



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

(RFA)

Title: COVID-19 Vaccination Activities

Funding: Mixed Source Federal

Baltimore City Health Department, Division of Youth Wellness
and Community Health

Release Date: Wednesday January 25, 2023

Applicant Informational Session on Zoom: Wednesday
February 01, 2023 @ Noon

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84883316223?pwd=Q0ZhWTRrZjVvV2hXQmhiSGVoKy9VZz09>

Letter of Intent: Friday February 3, 2023

Application Due: Monday February 27 by 5:00pm EST

Anticipated Award Notification: March 10, 2023

Anticipated Contract Start: May 1, 2023

I. Introduction

Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is the recipient of both American Rescue Plan Act funding and Federal Emergency Management Agency funding to support its response to the COVID-19 emergency. BCHD is releasing a single request for applications (RFA) for these funding sources.

The focus of this RFA is to obtain professional services to support BCHD's effort to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines, particularly in underserved communities, through direct service provision, training, care coordination, targeted outreach, and evaluation. This initiative aims to achieve the following goals:

Vaccination: Our vaccination campaign has three primary goals:

1. To align with the City outcome to reach at least 80% of all City residents with the COVID-19 vaccine, BCHD will focus on vaccinating older adults, homebound residents, and other special populations to ensure they receive vaccinations in an accessible and equitable manner.
2. To reduce COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among City residents, with emphasis on populations that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, by providing accurate and transparent health information and improving community trust of BCHD.
3. To ensure that all health providers and BCHD staff have the training and tools to reach community members about COVID-19 effectively and efficiently.

II. Award

BCHD is prepared to award up to 11 grants totaling \$4,500,000 for support to BCHD's COVID-19 vaccination strategy.

Applications are being sought in the following service areas:

A. Vaccination Clinics	Up to five (5) clinical services providers for clinics and major seasonal vaccination drives	Total funding for this category is up to \$2,000,000
B. Vaccination Outreach	One to three (1-3) vendors for outreach campaigns for older adults and persons living with disabilities, and other specialty populations.	Total funding for this category is up to \$825,000
C. Vaccination Care Coordination	One (1) vendor for the care coordination of immigrant and LatinX populations	Total funding for this category is up to \$300,000

D. Vaccination Staff and Provider Training	One (1) vendor for training and provision of job aids for BCHD and health providers citywide. This will include support for the vaccine distribution system to providers.	Total funding for this category is up to \$1,300,000
E. Vaccination	One (1) vendor for evaluation of fall 2022 canvassing, education, and vaccination campaign	Total funding for this category is up to \$75,000

This **project will be 20 months in duration**, contingent upon available funding. The initial implementation period will start May 1, 2023 and end December 31, 2024. Quarterly progress reports and program plans are required and are subject to approval for funding renewal.

NOTE: BCHD reserves the right to negotiate awards based on project plans, documented performance, and recommended program reviews.

III. Applicant Eligibility

BCHD will consider applications from any of the following:

- Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and FQHC “look-alikes”
- Academic medical centers
- Community health centers
- Pharmacies
- Migrant health centers
- Health care programs for the homeless
- Primary care programs for public housing projects
- Local nonprofit and community-owned programs
- School-based health centers
- Teaching clinics
- Wellmobiles
- Primary care providers
- Mental health or substance use treatment provider

In addition, to be eligible applicants must:

1. Have a history of engaging and working directly with Baltimore citizens and neighborhoods of all socio-economic backgrounds
2. Provide evidence of substantial experience providing professional services as described in the scope of work, with attention to evidence of a history of building trust with community residents
3. Provide evidence of being in good standing as a business/organization with the State of Maryland or have a fiscal sponsor that is an organization in good standing with the State
4. Have a physical office within Baltimore city limits

IV. Background

Over the last two years, BCHD and its community partners have made significant progress in reducing the incidence of new COVID-19 cases through targeted outreach and the provision of accessible vaccination services.

Unfortunately, disparities in vaccination access still exist. To address the gaps for vaccination, since 2020 BCHD has been implementing a multifaceted strategy to vaccinate Baltimore City residents against COVID-19. (See Attachment 1).

This plan incorporates a mobile response to special populations who lack access to existing vaccination sites. BCHD calls these populations VALUE Communities (Vaccine Acceptance & Access Lives in Unity, Education & Engagement, or VALUE), defined for this RFA as older adults, pregnant and lactating persons, people living with disabilities and underlying conditions, Latinx and immigrant community members, individuals experiencing homelessness, and pediatric populations. Many in these VALUE populations have suffered disproportionately in this pandemic and should be prioritized locally and attended to in a strategic and supportive manner.

