

Dept. of Health Services: Awards \$3.4 million in community outreach grants to promote equity in COVID-19 vaccinations

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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced today that \$3.4 million in grants has been awarded to 43 organizations to promote health equity in COVID-19 vaccinations in Wisconsin. These organizations will use the funds to serve as trusted messengers within their communities to help reduce barriers to vaccine access among disadvantaged or underserved populations.

“Access to effective, safe COVID-19 vaccines, as well as reliable information from trusted sources, is essential to making sure everyone across our state can protect themselves and their families,” said Gov. Tony Evers. “These awards will help trusted community-based organizations hire community outreach workers to increase vaccine confidence and accessibility for workers, families, and communities across our state.”

Due to various social factors and systemic barriers, communities of color have experienced [higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death during this pandemic](#). In Wisconsin, as well as nationwide, [COVID-19 vaccine data](#) shows rates of vaccinations have been disproportionately lower for Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, rural, and other underserved populations.

“These grant funds will raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention, including sharing information about the importance of getting your COVID-19 vaccine, including your booster dose as soon as you are eligible,” said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. “These community-based organizations are vital

partners in our efforts to meet people where they are, answer questions, and share accurate and reliable information about COVID-19.”

Grants were awarded to organizations that work to reduce socioeconomic or health inequities. The various organizations are committed to addressing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and minimizing accessibility issues for members of their populations. Strategies to improve access and acceptance of COVID-19 vaccines include creating culturally specific messaging and engaging in outreach with local businesses, community leaders, and community health workers. [See the full list of awardees and brief descriptions of their plans.](#)

In combination with the [\\$8.1 million awarded in December 2021](#), the total amount awarded in the second round of funding is \$11.58 million provided to 135 organizations that will continue this important work through the fall of 2022. During the first round of funding in early 2021, DHS awarded \$6.3 million in grants to more than 100 organizations. Through funding from the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC), DHS was able to open applications in October for an additional \$13 million for the second round of the [Vaccination Community Outreach Grant Program](#).

DHS will continue to work to ensure everyone in Wisconsin can get vaccinated against COVID-19. We remain committed to protecting and promoting the health and safety of all Wisconsinites.

For information, resources, and data related to Wisconsin’s COVID-19 vaccination program, visit the [COVID-19 vaccine data](#) webpage. To access resources translated into Hindi, Hmong, Mandarin, Somali, and Spanish, visit the [COVID-19 resources](#) webpage. For up-to-date information about Wisconsin’s COVID-19 response, visit the [DHS COVID-19 webpage](#). You can also follow @DHSWI on [Facebook\(link is external\)](#), [Twitter\(link is external\)](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram\(link is external\)](#) for more information on COVID-19.