
REVIEW MANUAL

COVID-19 Vaccination Community Outreach

Request for Applications (RFA)



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES**

Overview

Purpose of this Request for Applications

Vaccination is a critical tool for containing the virus and minimizing the adverse impact of COVID-19. The State of Wisconsin seeks to achieve herd immunity for COVID-19 across Wisconsin by immunizing approximately 80% of the eligible population. 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 coronavirus pandemic has been hard on everyone, yet COVID-19 has adversely affected black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) even more acutely. Data, both in Wisconsin and nationwide, show that BIPOC communities have experienced higher rates of infection, hospitalizations, and death. Compared to white Wisconsin residents, Hispanic or Latinx residents have 1.7 times greater case rates, Black residents have 2.1 times greater hospitalization rates, and American Indian residents have 1.5 times greater death rates.

The State of Wisconsin 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. The State must rely on those who can make the connections necessary to communicate vital information in culturally appropriate ways.

DHS 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 learning from our applicants and awardees.
- We will focus on the mission of the request.
- 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 dangers it poses
- The risks and long-term effects associated with COVID-19 infections
- The safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines
- 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

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.

Funding Available

DHS intends to issue awards of either \$10,000-\$50,000 (Tier 1) or \$50,000-\$100,000 (Tier 2) to approximately 50 organizations. Funding will be available for use upon award through 8/31/2021. 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 social vulnerability factors and healthcare utilization.

Should additional funding become available at any point during the course of the grant period, DHS reserves the right to use the results of this competitive application process to increase funding to selected agencies or to fund additional agencies that applied but were not funded originally. Wisconsin DHS also reserves the right to award grants for less than an applicant's proposed amount.

The total amount of funding available for this RFA is \$3,000,000. This equals:

- 300 - \$10,000 awards
- 120 - \$25,000 awards
- 60 - \$50,000 awards
- 30 - \$100,000 awards

Ideally would have a mixture of small and large awards. 300 grantees is unmanageable, and 30 very large awards likely won't reach a diverse enough population.

Eligible Applicants

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
- K-12 schools or school districts

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

- Use resources in the manner described.
- Use (or adapt, as needed) science-based information provided by DHS.
- Uphold public health practices and trauma-informed approaches in carrying forth this work.
- Use culturally competent messaging and services.
- Respond to requests for information/activity from DHS.
- Attend listening sessions with DHS to share experiences with other awardees and hear updates from DHS.
- Inform DHS about progress, impacts, and outcomes of the effort.
- Solicit technical assistance and support from DHS to ensure accurate information.
- Submit a final report on activities, a success story(ies), and lessons learned no later than 10/01/21.
- Prepare and submit expense reports monthly.
- (optional) Provide a document of ideas for potential action to further advance health equity in the community(ies) served.

DHS Commitments

- Provide funding for efforts to enhance awareness, accessibility, and access for COVID-19 vaccination.
- Provide technical assistance on credible public health practices and the COVID-19 vaccination program.
- Provide technical assistance related to trauma-informed practices and communications.
- Respond to requests for information/activity from grantees.

Use of Funds

As more groups become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine through spring and summer 2021, it is critical to prepare communities to be both mentally ready (i.e., addressing vaccine hesitancy, increasing knowledge of the benefits of vaccine, and dispelling myths) and physically ready (i.e., knowing where, when, and how to access the vaccine, as well as working to remove barriers to access).

Broadly speaking, this RFA will fund activities in Wisconsin focused on increasing knowledge and awareness of the COVID-19 virus and vaccines, decreasing vaccine hesitancy, and decreasing barriers to accessing COVID-19 vaccine.

Following are examples of potential activities:

- Trusted community members conduct culturally competent outreach about COVID-19 and its vaccines that aligns with COVID-related CDC guidance. Trusted community members distribute their messages via channels known to be used by specific populations.

- Use community health workers, who reflect the communities they will serve, to provide culturally competent education (e.g., text messaging, email, webinars, cold calls, call-in phone lines, socially distanced in-person outreach, etc.) about COVID-19 and its vaccines for a specific population.
- Use community health workers or other trainers, who reflect the communities they will serve, to help health care workers overcome barriers to immunizing specific communities (e.g., improve health care providers' cultural sensitivity and ability to answer patients' concerns, etc.).
- Establish or expand a community coalition and regularly convene it. The community coalition consists of diverse stakeholders (e.g., faith-based organizations, hospitals, pharmacies, schools, businesses, etc.) that represent and serve a specific population. The coalition implements culturally competent strategies for improving awareness and knowledge of COVID-19 and vaccines.
- Form partnerships with local health departments to assist them with their COVID-19-related community outreach (e.g., public health education campaigns, advertisement of community-based vaccination clinics, informational briefings, etc.) and in particular assure that such outreach is culturally competent towards a specific population.