In addition, partners working with BCHD over the last two years have developed a strong network of community providers and ambassadors to instill trust in the community about public health and vaccination. Finally, providers have been mobilized to share vaccine messaging to clients and to help distribute vaccines in hard-to-reach neighborhoods in the City. This RFA is written to build and expand on these successes already achieved through the vaccination strategy.

V. Scope of Work

This RFA for support to the COVID-19 vaccination effort include the following scopes of work:

- A. Clinical vaccination services for the City's mobile vaccination response
- B. Community mobilization and outreach to vulnerable populations, focusing on older adults and persons living with disabilities and other special populations
- C. Care coordination for immigrant and LatinX populations
- D. Staff training and provider outreach
- E. Evaluation of fall 2022 vaccination and outreach campaign

A. Vaccination - Clinical Vaccination Services

BCHD will hire up to five vendors to provide clinical services for the City's mobile vaccination response for residents in the VALUE Communities who are most in need of vaccination near or exactly where they live.

The clinical partners will support the BCHD city-wide COVID-19 and other vaccination responses by providing and administering vaccines to City residents. In total, we anticipate all clinical partners will provide 400 vaccine clinics in mutually agreed-upon locations, which includes but is not limited to senior housing sites, assisted living facilities, church sites, schools, community partner sites, homeless shelters, substance use treatment centers, and other sites as indicated by BCHD.

In accordance with provision of clinical services, the clinical partner will:

- Participate in planning calls for relevant clinics
- Provide vaccination education on risks and benefits of clinical services
- Support outreach to target populations
- Follow clinical guidelines, policies, and standard operating procedures
- Use the BCHD system for registering vaccination clients and documenting vaccine administration
- Maintain any other records essential to reporting of clinical services
- Provide feedback and participate in follow-up discussions of vaccine clinics

This work supports BCHD and partners continued efforts to ensure all City residents, including those most vulnerable, have access to and stay up-to-date with COVID-19 and other vaccinations.

Applicants must specify how they will manage third-party insurance coverage for vaccines. All residents, regardless of insurance status, must be vaccinated if they desire a vaccination.

B. Vaccination - Community Mobilization and Outreach to Vulnerable Populations - Older Adults, Persons Living with Disabilities, and other Special Populations

BCHD needs a maximum of three vendors to build on the existing effort in vaccination outreach and communication and to reach approximately 60,000 VALUE community residents with in-person contact:

- Develop and implement creative outreach strategies. Work with existing communication team and partners to use/develop standardized education content on COVID-19 vaccines for all VALUE Communities in line with CDC, FDA, and WHO guidelines.
- Train and manage paid outreach staff/ambassadors drawn from each VALUE Community who will outreach and educate residents.
- Mobilize communities
- Promote vaccine education training for (and specific to) faith-based and community leaders in vulnerable neighborhoods across the city in the effort to expand education to residents about the vaccine.

C. Vaccination - Care Coordination for LatinX and other immigrant populations

BCHD seeks a vendor to operate a multilingual telephone hotline for COVID-19, other vaccine-preventable diseases, and care coordination services for at least 5,000 individuals. This work is to support immigrants whose first language is Spanish or a language other than English. This project is critical to ensuring that immigrants and speakers of other languages have equitable access to vaccine information, registration, and appointments. This vendor will coordinate with BCHD and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) and will:

- Identify a staff member to manage the project and serve as a point of contact
- Participate in training facilitated by MIMA and BCHD so that staff are familiar with vaccine registration systems and can answer basic registration questions
- Dedicate and advertise a phone number that Spanish and other non-English speakers can call to register for COVID-19 vaccine appointments (including primary doses, booster shots, and additional doses) for adults and children, or to request additional information
- Engage with existing clients who may be eligible for vaccination to inform them of the service and help parents or legal guardians schedule vaccine appointments for children
- Provide basic education to clients about the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccine-preventable diseases, particularly to those who may be vaccine-hesitant, in coordination with community health workers and other staff trained in vaccine ambassadorship
- Provide language-appropriate services for those seeking to register through bilingual or Spanish-speaking employees
- Provide information and referrals to primary medical, dental, and mental health care, screenings, testing, and various care coordination services such as food distribution, housing and utilities assistance, job search, and immigration consultation
- Identify and share ongoing barriers to vaccine access, such as lack of transportation to vaccination sites, greater travel time when vaccination sites are far from place of residence, complexity of vaccine registration system, lack of computer and/or internet access, inaccurate translation of information regarding vaccination, language barriers, limited health literacy, misinformation, inability to take time off from work, fear of being asked to show proof of legal residency, or disclosing personal information that may lead to immigration arrests, childcare responsibilities, complaints of mistreatment, and associated distrust
- Provide monthly data on outreach efforts: clients served; language services provided; vaccine appointments made; appointments attended; number of clients who received primary doses, boosters, and additional doses; and number of fully vaccinated individuals
- Coordinate with BCHD to develop a workflow between the call centers, including regular meetings to refine and improve workflow and coordination

