



COVID-19 Vaccine Engagement Teams Grant: Expression of Interest Guidelines

Submission Deadline: Monday March 29, 2021 at 12 PM (noon)

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Introduction

The City of Toronto’s COVID-19 Community Mobilization and Engagement Plan recognizes that community-based not-for-profit organizations play a critical role in increasing residents' confidence in vaccines and addressing barriers to acceptance and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines. The City of Toronto is seeking to fund not-for-profit organizations to act as Vaccine Engagement Teams from April 2021 to March 2022.

The Expression of Interest is open to **consortiums of community organizations, grassroots groups, resident-led groups and faith-based organizations/groups**. Each consortium (“Vaccine Engagement Team”) may have anywhere from 4 to 10 members (“Vaccine Engagement Partners”) with one organization (“Vaccine Engagement Lead”) that acts as the administrative partner. The Vaccine Engagement Lead will disburse funding to Vaccine Engagement Partners to carry out aspects of the work.

The funding provided through this Expression of Interest will build on the infrastructure created through the Community Coordination Plan (CCP)¹. There will be at least one Vaccine Engagement Team funded in each of the geographic CCP clusters. While all Vaccine Engagement Teams will be expected to engage with Black and/or Newcomer communities, the City will also accept Expressions of Interest for Vaccine Engagement Teams to build on the work of the Black Resilience and Newcomer Clusters.

Please note, dedicated funding will be provided for Indigenous leaders and communities to self-determine their approach to community engagement and vaccine mobilization in their communities.

Vaccine Engagement Teams will be co-developing aspects of the COVID-19 Community Mobilization and Engagement Plan with the City. Collaboration with the City is key from the proposal development stage through to implementation of the project. The collaborative planning process will start in mid-April.

Contact Information

For any EOI questions, please email COVIDpartner@toronto.ca.

Grant Program Goals

Working together, the City of Toronto and Vaccine Engagement Teams will aim to ensure the COVID-19 vaccination program:

- Prioritizes targeted equity engagement and mobilization actions
- Implements immunization mobilization plans for specific communities that are most affected by COVID-19, including Black Torontonians, Latin American/Hispanic Torontonians, LGBTQ2S communities, People Experiencing Homelessness, People With Disabilities, Seniors, South Asian Torontonians, People who are Undocumented, and Youth.
 - NOTE: Supporting community engagement and vaccine mobilization carried out by Indigenous communities will be funded through a separate process.
- Amplifies City messaging about the safety of vaccines and the benefits to the individual and community of being immunized against COVID-19
- Is agile – to allow for responsiveness and quick pivots
- Increases uptake of vaccinations

Available Funding

- Total one-time only funding available from City of Toronto is \$5.5 million.
- The value of funding per cluster (geographic, Black Resilience and Newcomer) will be up to a maximum of \$500,000
- The funding will be given out in two installments.
 - The first installment will be released once teams are selected and will support engagement in the collaborative planning process.
 - The second installment will be used to further implement the COVID-19 Community Mobilization and Engagement Plan with the City

¹ A fact sheet on the Community Coordination Plan is attached to the email sent to launch this grant. Please email COVIDpartner@toronto.ca if you require a copy of the fact sheet.

Timeline and Deadline

March 10, 10:30AM-11:30AM March 17, 3PM-4PM	Information Sessions
Monday March 29 at 12 PM (noon)	Deadline for Expression of Interests submission
April 6	Allocations decisions announced
April 12	Collaborative planning process begins
Week of April 12	The first installment of the funding released
Mid-May	Second installment of funding released and engagement begins

Information Sessions

Two information session will be held for this grant:

March 10, 10:30AM-11:30AM - You can join the meeting using any of these options:

- Join the WebEx meeting here:
<https://toronto.webex.com/toronto/j.php?MTID=m6f2baf94652ecda93bf7803608cc48cb>
- Join by meeting number
 - Meeting number (access code): 133 856 7015
 - Meeting password: vaccine
- Join by phone
 - 1-416-915-6530
 - Meeting number (access code): 133 856 7015

March 17, 3PM-4PM - You can join the meeting using any of these options:

- Join the WebEx meeting here:
<https://toronto.webex.com/toronto/j.php?MTID=mb1001bd0636af0d630afda1a0a41657d>
- Join by meeting number
 - Meeting number (access code): 133 030 3925
 - Meeting password: vaccine
- Join by phone
 - 1-416-915-6530
 - Meeting number (access code): 133 030 3925

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Toronto will:

- Provide the framework for the engagement and marketing strategy
- Provide funding to Vaccine Engagement Teams
- Lead the collaborative planning process to co-develop aspects of the COVID-19 Community Mobilization and Engagement Plan with Vaccine Engagement Teams
- Provide training by behavioural scientists to Vaccine Engagement Teams and Resident Ambassadors on evidence-based strategies and engagement tactics and vaccine hesitancy research
- Provide staffing support for coordination among partners and data gathering
- Provide COVID-19-related communications strategies, materials and tactics to deliver in local communities

- Provide COVID-19-related population data and mapping
- Collect data and share with Vaccine Engagement Teams
- Provide regular updates to Council, the Province and the larger community

Vaccine Engagement Lead will:

- Participate in the collaborative planning process to co-develop aspects of the COVID-19 Community Mobilization and Engagement Plan with the City
- Receive funding on behalf of the Vaccine Engagement Team
- Distribute funds to other engagement team partners
- Act as a trustee for grassroots groups
- Hire staff to support coordination of the Vaccine Engagement Team and be compensated for administrative oversight
- Recruit and support Resident/Peer Ambassadors²
- Agree on common evaluation metrics to track engagement tactics and implementation measures to ensure that programs are effective in increasing vaccine confidence, ultimately increasing the number of vaccines administered.
- Be adaptive to allocate efforts and resources toward those actions that can provide the greatest uptake in vaccines.

Vaccine Engagement Teams will:

- Provide input into the immunization marketing campaign strategy
- Implement the immunization communications campaign plan
- Amplify City messages
- Recruit, trustee and support local agencies and grassroots organizations/groups
- Recruit and support Resident/Peer Ambassadors
- Support residents to access vaccination e.g. TTC tokens, childcare, support booking appointments
- Coordinate work with the broader CCP cluster

Vaccine Engagement Team membership can include:

- Non-profit organizations
- Community Health Centres
- Ethno-specific organizations
- Grassroots organizations
- Advocacy organizations
- Resident-led groups
- Faith-based organizations or groups

Strong applications will include a combination of the groups mentioned above tailored to meet the unique needs of the CCP Cluster in which it is applying for funding to work.

Experience

Each Vaccine Engagement Team must meet the following criteria:

- Have at least one partner that is an active member on the CCP Cluster in which it is applying for funding to work

² Resident Ambassadors have an established profile and extensive networks in the community. Resident Ambassadors may also include Peer Ambassadors, who have lived experience of homelessness.

- Demonstrated readiness and experience delivering COVID-19 emergency responses to vulnerable population groups
- Understanding of vaccine hesitancy and potential barriers to accessing vaccine by residents in the community
- Deep knowledge of the local community and community resources, including local influencers
- Extensive geographic and/or population specific networks and demonstrated experience working with at least **three** of the following population groups in your local Toronto community (Black, Latin American/Hispanic, LGBTQ2S, People Experiencing Homelessness, People With Disabilities, Seniors, South Asian, People who are Undocumented, and Youth)
- Experience collaborating with other community organizations/groups
- Experience working in partnership with residents as ambassadors
- Capacity and ability to reach all corners of the cluster (for consortiums applying to work in the geographic CCP clusters)
- Stable infrastructure to expand your COVID-19 emergency response
- Experience delivering health promotion messages and accessible information
- Enthusiasm to work in collaboration with each other to close the gap in the differential impact COVID-19 has had in your community
- Established communications tools that can be leveraged to deliver the immunization marketing campaign
- Applicants for the Downtown East and Downtown West clusters must have at least one partner with an existing well-established peer support program that employs people with lived experience of homelessness. This will be considered an asset for applicants from other clusters.

Vaccine Engagement Lead, which is the lead applicant agency that receives the funding and disburses the funding to Engagement Partners, must have the following organizational structure and experience:

- Incorporated not-for-profit organization based in the City of Toronto with annual audited financial statements
- Operating budget over \$1,000,000
- Employs at least one dedicated finance staff person
- Experience partnering with and trusteeing ethno-specific and grassroots groups
- Experience training and employing resident ambassadors
- Stable infrastructure to expand your COVID-19 emergency response
- Capacity and experience to contribute data to regular reports on campaign progress and outputs

* NOTE: an organization can only be the Vaccine Engagement Lead for one application. Organizations can be listed as partners for multiple applications.

Resident and Peer Ambassadors

Vaccine Engagement Partners will recruit and support Resident Ambassadors to support the broad deployment of City messaging regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. Due to the high number of people who are homeless living in the downtown, the Downtown East and Downtown West Engagement Teams must also recruit Peer Ambassadors who have lived experience with homelessness. Engagement Teams from other clusters may also choose to recruit Peers Ambassadors.

Resident and Peer Ambassadors will play a key role in building vaccine confidence. They will act as local/place-based point of contact for local residents.

Resident Ambassadors have an established profile in the community as a trusted partner and must support the City's immunization goals. They also have:

- Extensive networks within their community
- Ability to access micro-influencers in the community
- Ability to speak languages other than English (if necessary for the communities they will engage)
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Willingness to be trained on key messaging on COVID-19 vaccines, common vaccine hesitations, and other COVID-19 risk reduction strategies.
- Knowledge of or readiness to engage on social-media (if necessary for the communities they will engage)

In addition to the qualities of Resident Ambassadors, Peer Ambassadors also have:

- Lived experience of homelessness
- Cultural competence and experience working with diverse populations of people experiencing homelessness

Additional Support for Engaging Priority Populations

The activities funded by this grant are intended to prioritize communities that are most affected by COVID 19, including Black Torontonians, Latin American/Hispanic Torontonians, LGBTQ2S communities, People Experiencing Homelessness, People With Disabilities, Seniors, South Asian Torontonians, People who are Undocumented, and Youth. If it is determined that Engagement Teams in any clusters would benefit from additional support to reach these populations, the City may provide additional support to organizations to do so.

Submitting an Application

The Expression of Interests (EOI) must be submitted by the Vaccine Engagement Lead on behalf of the Vaccine Engagement Team. The EOI is accessed through this link:

<https://s.cotsurvey.chkmkt.com/?e=224021&h=D5331E8186F6A8E&l=en>.

EOIs will be assessed by City staff and external partners based on the experience, reach, and diversity of consortium members and alignment with the criteria outlined above. The EOI is due on **MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021 AT 12 PM noon**.