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, community outreach materials)
- Contractual costs (staffing, grassroots awareness campaigns)
- Purchasing gift cards or other incentives (in compliance with State requirements, at nominal levels to be detailed in the proposal)
- Indirect expenses benefiting multiple projects/activities (must be <10% of total proposed project budget)
- Translation and production/printing services

Examples of Unallowable Expenses – major categories

- Capital purchases or leases
- Reimbursement of pre-award costs
- Funding advocacy or lobbying efforts
- Purchase of vaccines or clinical care to the public
- Research

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 Review

All applications will be subject to an initial technical review for completeness and adherence to RFA specifications and requirements. Applications that fail the initial review will receive no further consideration. Applications that pass the initial technical review will be evaluated and scored by a panel of reviewers with knowledge of: community outreach, public health, health care, and/or immunizations. Reviewers will independently evaluate and score applications. Then all scored applications will be compared with each other. DHS 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
- Ability to reach a large number of marginalized people or those belonging to marginalized communities and/or
- Understanding of target population, barriers faced, and ways to advance racial/economic/geographic equity
- Experience working within the identified population(s)/communities(s)
- Ability to get funds to groups on the ground/grassroots organizations (Tier 2)
- Collaborative approach (for Tier 2)
- Entities led and/or staffed by BIPOC, people with disabilities, and/or LGBTQ individuals will be prioritized

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

Fair and Equitable Review

To assure a fair and equitable review of all eligible applications, DHS has implemented the following:

1. Reviewers are randomly assigned applications and are screened for any conflicts with the applicant or proposed project.
2. Scoring criteria are standardized, reducing subjectivity of meeting or not meeting benchmarks.
3. Reviewer scores are assessed by DHS and CRT leadership to identify any outlying scores or anomalies to be addressed by the review panel.
4. A review panel meeting will be held to discuss funding recommendations.

Application Specifications

Responses should be prepared with Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial font no smaller than size 10.

Responses are not to exceed:

- four (4) pages for Tier 1 (\$10,000-\$50,000) applicants
- eight (8) pages for Tier 2 (\$50,000-\$100,000) applicants

This page limit includes the budget, but does not include a cover page or letters of support (for Tier 2 applicants).

Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 Applications

There are a few differences between Tier 1 and Tier 2 applications, the namely being the funding request amount. Tier 1 applicants may request between \$10,000-\$50,000, while Tier 2 applicants may request between \$50,000-\$100,000. To better describe how the larger award would be used, Tier 2 applicants must provide additional information and detail in their application and budget, further described below.

Criteria	Tier 1	Tier 2
Application Request Amount	\$10,000 - \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Page Limit (including budget)	4 pages	8 pages
Organization, Grant Contact, and Request Information	✓	✓
Brief description of request	✓	✓
Description of intended population(s), existing barriers, and how barriers will be addressed	✓	✓
Organization's unique qualifications to advance this work	✓	✓
Intended expenses – description and categories (brief)	✓	
Intended expenses – line item budget		✓
Major activities and milestones	✓	✓
Description of success	✓	✓
Experience implementing culturally competent services and programs		✓
Working with existing partners to connect with population(s)		✓
Details about sub-awards and monitoring sub-awards		✓ (if applicable)
Letters of support describing organization's experience removing barriers to healthcare and/or connecting with population(s)		optional

Review Process

Step 1: Eligibility Check

Purpose: Did the applicant meet the minimum eligibility criteria to be reviewed?

Who: Conducted by RFA manager or small group of staff

- ✓ Was the application received on or before 4:00 PM on March 19, 2021?
- ✓ Is the application complete enough for review?
- ✓ Is the applicant one of the following?
 - Local or tribal government entity
 - Nonprofit entity certified as a 501(c)(3) by the federal Internal Revenue Service
 - Project sponsored by another 501(c)(3) organization
 - K-12 school or school district

If the criteria above have been met, the application will be reviewed by a panel of individuals, further described below.