D. Vaccination - Staff Training and Health Provider Outreach

BCHD will hire a provider education team lead who will organize messaging and training internally and to 150 pediatric, obstetric, family medicine, and other health providers. The purpose of this outreach and training will be to equip providers with the data and the means to direct residents to vaccination sites and to answer other basic questions with standardized job aids. Materials will include posters, job aids, flyers, and recorded messages from the Commissioner of Health and the Chief Medical Officer. Providers will be engaged routinely, and the vendor will inform the BCHD vaccine logistics team of providers wishing to receive vaccine directly from BCHD.

In addition, this team will build on and implement a standardized training curriculum for 30-40 BCHD clinical and VALUE Community staff, community health workers, and others about COVID-19 and other viruses, other public health interventions, and best

practices for mobile vaccine clinics. Curricula will address how the vaccines work, vaccine safety, addressing vaccine hesitancy, and common misconceptions about the virus and vaccine. Training materials should be culturally sensitive and adaptive to the changing landscape of vaccine research and the BCHD vaccination response.

E. Vaccination - Evaluation of Fall 2022 Vaccination and Outreach Campaign

Baltimore City will hire a vendor to implement a retrospective evaluation of the COVID vaccination outreach, education, and canvassing campaign that took place in Fall 2022. The goal of the evaluation would be to understand the overall reach and impact of the campaign within a representative subsample of the campaign's area of interest.

While BCHD staff will be in charge of evaluation objectives, designing the survey, determining the target area/households and sample size, and timeline, the vendor will be tasked with implementing the survey and collecting community-level data. The survey will be quantitative in nature, capturing community member knowledge, attitude, and behaviors related to COVID vaccination. It will be administered either in-person or via a phone survey, and subjects will be randomly chosen within the area of interest to increase generalizability of survey results.

The vendor responsibilities will also include:

- Suggesting an incentive to be offered to participants in order to increase overall community response rate
- Hiring the survey team
- Organizing and managing daily activities
- Overseeing survey implementation and data collection, including utilizing quality assurance measures that will produce high-quality and complete data
- Using electronic mobile data collection devices to ensure data quality
- Training all survey team members in community outreach and data collection techniques
- Ensuring that a data protocol and process is in place so that survey data can be transferred and stored on a secure BCHD data system on a daily basis

The vendor will be expected to use its own organizational HR and payroll system to manage and pay the survey team.

The evaluation is estimated to take eight weeks to complete—two weeks for training and six weeks for implementation. Once all data is collected, BCHD will clean, analyze, and interpret survey results. The evaluation results will help to inform BCHD's future community outreach and canvassing efforts related to COVID vaccination and education.

VI. How to Apply

Applicants will begin by submitting a Letter of Intent by February 03, 2023. Full grant applications will be due to BCHD on February 27, 2023 by 5:00 PM. Applicants will be notified about the status of their application by March 10, 2023.

Step 1: Letter of Intent Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent for the application to be considered. Applicants should use the template in Attachment 2. Applicants

must send the Letters of Intent via email to Melina Turtle at melina.turtle@baltimorecity.gov by February 3rd by 5:00 PM. In the subject line of the email, please state your organization's name and the RFA category area for your application. *A hard copy of the Letter of Intent is not necessary.*

The Letter of Intent must use the template found in Attachment 2.

Step 2: Submission of Applications: Organizations invited to submit a full application should follow the guidelines detailed below. **Applications are due by email by 5:00 PM on February 27, 2023.**

Electronic versions of applications for COVID-19 Vaccination should be emailed to Melina Turtle melina.turtle@baltimorecity.gov. In the subject line of the email, please state your organization's name and the RFA category area of your application.

Applications must include the following items for full consideration:

(1) Transmittal mail: This email from the applicant organization must specify the title of the application, the applicant organization, the project director, and the funding requested.

(2) Authorized signature: The cover sheet of the budget form (Attachment 4 B tab 432 A) should be completed and signed by the chief executive officer or the individual responsible for conducting the affairs of the applicant organization and legally authorized to execute contracts on behalf of the applicant organization.

(3) Application:

Applications should be well-written, clear, and concise. Applications may not exceed 10 pages single-spaced on standard 8 ½" x 11" paper with one-inch margins and using 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font. Tables and charts may use a 10-point font or larger. All pages of the application must be numbered. The budget and budget justification are not included in the maximum 10-page limit. The appendices specified in the guidelines below are excluded from the 10-page limit.

The application should be structured using these topic headings:

Table of contents (not included in the 10-page limit)

- I. Project Summary
- II. Background and Justification
- III. Organizational Capacity
- IV. Project Plan
- V. Partnerships
- VI. Project Budget and Budget Justification (Attachments 4 A, B, & C)
- VII. Appendices (not included in the 10-page limit)
 - A. Mandatory appendices:
 1. Workplan (Attachment 3)
 2. Letters of support from prospective collaborators
 3. Résumés of key personnel (2 page maximum each)
 4. Organizational chart
 5. List of officers and Board of Directors or other governing body

6. IRS determination letter indicating 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, if applicable
7. Form 990, if the organization is required to file it
8. Most recent financial audit
9. Documentation of being in good standing as a business/organization with the State of Maryland

Appendices should include only the material necessary to support the application.

- I. **Project Summary** Provide a one-page (maximum) summary of the proposed project. The summary should include: applicant organization; project funding category; project title; succinct overview of project; population to be served; health disparity(ies) to be addressed; funding amount requested; description of how BCHD funds will be used.

- II. **Background and Justification**

Describe approach to population Applicants should describe the geographic areas/sites where they intend to hold clinics, outreach to the VALUE Communities, or outreach providers. BCHD may assign vendors to geographic areas and populations as needed. Applicants who have a specialized geographic or population-specific expertise should describe such. Applicants who are flexible with where and which populations they can outreach and/or hold clinics should describe such. Applicants should provide a brief explanation of outreach approaches, and clinical partners should identify strengths in vaccinating vulnerable populations.

Document the needs of this population. Based on the population identified by the applicant, what are the COVID-19 vaccination needs of the target population? What are the gaps in the vaccine delivery system? What are the barriers that the target population faces in accessing vaccine services? Discuss the community conditions affecting the target population's vaccine attitudes and behaviors.

Describe the vaccine disparity(ies) in the target population that the project will address. Discuss the vaccine disparity(ies) the project intends to address and how the Applicant's work will address them.

- III. **Organizational Capacity**

Describe the organization's mission, governance, facilities, and staffing. Discuss the organizational strengths and challenges. Identify the type of organization (e.g., federally qualified health center, free-standing clinic, clinic affiliated with a hospital, community-based organization). In an appendix, provide a list of the officers and board of directors or other governing body. Describe the current and proposed staffing and provide an organizational chart as an appendix. Describe the facilities owned and/or operated by the organization.

Describe how the organization is financed.

Describe the organization's history of working in Baltimore City with the target population and with partnerships in this community. Discuss previous work in this community and with this target population. Discuss the organization's history with other/similar grants, including prior BCHD funding.

Discuss project staffing. Identify the project director and describe their level of responsibility in the organization, qualifications to lead the project, and the role in carrying out the project. Identify any other essential staff, their roles in the project, and their relevant qualifications. In the appendices, include résumés (maximum two pages each) for all key personnel.

IV. **Project Plan**

Discuss the project's goals and objectives. What are the project's goals and objectives? Use SMART objectives (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound). What is the evidence that the proposed model or approach will be successful?

Describe the major steps or actions and timeframe in carrying out the project. List key actions or steps in the implementation of the project. Describe the process and timeframe for reaching these benchmarks. A project work plan template can be found in Attachment 3 and should be used in preparing the application.

Describe the project metrics. What are the quantifiable output metrics associated with these actions and overall goals of the project? Include metrics into the work plan created as Attachment 3 in the column titled "Output Metrics" and include the timeline for accomplishing metrics.

BCHD may request additional activities and metrics according to program needs.

V. **Partnerships**

Identify planned partners. Name the organization(s) that will play a defined role in the project. Identify the leadership of the partner organization. **Discuss the ways the partners will contribute to the project.** Clearly define the role of the partner(s) in the project. Include a description of the added capacity that they bring to the project. Include a letter of support in the appendix that describes the role that the partner organization agrees to play.

