



Request for Applications (RFA)

No. 24-10181

Increasing Vaccine Confidence Among California Adolescents

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Part I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose

The purpose of the RFA solicitation is to make multiple grant agreement awards to entities that will develop and implement youth engagement and education campaigns to targeted communities and audiences to assist with statewide efforts to improve vaccine confidence and appointment attendance among adolescents across California.

We are awarding up to eight (8) grants of \$25,000 per organization to community-based organizations (CBOs) to employ, recruit, and train adolescents (ages 14-18) to perform outreach activities which address vaccine hesitancy among young people (ages 11-18) and encourage them to attend vaccination appointments. The content must address at least COVID-19 and HPV but may also include other vaccinations (e.g., flu, Tdap, MenACWY, MenB). Depending on the needs of the population served, content and distribution may take the form of social media, radio, peer-to-peer education, or other ways to reach adolescents. The applicant must propose a project that utilizes youth on a part-time, paid basis as content creators and/or educators. Applicants must also describe how they will measure success, and develop a timeline, budget, and workplan. The project is expected to begin as early as late August 2024 and must be completed by June 30, 2025.

Please note that organization representatives will be required to meet virtually with CDPH and provide project updates and reports at an interval to be determined upon receipt of award.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this RFA, please email VaccineConfidenceRFA@cdph.ca.gov and identify “Adolescent RFA Question” in the Subject Line.

Background

For the purpose of this grant, we are focusing on HPV and COVID-19 vaccines as these tend to have the lowest coverage rates among adolescents. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many families might have missed well-child appointments when vaccinations were due. Ensuring that [adolescents are up to date with recommended vaccines](#) is the best way to protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases. Particular focus is needed for subgroups that experienced larger recent declines in vaccination coverage or substantially lower coverage, including those who were due for adolescent vaccines during the pandemic and [Vaccine for Children Program](#)-eligible populations. California has been closely tracking [COVID-19 vaccination rates](#), and it is estimated that as of January 31, 2024, only 7.1% of 12-to-17-year-olds are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. Coverage is lowest among Black/African

American, Latinx, and Multi-racial adolescents and those living in [Healthy Places Index \(HPI\) Quartile 1](#) ZIP codes.

According to a national survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [National Immunization Survey-Teen](#), coverage with HPV vaccine dropped markedly during the pandemic. In California, HPV vaccination coverage decreased from 67% to 61% among females and from 71% to 60% among males 13-to-17-years-old. Using data from the California Immunization Registry (CAIR), we can look more closely at adolescents by race-ethnicity, and find that American Indian or Alaska Native, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White populations are less likely to complete the HPV vaccine series. We also observe that adolescents living in [Healthy Places Index \(HPI\) Quartile 1](#) ZIP codes are most likely to start the series but least likely to complete it.

For additional information on vaccines for adolescents please see the [CDPH webpage on Adolescent Vaccine Needs](#), as well as [CDPH COVID-19 vaccination data](#) webpage. Please note: (1) HPV vaccination is allowable under [CA Minor Consent laws](#) and adolescents ages 12 and older do not need parental consent for vaccination, (2) parental consent is required for COVID-19 vaccination, (3) COVID-19 vaccines are available as a Medi-Cal Rx pharmacy benefit for members 3 years of age and older under the [PREP Act](#), and (4) families can now access their [Digital Vaccine Record](#) as proof of vaccination, if needed.

Eligible Entities (EE)

Entities that are eligible to receive this award must demonstrate that they have the capacity to fulfill the programmatic and administrative requirements listed below, including the ability to outreach to, as well as supervise and motivate adolescents ages 14-to-18 years old. Eligible Entities (EEs) include but are not limited to: (1) any Community-Based Organization located within any Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) in California, (2) Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and other community clinics, (3) any non-profit organization located within California, and (4) Multi-County Entities (MCEs).

As required by California law, business entities must be in good standing and qualified to do business in California, including EEs that have concurrent or prior contract/grant relationships with CDPH and/or IZB. CDPH and/or IZB will consider any prior letter of correction, written notice of breach, or inadequate performance sent to EE in its scoring.

Award Period

The award period will extend through June 30, 2025. The anticipated project start date referenced in the RFA Time Schedule on the RFA webpage may vary due to the time required to finalize and process the agreements between awardees and CDPH Immunization Branch (IZB).

Awardees are not authorized to begin work until the agreement is finalized. Work conducted outside the effective start and end date of the agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

RFA Time Schedule

Schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the RFA webpage for the current time schedule.