Step 2: Panel Review and Rating

Purpose: To narrow the pool of applicants to a number that can be prioritized/approved by CRT/DHS leadership for funding. The difficulty of this task is impacted by the number of applications received and the amount of funding requested.

Who: A panel of individuals which could include Immunization Program staff, public health educators, CRT Stakeholder Engagement Taskforce members, HEAT representatives, other equity staff in DPH. Consider DHS staff and partners with a demonstrated understanding of equity to the criteria for being a reviewer.

The reviewers will meet ahead of the review process to develop a shared understanding of:

- The purpose and aim of the funding
- The scoring criteria (i.e., the “what” of scoring)
- Approaches to scoring to reduce variability among reviewers (i.e., how to approach scoring so it’s as uniform as possible)
- The importance of the considerations below (do not evaluate grammar, focus on content and understanding of the community served, etc.)
- How to surface and discuss potential biases panelists may be bringing into the process

Tip #1: Move beyond the naming of biases as shaming or conflating bias with conflict of interest. Openly articulating filters and biases helps illuminate potential influences on decision-making. Bias is natural and is only a problem in the decision-making process when it is acted on without question.

Tip #2: Encourage discussions of bias as a way of surfacing ideas that are guiding a panelist's scoring. Just because a bias is articulated, doesn't mean that it is automatically a bad or wrong impulse. Sometimes a conversation that arises out of a feeling of bias can provide important information for the review. For example, a panelist might say, "This particular application is hitting on my bias against cultural appropriation."

Other Considerations

- All comments made about an applicant in the reviewer's score sheet is considered a record. Provide only comments that are relevant and necessary to make funding decisions.
- Do not score for spelling, grammar, or use of terms. Small, community-led projects have less capacity and experience in grant writing, which is not indicative of their ability and expertise in community engagement. The goal is to understand the project and what they propose to do/accomplish.
- Focus on whether the proposal seems a good strategy for promoting vaccine equity among a marginalized population and whether the organization seems well-positioned/equipped to conduct the work (e.g., are they part of or well known by the community, are they in a particular position to be able to deliver key messages or understand and address barriers, etc.).
- **Content provided beyond the page limit should not be considered or count towards the application's score.**

Reviewer Tips

- Before you begin scoring, it is recommended that you first read through the entire application. Requested information that the applicant provides may not always be in the same section as other applications, so it helps to first understand what the applicant is proposing, then begin to assess whether all the criteria were met and to what extent.
- Each criteria is given a scale from not responsive (0 points) to excellent. Reviewers should use their best judgment in determining whether the applicant has provided adequate information to satisfy each criteria. There are no half points or in-between scores.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Request for funding – Overview (0 points)

While this section is not scored, it provides an overview of the project. Some information contained in this section may be relevant for other criteria in the application. This information should be considered in response to those questions.

Applicant describes how they will:

- Provide timely and accurate information to promote vaccination and/or
- How they will help reduce barriers for individuals to access the vaccine

Intended population(s) (9 points)

- Applicant clearly describes the marginalized community/population(s) they will work with
- Applicant describes the barriers that exist in the community/population(s)

Rating Scale:

- Excellent - 9
 - Provides a clear description of a marginalized community/population that will be the focus of the project
 - Demonstrates an understanding of the barriers faced by the identified group and how to address those barriers in order to promote greater equity – in a way that meets the needs and concerns of the community
 - Demonstrates that the organization or the individuals who will conduct the activities are known and trusted by the intended audience
 - Demonstrates ability to begin project shortly after award (1 month)
- Good - 6
 - Covers many, but not all, of the points above
- Fair/Poor - 3
 - The proposal's activities do not address the needs or barriers experienced by a marginalized population and/or the strategies will exacerbate inequities
 - Does not describe activities that would overcome the information or logistics to overcome barriers to more equitable uptake and access to the COVID-19 vaccine
- Not Responsive – 0
 - Applicant has not described a marginalized community/population and has not described the barriers that exist in the community/population

Types of things to look for:

- The identified population is a group that experiences the ongoing effects of historical racism and/or marginalization
- The identified barriers demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the marginalized group
- Additional points if the barriers include both access to vaccine and historical mistrust

Organizational Qualifications (3 points)

- Applicant has experience working with the identified population(s)
- Applicant has experience in community outreach, health equity, or other activities relevant to the proposed project
- OR Applicant provides information about subawards or partnerships with organizations with this experience, as demonstrated in the Subawards section (Tier 2 only) or in letters of support.

Rating Scale:

- Responsive – 3 points
 - Applicant clearly describes that they (or their partners or subawardees) have the experience in both working with the identified population and in community outreach, health equity, or other activities relevant to the proposed project
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - If the applicant does not demonstrate this experience or intent to work with appropriate partners with this experience, they should not receive points for this section.

Types of things to look for:

- Extent to which the project serves the organization's identified community or constituency
- The organization's leadership demonstrates cultural sensitivity with the population served and/or identifies as belonging to the population being served
- Where appropriate, potential to reach additional underserved populations in alignment with partners
- It is clear that the applicant is authentically embedded in the communities prioritized and articulates a deep understanding of the equity and social justice implications to the outbreak and its aftermath
- Applicant recognizes the cultural nuances of and impact of the language that is used in describing programs
- Organizations that are limited English speaking and that speak Indigenous languages

Budget (Tier 1) (3 points)

- Budget is reasonable (i.e., budget request aligns with work being described; costs do not seem inflated)
- Items in budget are allowable (i.e., budget items are allowable according to the RFA/federal regulations)

Rating Scale

- Excellent – 3 points
 - Applicant provides a budget that has enough details about the categories of expenses to understand how the grant funds will be utilized
 - Expenses are allowable and support the purpose of the project

- Good – 2 points
 - Applicant provides a budget with categories of expenses
 - Expenses are allowable, but some expenses do not seem necessary for the purpose of the project
- Fair/Poor – 1 point
 - Applicant provides few details about how grant funds will be spent and/or expenses do not align with the activities in the project plan
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - Applicant does not provide a budget

Project Plan (15 points)

- Activities will help promote equity and reduce disparities among marginalized populations in COVID-19 vaccination uptake in Wisconsin
- Activities will help address the barriers identified by the applicant in ways that are or that they identify as being relevant/meaningful to the audience
- Applicant describes how these barriers will be addressed
- Activities are aligned with public health guidance about COVID-19 (mass gatherings, etc.)
- Milestones are achievable within the project period (by August 31, 2021) (note: some of this information may be contained within the Outcomes section)
- Activities can begin within one month of award

Rating Scale

- Excellent – 15 points
 - Applicant fully describes how activities will help promote equity and reduce disparities among marginalized populations in COVID-19 vaccination uptake
 - Applicant fully describes the barriers faced by the population and the activities that are described will clearly address the barriers identified by the applicant
 - There are no activities that are not aligned with public health guidance about COVID-19
 - Activities align with the project timeline (i.e., can be started within one month and will be complete by 8/31/2021)
- Good – 10 points
 - Most, but not all of the criteria above are met
 - Applicant may not fully describe or show full understanding of the barriers faced by the population, the activities may not meaningfully reduce barriers, and/or the activities may not be relevant/meaningful to the audience
 - Activities will not start within one month of award, or it is unclear when activities will begin
- Fair/Poor - 5 points
 - Few of the criteria above are met
 - Applicant does not address how activities will be aligned with public health guidance about COVID-19

- Applicant does not provide a timeline for when activities will take place
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - Applicant does not provide a project plan

Types of things to look for:

- The activities have the potential to reduce inequities in vaccine uptake among the identified marginalized population
- The project supports groups who face barriers to equitable vaccine uptake through:
 - Information and/or outreach efforts that address historical mistrust in medicine and/or government
 - Activities that will overcome barriers to access, such as outreach to help people and communities register, providing transportation to people who otherwise would not have the ability to easily reach a vaccination site, etc.)
- Project activities are culturally specific and/or are tailored for the intended audience (e.g., language, messaging, responding to a particular historical concern or present-day myth, addressing logistical barriers in a meaningful and/or appropriate way)
- Somewhere, the application identifies that the people providing the information, outreach, or services are known and trusted by the community
- Additional points for projects and activities that address both barriers to access to vaccine and historical mistrust
- The project plan is clear and understandable
- Activities help build and strengthen community connections and/or partnerships.
- Proposal/activities clearly indicates the ability to provide culturally and linguistically relevant information, regardless of the target audience (could be native or non-native English speakers)

Outcomes (9 points)

- Outcomes are reasonable and aligned with the purpose of grant funds as described in the RFA
- Outcomes are meaningful and beneficial for the community/population(s)
- Outcomes can be achieved within the project period (i.e., by August 31, 2021)

