Chicago Vaccine Outreach  
*An interfaith approach to vaccine accessibility & trust-building*

Like many cities across the United States, Chicago has been hard hit by the devastating effects of COVID-19. Over 4,500 Chicagoans have lost their battle with the virus and many others are ailing from the physiological consequences of contracting COVID-19. Early data collected during the pandemic indicated that communities of color—Black, Latino/a/x, and Native American—are disproportionately impacted. Unfortunately, these disturbing national trends have remained steady, and are mirrored in the City of Chicago today.

To combat inequities exacerbated by COVID-19, faith-based and community organizations in Chicago have mobilized to empower and support their communities. As the vaccine roll out begins, many of these same organizations are faced with another challenge: ensuring the equitable distribution of the lifesaving vaccine. The arrival of effective vaccines is a turning point in beating the COVID-19 pandemic, yet equitably moving from vaccine to vaccination is an enormous challenge. According to recently released data, Chicago’s whitest zip codes have the highest vaccination rates while communities of color continue to lag behind; moreover, zip codes with the highest rates of COVID-19 deaths tend to have lower vaccination rates, including communities that are largely majority-minority.

While Black, Native American, and Latino/a/x communities are particularly ravaged by COVID-19, they are also less likely to trust the vaccine. This reluctance stems from a variety of reasons, including historical and ongoing racism faced in the American healthcare system. Politically and religiously conservative white communities, often evangelical, are also less likely to trust the vaccine. As questions continue to loom around the vaccine in these communities, IFYC believes that faith-based and community organizations are well positioned to act as advocates and ambassadors.

In partnership with Rush University Medical Center and a top rate technology company, Lightful, IFYC will equip organizations to expand their vaccine trust-building and vaccine access campaigns.

**Program Overview**

Leveraging the medical expertise of Rush University Medical Center and the technological expertise of Lightful, IFYC is offering a 6-month training program that will enable faith-based/faith inspired organizations to maximize their impact on the ground. Through synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, grantees will develop new digital skills and expand their capacity to respond to emergencies and engage in virtual and in-person conversations about the vaccine within their communities. Below is an enumerated list of programmatic benefits for grantees.

**Join a Chicago-based cohort of 15-20 organizations:** Exchange stories and best practices with peer organizations and form new relationships with organizations fighting for their communities.
Receive emergency response funding: We understand that COVID-19 has stretched the resources of many organizations thin. We are pleased to offer $2000-$5000 in funding for organizations as compensation for the time and energy it takes to complete the program and deploy outreach strategies.

Engage with leading doctors, scientists, and public officials: A Masterclass series will create opportunities for participants to work with doctors and scientists who helped develop and administer Covid-19 vaccines, ask questions that your community wants answers to, and learn how to communicate scientific information back to your community.

Master a Digital Covid-19 Response Curriculum: Through a guest speaker series, readings, and on-demand videos you will develop the skills to communicate the science behind Covid-19 vaccination, how to combat misinformation, how to increase the impact of your digital storytelling, how to connect with social media ambassadors, and how to measure your success online.

Develop your organizations long-term digital brand: As a grassroots organization, your mission will extend beyond the 6-month training program. In consultation with Lightful, you will be presented an opportunity to develop a digital media strategy that can meet both current and emerging needs in your community.

Receive one-on-one coaching: Additional support for your work will be available from IFYC and Lightful for the duration of this project. We will be available during and after the training program to share resources and provide our expertise in fostering interfaith cooperation. You will also have the opportunity to engage experts from Rush Medical Research Center specifically about vaccinerelated questions.

Participant Requirements

This program will be in session from April – September 2021. Our hope is that you will bring your enthusiasm and community expertise to our time together. We will interact with each other in orientation sessions, zoom masterclasses, informal cohort check-ins, online learning resources and more! You will also have the opportunity to craft an experience that works for you and your organization’s needs, while also being in community with a cohort of organizations who are collectively responding to this critical moment. As you consider applying, please carefully review the participant requirements below:

• Be actively present in the program including orientation sessions, master classes, and cohort check-ins
• Select 1-2 designated staff member or volunteer to complete the training program
• Demonstrate commitment to faith-based community development
• Have some social media presence for your organization in the form of a Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter account
Timeline

The application process will begin in early March and the cohort will be selected by mid-April. The selected cohort will engage in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, including cohort check-ins, from May – September 2021.

Application Deadline  April 1
Opening Sessions  April 30 (9am-2pm)
  May 3 (11am-1pm)
  May 5 (10am - 12pm)

Closing Session  September 30 (11am - 1pm)

Cohort participants are required to attend all opening sessions. All other asynchronous learning opportunities are optional, but we highly encourage your attend. If you have any questions or concerns about the program, please reach out to Don Abram at don@ifyc.org.