**Wisconsin Health Literacy COVID-19 Vaccine Community Outreach Sub-Award Application**

## Overview

Vaccination is a critical tool for minimizing the adverse impact of COVID-19. The State of Wisconsin seeks to vaccinate as many people as possible to reduce the risk of severe disease, hospitalization and death. Ongoing efforts to distribute the vaccine safely, efficiently, and equitably must include strategies to ensure that vaccines reach communities that face barriers to accessing medical care and people who have historical mistrust of the medical community and vaccines.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted everyone, yet it has affected black, indigenous, and Latinx even more adversely. Data, both in Wisconsin and nationwide, show that communities of color have experienced higher rates of infection, hospitalizations, and death. Compared to white Wisconsin residents, Latinx residents have 1.7 times greater case rates, Black residents have 2.1 times greater hospitalization rates, and indigenous residents have 1.5 times greater death rates. In addition, many rural Wisconsin counties have very low vaccination rates, and populations who are at risk of lower health literacy experience greater barriers when accessing vaccines. The five counties with the lowest rates are Taylor, Clark, Rusk, Waushara, and Shawano.

Wisconsin Health Literacy (WHL), a division of Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., recognizes that community-based organizations and trusted messengers are in the best position to promote acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination among marginalized and underserved communities. WHL must rely on those who can make the connections necessary to communicate vital information in culturally appropriate ways. WHL puts forward the following principles for this grant award process:

## We recognize the need for trusted messengers who understand the lived experiences of the diverse individuals, families, and communities across the state.

## We are interested in building trust from shared values.

## We are committed to supporting community organizations by providing trainings and tailored materials to sub-awardees, based on their needs.

## We will operate from a place of curiosity and humility.

## Opportunity

This funding award seeks to engage community-based organizations to help remove barriers to and promote acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination for communities that have and do face barriers to accessing medical care and people who have historical mistrust of the medical community and vaccines. The awarded community-based organizations will build upon existing relationships within the community and adapt strategies to meet the unique identified needs of each community. Their work should aim to increase knowledge and awareness of factors such as:

* How COVID-19 spreads and the risk to human health
* The risks and long-term effects associated with COVID-19 infections
* The safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
* The routine nature of getting immunized
* Where to access COVID-19 vaccines, particularly if uninsured or underinsured
* Support in navigating systems or overcoming barriers to access COVID-19 vaccines in the community, including digital literacy challenges.

By increasing knowledge and awareness about COVID-19 and vaccines, these community outreach activities will facilitate downstream improvements in COVID-19 vaccination rates and the disparities that exist in these rates.

**WHL intends to issue awards of $50,000. Funding will be available for use upon award through 6/30/2024.** Applicants will be awarded based on available funding, capacity, and application scores as determined by the review panel. Awards will be geographically dispersed and in consideration of counties, zip codes, and communities with low vaccination rates within the state of Wisconsin.

Register for the April 13th Webinar Informational Session: <https://bit.ly/41TQ2o8>

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be based in Wisconsin, conduct their proposed community outreach work in Wisconsin, and be one of the following:

* Local or tribal government entities
* Nonprofit entities certified as a 501(c)(3) by the federal Internal Revenue Service
* Projects sponsored by another 501(c)(3) organization
* Organizations that are new and have not done this work under the direction of Wisconsin Health Literacy before.
* Organizations that are grantees finishing up Year 1 of this work in June 2023.

Eligible organizations may not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, or national origin in their staffing policies, use of volunteers, or provision of services.

## Mutual Commitments

**Grantee Commitments**

* Prepare and submit the following reports:
  + Monthly expense reports, including timesheets, receipts, and other fiscal documentation, as appropriate
  + Quarterly reporting of data and outcomes, including but not limited to:
    - community concerns and challenges encountered
    - number of people contacted with demographic information, if available,
    - number, type, location, and purpose of activities,
  + A final annual report on activities, demographic reach, success story(ies), and lessons learned no later than July 15, 2024.
* Meet at least monthly with your respective Regional Vaccine Community Outreach (VCO) Specialist.
* Use resources in the manner described.
* View WHL recorded trainings on health, science, and digital literacy. (if not done so already).
* Use (or adapt, as needed) health literate COVID-19 information and resources provided by WHL.
* Uphold public health practices and implement active listening and respectful communication practices in carrying forth this work. This includes empathy and understanding of those who are not vaccine confident..
* Use culturally competent, health literate messaging and services.
* Respond to requests for information/activity from WHL.
* Inform WHL about progress, impacts, and outcomes of the effort
* Solicit technical assistance and support from WHL to ensure accurate, understandable, and actionable information.

**WHL Commitments**

* Provide funding for efforts to enhance awareness, accessibility, and access for COVID-19 vaccination.
* Provide technical assistance including trainings and tailored resources to support COVID-19 vaccination education and outreach.
* Provide trainings related to active listening and respectful communication practices.
* Provide technical assistance and trainings on financial reporting requirements.
* Respond to requests for information/activity from sub-awardees.

## Use of Funds

Broadly speaking, this RFA will fund activities in Wisconsin focused on increasing knowledge and awareness of the COVID-19 virus, vaccines, and boosters, decreasing vaccine questioning, and decreasing barriers to accessing COVID-19 vaccines. In this post-emergency era of the pandemic, communities are expressing fatigue having conversations about vaccination and boosters. This funding will support organizations who recognize this fatigue and are motivated to educate communities about the effectiveness of vaccines and boosters.