Rating Scale

- Excellent – 9 points
 - The outcomes are fully described, align with the purpose of these grant funds, and align with the activities described in the project plan
 - Applicant describes how the outcomes will be meaningful and beneficial for the community/population(s)
 - Applicant describes when the outcomes will be achieved, and they will be achieved by 8/31/2021
- Good – 6 points

- The outcomes are provided, align with the purpose of the grant funds, and make sense for the activities described in the project plan
- Applicant either doesn't describe how the outcomes are meaningful and beneficial for the community/population(s), OR outcomes cannot be achieved by 8/31/2021
- Fair/Poor - 3 points
 - Applicant fails to describe the outcomes, they do not align with the purpose of the grant funds, and/or the activities described in the project plan
 - Applicant does not describe how the outcomes are meaningful and beneficial for the community/population(s) AND outcomes cannot be achieved by 8/31/2021
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - Applicant does not provide outcomes

Types of things to look for:

- Consider cultural and situational (contextual) nuances in outcomes
 - The outcomes align with the proposed activities (i.e., make sense)
 - Intended outcomes reflect the goal of increasing vaccine uptake among marginalized communities
- Scoring should not be based solely on the numbers of people the proposed project can reach. It is important to reach as many people as possible, and to balance that aim with the importance of supporting a group or organization that can reach a smaller number of people who are particularly marginalized or often excluded from larger, broader efforts.

Tier 2 Applicants – All of the above, plus:

Experience (3 points)

Rating Scale:

- Responsive – 3 points
 - Applicant clearly demonstrates their experience implementing culturally competent meaningful services and programs with and on behalf of the intended audience OR will provide subawards to identified entities that meet this criteria
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - If the applicant does not demonstrate this experience or intent to work with appropriate partners with this experience (as demonstrated in the Subaward section, Partnership section, or Letters of Support), they should not receive points for this section.

Types of things to look for:

- Experience w/ being authentically embedded in the communities prioritized
- Experience with working on social justice issues and addressing the impact of structural inequities

- Experience working with and meeting the needs (linguistic and beyond) of English-language-learners/communities

Partnerships (6 points)

- Applicant describes existing partnerships or groups they will collaborate with to achieve the project goals
- Partnerships seem to be beneficial to achieving the project goals

Rating Scale

- Excellent – 6 points
 - Applicant fully describes existing partnerships with good working relationships that will help complete the activities described in the project plan and meet the outcomes provided by the applicant
 - Applicant demonstrates experience and ability to collaborate with others to achieve common goals
 - Applicant provides information about how the partnership(s) will be beneficial to achieving the project goals
- Good – 3 points
 - Applicant does not fully describe existing partnerships or describes needing to build partnerships for the purpose of this project
 - Applicant provides few details about how the partnership(s) will be beneficial to achieving the project goals
- Fair/Poor - 1 point
 - Applicant describes partnerships that would not be beneficial to achieving the project goals and/or provides few details about partnerships overall
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - Applicant does not provide information about existing partnerships or groups they would collaborate with to achieve the project goals

Types of things to look for:

- Demonstrated partnerships that help further the impact and reach of the activities and deliverables of this grant.

Subawards (Optional, 0 points)

If the applicant intends to provide subawards, they clearly describe each of the following:

- Who the subawards would go to
- How the subawardees reflect the target audience and/or have demonstrated experience working with and/or providing meaningful services to the audience

- The purposes of the subawards
- How the subawards will be monitored (to assure that activities and expenses are reasonable, allowable, and align with the purpose of the RFA)

While this section is not scored, please note any highlights or concerns about subawards in the score sheet. Information provided here could help demonstrate organizational qualifications and experience to do this work.

Detailed Budget – Tier 2 Only (3 points)

- Budget is reasonable (i.e., budget line items align with work being described; costs do not seem inflated)
- Budget is accurate (i.e., budget line items add up)
- Items in budget are allowable (i.e., budget items are allowable according to the RFA/federal regulations)
- Enough detail is provided in the budget to clearly identify the purpose and use of funds

Rating Scale

- Excellent – 3 points
 - Applicant provides a clear, line-item budget in which all criteria are met
 - It is clear how grant funds will be used to support the project plan
 - Expenses are allowable and support the purpose of the project
- Good – 2 points
 - Most criteria are met with enough detail to understand how the grant funds would be used
 - Expenses are allowable, but some expenses do not seem necessary for the purpose of the project
- Fair/Poor - 1 point
 - Applicant provided a budget, but it does not have enough detail to understand how the grant funds would be used and/or expenses do not align with the activities in the project plan
- Not Responsive – 0 points
 - Applicant did not provide a detailed budget

Types of things to look for:

- Similarly to Tier 1, Proposed activities appear in alignment with expenses (i.e., the budget appears to make sense)

Letters of Support (Optional)

Letters of support are optional for Tier 2 applicants to provide to help demonstrate existing relationships and partnerships. These letters do not count towards the application page limit, and are not scored; however, please

make a note if information in the letters of support help provide additional detail or demonstration of the criteria above. These letters of support may be particularly helpful in scoring the Partnerships, Organizational Qualifications, and Experience sections.

Scoring

Reviewers will provide scores up to the maximum amount for each criteria. Reviewers will be evaluating both Tier 1 and Tier 2 applications; instructions are included in the RFA Score Sheet.

Some criteria will not be scored; however, the information contained in those sections may still be counted towards other responses. For example, if an applicant fully describes how they will begin activities within one month of award in the *Brief Description of Request for Funding* but does not include in the *Project Plan*, please use that information where it can be found to help meet the requested criteria.

Information provided beyond the page limits (4 pages for Tier 1; 8 pages for Tier 2) cannot be counted and will not be provided to reviewers. This page limit is inclusive of the narrative and budget sections, but does not include a one-page cover sheet or letters of support. Other materials not requested that are submitted with the application should not be considered (e.g., annual reports, newsletters, awards, etc.) and will not be provided to reviewers.

Reviewer Funding Recommendation

After reviewing the application, please make an overall recommendation as to whether DHS should further consider the proposal for funding by selecting one of the following:

- Fund
- Fund with reservations
- Don't fund

Please remember that all comments made about an applicant in the reviewer's score sheet is considered a record. Provide only comments that are relevant and necessary to make funding decisions.

Step 3: Post Review Prioritization and Award

Purpose: It is unlikely that Step 2 will determine the final group of recipients, so it is important to complete an equity review to prioritize diversity of recipients and determine final awards. It is suggested that the review committee do their best to recommend a pool of candidates to CRT/DHS leadership for consideration. They can use some of the criteria below as a guide.

- Use the DHS vaccination dashboard data to understand which populations are lagging in vaccination rates. Funding should be targeted toward efforts to overcome disparities in vaccine uptake.
- Ensure statewide coverage considering:
- Populations based on race, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- Populations based on geography: region, rural/urban

CRT/DHS leadership will make final decisions about grantees and funding amounts, using the review committee's scores and considering the above criteria above for these funding decisions.

Reviewer Documents

1. Confidentiality Statement Form

Please read and sign the statement of confidentiality form and email it back to

jessica.kessler@dhs.wisconsin.gov **prior to reviewing any applications.**

2. RFA Document and Q&A

The [RFA](#) and [Applicant Questions & Answers](#) contain important information about this grant's purpose, application process, and review process, as well as answers to questions submitted by potential applicants. Please become familiar with these and use in conjunction with this review manual.

3. Review Manual (this document)

The review manual provides reviewers an overview of the required content and rating scales for scoring the applications to this RFA.

4. Applications

Each reviewer will receive a portion of the applications that pass the eligibility check (Step 1) of the review process. Multiple reviewers will be assigned to each application.

✕ Conflict of Interest

Before evaluating any of their assigned applications, reviewers must look through all of their assigned applications to ensure they have no conflict of interest with any of them. If reviewers have questions about a possible conflict of interests, or if they believe for any reason that they cannot objectively review an individual application, please contact Jessica Kessler immediately.

✕ Contact with Applicants

Reviewers are not allowed to contact an applicant for any clarification or discussion. Reviewers must evaluate each application based only on the written application submitted.

5. Score Sheet

- Reviewers will record their ratings and comments in the provided score sheet.
- Reviewers should take notes about the application's strengths, weaknesses, and areas that would need to be revised in order to be funded (if any). It is important that reviewers take their time and are thorough in their scoring and notetaking of applications because these reviews will inform funding recommendations made by DHS. Please remember that notes submitted as part of your score sheet is a public record.
- Please submit final score sheets on or before **11:59 AM on Thursday, March 25, 2021** to Jessica Kessler at jessica.kessler@dhs.wisconsin.gov.