Part II. Project Requirements

RFA Award Allocations

A total amount of \$25,000 will be awarded to each organization, up to eight (8) total, through this RFA to hire and train adolescents (ages 14-to-18) to create content and/or outreach and education activities addressing adolescent vaccine hesitancy and encouraging attendance of vaccination appointments for HPV and COVID, at a minimum. Depending on the needs of the population served, content may take the form of social media posts, radio ads, peer-to-peer education, etc.

The applicant must propose a project that pays adolescents on a part-time basis as content creators and/or educators and should support youth in learning evidence-based best-practices* for creating social media content and conducting outreach and education. Examples of evidence-based practices include:

- Example 1: [COVID-19: Initiatives and Strategies Encouraging Vaccine Confidence Amongst Youth and Young Adults in North America](#)
- Example 2: [COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence and Access Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- Example 3: [Empowering Youth Vaccine Ambassadors to Promote COVID-19 Vaccine in Local Communities: A Seven Step Approach](#)

CDPH/IZB will consider entities that demonstrate experience and expertise in providing culturally appropriate services to adolescents in various settings (rural, urban, suburban). Entities are encouraged to propose outreach and education strategies that are best for their target community (e.g., social media, peer-to-peer education, radio, murals, performance art such as theater and music, etc.). Outreach efforts should include linkages to local support services. As part of project expectations, youth supervisors should support youth in identifying and communicating local support options for vaccination.

CDPH/IZB will award up to eight awards of \$25,000 for encumbrance or expenditure by **June 30, 2025**.

Program Requirements

Project Activities and Objectives

Successful applications will demonstrate the EE’s capacity to accomplish the following programmatic activities and objectives by providing responses to the components in the “Increasing Vaccine Confidence Among California Adolescents” Narrative template (Attachment 5):

- Increase the number of adolescents within the target community who express confidence in COVID and HPV vaccines, at a minimum.
- Increase the number of adolescents within the target community who attend vaccination appointments and follow-up appointments.

Please note, in addition to project objectives, EEs will be required to meet with CDPH and provide project updates and reports at an interval to be determined upon receipt of award.

Project Components and Scoring

Using the Narrative Template (Attachment 5), respond to all items within each section. When responding to the statements and questions, be mindful that application reviewers may not be familiar with the EE and its services. Therefore, answers should be specific, succinct, and responsive to the statements and questions as outlined. The review team will base its scoring on the maximum points indicated for each section. Breakdown of total points for each section can be found below:

RFA Scoring Components

Scoring Categories	Maximum Points
Priority Populations	25
Required Community Engagement	50
Capacity	10
Program Monitoring and Evaluation	5
COVID-19 Vaccination	5
HPV Vaccination	5

EEs will be scored on all required components. The maximum total points for applicants is 100.

Priority Populations

- The EE should provide a justification for the selection of the priority population and an estimated number of persons who can be served by the various activities of the project.
- The EE must currently serve priority populations that include but are not limited to adolescents within the target community. Other populations for which local data indicates a need for improved vaccine confidence and vaccination appointment attendance (e.g., family members of adolescents) may also be included.

Community Engagement

- Describe how EE will provide services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Describe how the EE will engage the priority population(s)(adolescents) in planning and design of the project.
- Describe how the proposed project will meet the identified needs of the priority population.
- Proposed projects should be innovative and/or employ evidence-based strategies for improving vaccine confidence among adolescents.

Capacity

- List any concurrent or prior contract/grant relationships with CDPH/IZB over the last five years. If the EE has received any letters of correction or written notices of breach or inadequate performance from CDPH/IZB related to any concurrent or prior contract/grant relationships, please describe them.
- List any other agency or grant funding used to provide services for adolescent populations. Include the funding source, activities being funded and when the funding will end. Describe how the proposed program will be distinct without duplicating services.
- Describe EE's existing ability to serve adolescents. Depending on proposed activities (e.g., creation of social media, in-person outreach, other methods such as radio, arts-programming, etc.), specify the process that will ensure the services proposed are delivered. **Attach letters of support if collaborations are planned.**
- Describe the EE's experience in implementing evidence-based and/or strength-based programs or innovative strategies that will lead to outcomes that are aligned with the goals of this project.
- Describe current and proposed staffing and staff capacity to complete the award activities. Describe any planned activities such as trainings to increase staff capacity to conduct vaccine-related work.

- Describe the EE administrative systems and accountability mechanisms for grant management.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

- Budget funds should be allocated to evaluation activities, which should include data collection (e.g., number reached, number vaccinated, number and type of outreach activity).
- EEs will meet with CDPH and provide progress report summaries at appropriate intervals and a final report at end of grant period.
- EEs must demonstrate the capacity to collect and monitor project data, including established processes for data collection, entry, and routine monitoring, sufficient staffing, and inter-agency agreements as needed.
- EEs should provide SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) objectives. Sample objectives:

“By June 30, 2025, ABC organization will create 10 social media posts on TikTok reaching at least 100 adolescents in Main High School, resulting in a 10% increase in adolescent vaccination appointment attendance at a school-based clinic.”

“By January 2025, ABC organization will conduct at least 5 school presentations at Main High School, leading to a 10% increase in vaccine confidence, as reflected in pre/post survey results.”

Creation of Social Media/ Education and Outreach

- EEs must discuss strategies for educating adolescents about the importance of HPV and COVID-19 vaccination, disparities among adolescents related to vaccination, and confidence in vaccine efficacy.
- The EE should describe the process by which they will prepare adolescents to utilize best practices in the creation and dissemination of social media materials and/or the conducting of outreach/education efforts within the community.
- If the EE does not have capacity to vaccinate, they should describe a referral strategy to link patients to vaccination appointments and a mechanism for measuring efficacy of referrals.

Budget

The Budget Form (Attachment 4) must be completed. The budget justification must explain all expenses included. There will be no reimbursement of pre-award costs. CDPH/IZB reserves the

right to deny requests for any item listed in the budget that is deemed unnecessary for the implementation of the project.

Part III. Additional Requirements and Submission

Questions and Application Evaluation Process

If upon reviewing this RFA, a potential EE has any questions regarding the RFA or discovers any problems including any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or any other error in the RFA, the EE shall immediately notify CDPH IZB in writing via e-mail to request clarification or modification of this RFA. All such inquires shall identify the author, EE name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, and shall identify the subject in question, specific discrepancy, section and page number, or other information relative to describing the discrepancy or specific question. Questions/inquiries must be received by the time and date referenced in the RFA Time Schedule on the RFA Webpage. **Questions will be accepted via e-mail at: VaccineConfidenceRFA@cdph.ca.gov.** Identify “Adolescent RFA Question” in the Subject Line.

Inquiries will be responded to via e-mail to the requestor. CDPH may publish an FAQ with questions and answers relevant to all applicants. If a prospective EE fails to notify CDPH IZB of any problem or question known to an EE by the date indicated in this section, the EE shall submit an application at EE’s own risk. Prospective EEs are reminded that applications are to be developed based solely upon the information contained in this document and any written addenda issued by CDPH/IZB.

Following the closing date for application submissions, CDPH IZB will evaluate each application to determine responsiveness to the RFA requirements. Applications found to be non-responsive at any stage of the evaluation, for any reason, will be rejected from further consideration. **Late applications will not be reviewed.** CDPH may reject any or all applications and may waive any immaterial defect in any application. Please note that submitting budgets with “to be determined” positions will not exempt the EE from providing detail on specific services to be provided by the positions listed.

Grounds for Rejection

CDPH may, at its sole discretion, correct any obvious mathematical or clerical errors. CDPH/IZB reserves the right to reject any or all applications without remedy to the EEs. There is no guarantee that a contract will be awarded after the evaluation of all applications if, in the opinion of CDPH, none of the applications meets California’s needs.

Circumstances that will cause an application package to be deemed non-responsive include:

- The application is received after the deadline set forth in this RFA.
- Failure of the EE to complete required forms and attachments as instructed in this RFA or as instructed in the attachments.
- Failure to meet format or procedural submission requirements.
- EE provides inaccurate, false, or misleading information or statements.
- EE supplies cost information that is conditional, incomplete, or contains any unsigned material, alterations, or irregularities.
- EE does not meet EE qualifications set forth in this RFA.
- EE does not use and/or modifies Narrative template or other provided attachments.

Application Review

Applications that meet the format requirements and contain all the required forms and documentation will be submitted to an evaluation committee convened by CDPH IZB. The committee will assign numeric scores to each responsive application. The applications will be evaluated in each category based upon the quality and completeness of its response to California's needs, the likelihood of successful accomplishments of the activities and objectives and RFA requirements. The evaluation will constitute recommendations to CDPH IZB management. Final approval of awardees will be made by the CDPH IZB Branch Chief or a designee.

Instructions for RFA Submission

Application Submission Requirements

The provided application templates must be used when responding to the RFA. Do not reformat any of the templates. The size of the lettering must be 12-point, Calibri font. Do not send application as one single PDF. All attachments should be sent back in PDF format. EEs intending to apply are expected to thoroughly examine the entire contents of this RFA and become fully aware of all the requirements outlined in this RFA. Applications are to be developed solely on the material contained in this RFA and any written addendum issued by CDPH/IZB.

The following is the order in which sections in the application must be submitted. A complete application package (Attachments 1-5, plus additional attachments as applicable) must be submitted. A brief description of each section to be included is given below:

Application Checklist

1. General Items:

- All forms must have the same exact naming convention throughout, or they will not be accepted by the Contracts Management Unit. For example, if the licensed name of an agency is “Trinity Community Healthcare Center Inc.,” all documents must include that full name and not a shortened version such as “Trinity Health.”
 - Do not send application as one single PDF.
 - The size of the lettering within application is 12-point, Calibri font.
2. Application Certification Checklist
 - Complete the checklist (Attachment 1). This sheet will serve as the guide to make certain that the application package is complete, and to ensure that the required documents are organized in the correct order.
 3. Application Cover Sheet
 - Complete the application cover sheet (Attachment 2). This sheet must be signed by an official authorized to enter into a grant agreement on behalf of the EE.
 4. Project Synopsis (one page limit)
 - Include a one-page Project Synopsis (Attachment 3) of the proposed program and how it will be integrated with the EE’s current activities.
 5. Budget Form
 - Complete the Budget Form (Attachment 4). The terms of the award will be through **June 30, 2025**.
 - Please note that funds may not be used to pay for vaccine, screening tests, clinical care or other services that can be billed to 3rd party payers. The budget descriptions of services, duties, etc. found in the Budget Form (Attachment 4) must explain and justify both program services funded by other funding and those, if awarded, funded by this grant.
 - Availability of other funding will not affect the scoring of this RFA. For example, the salaries line item must list each position that is associated with this program. Include a brief explanation of each position’s major responsibilities, and the time allocation to be funded by the grant, which results from this RFA. For the operating expenses category, provide a general description of expenses included in the budget line item.
 - Proposed consultants must indicate the number of contracted hours and costs associated with hiring a consultant for the project. All subcontractor(s) shall be listed by name and address in the application. Note: The cost of developing the application for this RFA is entirely the responsibility of the EE and shall not be chargeable to the State of California or included in any cost elements of the application.
 6. Application Narrative

- Complete the Application Narrative (attachment 5) covering the funding period, through June 30, 2025. The application narrative must include complete descriptions of your plan to carry out the project.
7. Project Workplan and Timeline
 - Draft a workplan and estimated project timeline and submit along with your application.
 8. Organization Certification
 - Submit evidence that your organization is qualified to do business in and has a physical presence in California.
 9. Letters of Support (if applicable)
 - Include letters of support from project partners and/or referral entities, if applicable.

NOTE: Applications that fail to follow ALL the requirements may not be considered.

Application Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted via e-mail to VaccineConfidenceRFA@cdph.ca.gov as referenced in the RFA Time Schedule on the RFA Webpage. Identify “Adolescent RFA” in the Subject Line.

Notification of Intent to Award

Notification of the State’s intent to award grants for these “Addressing Adolescent Vaccine Confidence” projects will be posted on the CDPH/IZB website. Additionally, a letter will be e-mailed to all EEs notifying them of the status of their application.

Disposition and Ownership of the Application

All materials submitted in response to this RFA will become the property of CDPH/IZB and, as such, are subject to the Public Records Act (Government Code Section 6250, et. seq.). CDPH/IZB shall have the right to use all ideas or adaptations of the ideas contained in any application received. The selection or rejection of an application will not affect this right. Within the constraints of applicable law, CDPH/IZB shall use its best efforts not to publicly release any information contained in the applications which may be privileged under Evidence Code 1040 (Privileged Official Record) and 1060 (Privileged Trade Secret) and which is clearly marked “Confidential” or information that is protected under the Information Practices Act.

Award Appeal Procedures

An EE who applied and was not funded may file an appeal with CDPH/IZB. Appeals must state the reason, law, rule, regulation, or practice that the EE believes has been improperly applied regarding the evaluation or selection process. There is no appeal process for applications that are submitted late or are incomplete. Appeals shall be limited to the following grounds:

- CDPH/IZB failed to correctly apply the application review process, the format requirements or evaluating the applications as specified in the RFA.
- CDPH/IZB failed to follow the methods for evaluating and scoring the applications as specified in the RFA.

Appeals must be sent by email to VaccineConfidenceRFA@cdph.ca.gov and must be received as referenced in the RFA Time Schedule on the RFA webpage. Identify “Adolescent RFA Appeal” in the Subject Line.

The CDPH/IZB Chief, or designee, will then come to a decision based on the written appeal letter. The decision of the CDPH/IZB Chief, or designee, shall be the final remedy. EEs will be notified by e-mail within 15 days of the consideration of the written appeal letter.

CDPH/IZB reserves the right to award the funding when it believes that all appeals have been resolved, withdrawn, or responded to the satisfaction of CDPH/IZB.

Miscellaneous RFA Information

The issuance of this RFA does not constitute a commitment by CDPH/IZB to award funds. CDPH/IZB reserves the right to reject any or all applications or to cancel this RFA if it is in the best interest of IZB to do so.