Examples of Allowable Expenses

* Personnel (salary/wages, fringe benefits)
* Travel for provision of services (excluding meals and in compliance with state and local restrictions)
* Supplies (office resources, minor equipment such as a computer for digital literacy efforts, community outreach materials)
* Contractual costs (staffing, grassroots awareness campaigns)
* Translation and production/printing services.
* Indirect expenses benefiting multiple projects/activities (must be no more than 10% of total proposed project budget)

Examples of Unallowable Expenses – major categories

* Capital purchases or leases
* Reimbursement of pre-award costs
* Purchases not related to vaccine community outreach
* Rental support for underserved communities
* Funding advocacy or lobbying efforts
* Purchase of vaccines or funding vaccine clinics
* Incentives of any kind to engage participants in activities offered by sub-awardee.

Please note that outreach materials, including existing materials translated into additional languages, created with this award are to be made available publicly for use with other communities and other areas of the state as applicable.

## Application Submission

Applicants should email their application to Health Literacy Director, Stan Hudson [stan@wisconsinliteracy.org](mailto:stan@wisconsinliteracy.org) with the subject line “Application–COVID-19 Vaccination Community Outreach Sub-Award.”

## Application Questions

Please submit all questions about this RFA to Stan Hudson at [stan@wisconsinliteracy.org](mailto:stan@wisconsinliteracy.org).

**Application Review**

All applications will be subject to an initial technical review for completeness and adherence to RFA specifications and requirements. Applications that pass the initial technical review will be evaluated and scored by a panel of reviewers with knowledge of: COVID-19 vaccine education and community outreach, public health, and health care. WHL will make awards to applicants who demonstrate the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of this RFA.

Favorable applications will reflect the following guidelines:

* Are culturally competent
* Serve a marginalized population
* Can be started quickly (i.e., within one month of award)
* Comply with public health guidance about COVID-19
* Are capable of producing immediate impacts on knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
* Ability to reach a large number of marginalized people or those belonging to marginalized communities, including small rural communities
* Understanding of target population, barriers faced, and ways to advance racial/economic/geographic equity
* Experience working within the identified population(s)/communities
* Entities led and/or staffed by people of color, people with disabilities, and/or LGBTQ individuals will be prioritized

WHL reserves the right to reject any and all submissions. Also, WHL reserves the option to conduct discussions with organizations about their applications for clarification purposes. If discussions are conducted, applicants may be invited to modify their applications as needed.

**Application**

1. **Organization Name**:

2. **Organizational Address:**

3. **Main Contact Name**:

4. **Main Contact Email Address**:

5. **Main Contact Phone Number**:

6. **Secondary Contact Name**:

7. **Secondary Contact Email Address**:

8. **Secondary Contact Phone Number**:

9. **Project Title**:

10. Required questions for **new applicants** that did not receive WHL VCO funding 2022-2023:

*Provide a one-paragraph statement of work that summarizes the VCO project proposed (maximum 200 words)]* :

11. Required question for **current grantees** that received WHL VCO funding in 2022:

*Please provide a one paragraph statement of how your project would evolve in year 2. Which activities were successful in year 1 that you would continue in year 2? Please describe any new activities/projects that you plan to incorporate. Also include information about strategies you may not continue, and why.*

11. **Target Population/Audience** *[Describe the communities/populations that will be reached through the proposed community outreach. Please list all the counties that you serve. Describe current barriers to this population receiving COVID vaccinations and boosters. (maximum 400 words) Required]*:

12. **Project Objectives** *[Clearly list your VCO project goals/objectives and the proposed activities for meeting each goal/objective (maximum 800 words) Required]*:

13. **Timeline** *[Include a timeline for implementing the plan to meet goals/objectives (maximum 400 words) Required]*:

14. **Evaluation Plan** *[Describe how you will evaluate the success of the project. The plan should be tied to project goals/objectives. List measures of success for each objective. (maximum 800 words) Required]*:

15. **Amount of Award Being Requested** (Required):

16. **Budget** **Explanation**  *[Please complete and submit the Excel VCO Sub-Award Budget Template. Use the Excel budget template to write a brief narrative explanation for the budget items you included below. Only explain the items below if they are in your budget. (maximum 400 words) Required]*

*Personnel*: *Please explain broadly what each staff member listed on your budget template will be doing on the project and why they need the total number of hours you listed on the Excel budget to accomplish their work.*

*Fringe*: Note: *If you are hiring contract employees and they are not on your payroll, do not include 7.65% fringe on your budget. Contact* [*stan@wisconsinliteracy.org*](mailto:stan@wisconsinliteracy.org) *if you need help deleting the line item on the budget template. If you pay your staff benefits (greater than 7.65% FICA), please briefly explain what those benefits are and how they match the percentage you included on your budget template.*

*Supplies*:

*Translation services*:

*Printing*:

*Mileage*:

*Other*:

17. **Do you currently receive any funding from another source to provide COVID vaccine community outreach? If so, please provide the activities and current timeline.**

18**. Please share any thoughts, questions, concerns, or additional information** *(Maximum 250 words)*: