and are able to facilitate access to a variety of services—for COVID-19 prevention and control. Applications for this funding are due by May 24, 2021.
- **\$2.25 billion to [address COVID-19-related health disparities](#) and advance health equity** among populations that are at high risk and underserved, including underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and people living in rural areas. Applications for this funding have closed.
- **\$250 million from HHS’s Office of Minority Health to advance health literacy** and enhance equitable community responses to COVID-19. Applications for this round of funding have closed.
- **Funding from FEMA for [on-the-ground efforts to promote vaccinations](#)** available to state, territorial, Tribal, and local governments that apply. Funding will support grassroots community efforts to improve vaccine education and help get people vaccinated, including phone banking, canvassing, appointment scheduling, and pop-up vaccination sites in workplaces and churches.
- **\$400 million to launch a public health AmeriCorps.** At a time of unprecedented interest in public health, CDC and AmeriCorps (the Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS]) will work together to launch the Public Health AmeriCorps to recruit and build a new workforce ready to respond to the nation’s public health needs. The program will focus on building a diverse pipeline for the public health workforce and on providing direct service to communities across the country. More information on this program is forthcoming and will be available on the [CNCS website](#).

Funds across these programs can be used for various types of community health outreach, including identifying and training trusted members of the community to conduct door-to-door, phone, and text message outreach to raise awareness about COVID-19 vaccines and helping individuals sign up for appointments. Funds may also be used to support the hiring of community health workers who perform culturally competent bilingual health outreach.

CBOs and FBOs that are interested in accessing these funds should contact their state or local health department directly for application instructions.

Appropriate contact information [for vaccine distribution, access, and administration funds](#) can be found [here](#).

Partner with Tribal Communities

Some of the funding described above will also be sent directly to health departments and centers in Tribal communities. CBOs or FBOs operating in Tribal areas should contact local Tribal authorities to discuss opportunities to partner and collaborate. Additional details on the funding that have been provided to Tribes for COVID-19 response can be found [here](#).

Partner with Community Health Centers

Nationwide, nearly 1,400 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) serve about 30 million people, nearly all of whom are in or near poverty. FQHCs—also known as Community Health Centers—work closely with underserved communities, including the uninsured or underinsured, immigrant communities, limited English speakers, and communities at the highest risk of contracting or dying from COVID-19. These community anchors have been doing critical work throughout the pandemic, and now all of them have been invited to participate in the direct federal vaccination program.

The American Rescue Plan has provided substantial investments to Community Health Centers nationwide to expand COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, and treatment for vulnerable populations, and many are receiving direct federal allocations of vaccinations to administer every week. Community Health Centers often partner with local, community-based, and faith-based organizations to conduct outreach about vaccination, to help fill vaccination appointments, to ensure that underserved populations have transportation, and other support to make their vaccination appointments.

We encourage CBOs and FBOs to [reach out to nearby Community Health Centers](#) to partner in those efforts.

Partner with Area Agencies on Aging

Under the American Rescue Plan, the federal government has allocated over \$1.4 billion to 56 State Units on Aging (SUA) and 622 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), and grants were scheduled to be made by May 1, 2021. These grants aim to cover a range of services, including congregate and home-delivered meals, family caregiver support, preventive health services, and home and community-based services.

Typically, AAAs subgrant to local CBOs and FBOs. **To learn more about opportunities to partner, we encourage you to contact your local AAA. You can find contact information for your local AAA [here](#).**

Other Opportunities to Help: Join the COVID-19 Community Corps to Encourage Your Neighbors to Get Vaccinated

The COVID-19 Community Corps is a program through HHS and CDC to share science-based information directly with community organizations and Americans across the country to empower them to deliver messages in the fight against COVID-19 and share the importance of vaccinations in their community.

COVID-19 Community Corps members receive weekly updates on the latest scientific and medical updates, FAQs about the vaccine, social media suggestions, infographics, factsheets with timely and accurate information, and tools on ways to help people get registered and vaccinated. The COVID-19 Community Corps launched on April 1 with over 275 founding members, and as of April 14, more than 6,000 had already signed up to participate.

To join the Corps and get real-time updates, sign up [here](#).