Discuss the management plan for the project. Describe the structure that will be put into place to ensure that the partnership(s) are effective.

- VI. **Project Budget** The applicant must provide a budget for the full project period. Applicants must use the Budget Form provided in Attachment 4 of the RFA. Applicants must include a line-item budget narrative detailing the purpose of each budget expenditure. This form will be the actual budget that will be used for the vendor contract and requires significant attention.

The BCHD Budget Instructions are included as Attachment XX:

Questions from Applicants: Please email questions to melina.turtle@baltimorecity.gov by noon on January 31, 2023. Questions will be included during the public Zoom call on February 1, 2023. All questions received by BCHD will be included on a master question and answer document and posted on BCHD's website.

Program Office:

The program office is located at 1200 E. Fayette Street.

VI. Application Evaluation Criteria

The application will be scored out of 100 points and will be weighted in the following manner.

- I. Project Summary (for public communication, no points included)
- II. Background and Justification (10 points)
- III. Organizational Capacity (30 points)
- IV. Project Plan (40 points)
- V. Partnerships (10 points)
- VI. Project Budget and Budget Justification (10 points)
- VII. Appendices (not included in the 10-page limit)
 - A. Workplan
 - B. Letters of support from prospective collaborators
 - C. Résumés of key personnel (2 page maximum each)
 - D. Organizational chart
 - E. List of officers and Board of Directors or other governing body
 - F. IRS determination letter indicating 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, if applicable
 - G. Form 990, if the organization is required to file one
 - H. Most recent financial audit
 - I. Evidence of being in good standing as a business/organization with the State of Maryland

The applicant must limit the appendices to the mandatory documents. Failure to provide these mandatory appendices will result in the applicant being considered non-responsive. Any additional documents will not be considered in scoring the application.

The application will be deemed responsive if the applicant responds to and meets all of the requirements of the RFA. Applicants may be invited for interviews to discuss the application elements in more detail at the discretion of the selection committee. BCHD reserves the right to cancel this RFA and solicit new applications if, in BCHD's sole judgment, the best interests of BCHD will be served by doing so. The selection committee will evaluate each application and use the following steps for reviewing each submission:

- BCHD staff will screen applications for eligibility and responsiveness to the RFA before advancing the application to the next phase.
- After initial screening, applications will be reviewed by a panel of 3-6 BCHD reviewers.
- BCHD may select several awardees from the application pool.
- Awardees are not guaranteed the full amount for which they apply.
- Anticipated award notification date for applicants is March 6, 2023.
- BCHD reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all applications.

PLEASE NOTE:

- (1) Failure to include all elements of the application, exceeding page limits, or not following instructions will cause the application to be considered non-responsive to the RFA and will result in its disqualification.**
- (2) Applicants should review the contract Attachment 5 in detail. Concerns on contract language should be addressed immediately with BCHD PRIOR to submitting an application.**
- (3) We expect vendors to begin work May 1, 2023. Contracts will need to be signed by this time. Vendors will be expected to respond within 2 business days to any email related to the administration of the award throughout the project period. Failure to respond promptly may compromise funding.**

VII. Availability of Funds

- All awards are subject to the availability of funds.
- Modifications or additional requirements may be imposed by city policies and/or regulations.
- Awards will be made as reimbursable grants.
- Funding for the COVID-19 Vaccination awards is limited to \$4,500,000 over a 20 month period with work expected to begin no later than May 1, 2023. Funding caps for the service areas are:
 - A. Vaccination - Clinical Vaccination Services: up to \$2,000,000
 - B. Vaccination - Staff Training and Health Provider Outreach: up to \$1,300,000
 - C. Vaccination - Community Mobilization and Outreach to Vulnerable Populations - Older Adults, Persons Living with Disabilities, and other Special Populations: up to \$825,000
 - D. Vaccination - Care Coordination for Immigrant and LatinX populations: up to \$300,000
 - E. Vaccination - Evaluation of Fall 2022 Vaccination and Outreach Campaign: up to \$75,000

VIII. Attachments to the RFA

- 1 COVAX Strategy Final
- 2 LOI Template
- 3 Workplan Template
- 4 Budget Templates
 - A. BCHD Budget Form Instructions
 - B. BCHD 432 A-I Budget Form
 - C. BCHD Budget Narrative Form 433
- 5 Example Contract - Applicants are expected to review language and share any concerns on language with BCHD PRIOR to submitting a grant application