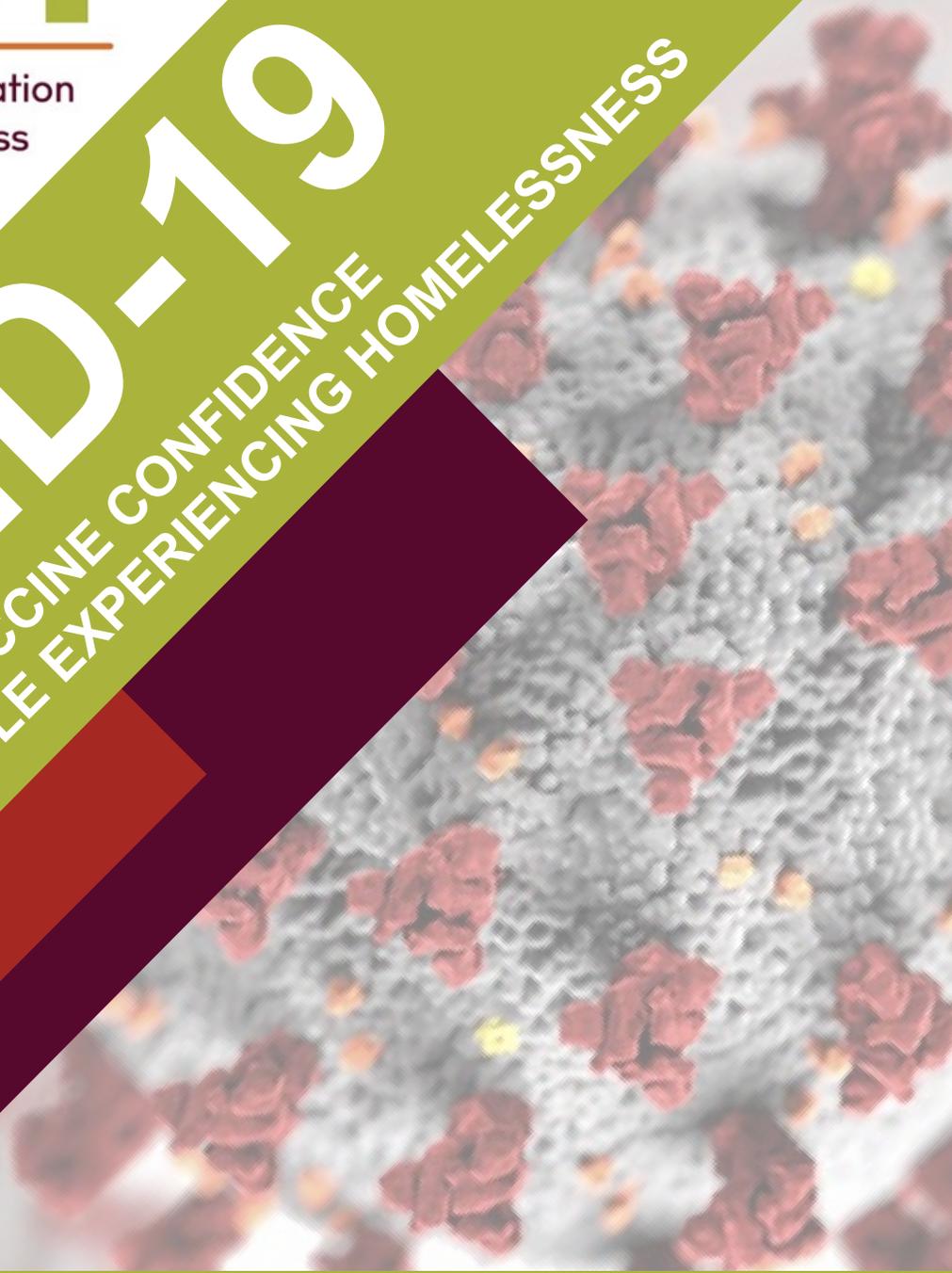




Tucson Pima Collaboration
To End Homelessness

COVID-19

PROMOTING VACCINE CONFIDENCE
AMONG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



PIMA COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is excerpted from TPCH's Promoting COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Toolkit for Homeless Advocates and Service Providers.

Toolkit Chapters

Download at <https://www.tpch.net/vaccine-toolkit>

Introduction: Overview of the toolkit's purpose, commonly used terms, and updates.

Chapter 1 - Vaccine Ambassadorship: Introduction to vaccine ambassadorship and the important role that homeless advocates can play in building vaccine confidence and uptake among people experiencing homelessness.

Chapter 2 - COVID-19 Basics: Basic information about SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 illness, and risk management.

Chapter 3 - COVID-19 Vaccines: General information about currently available COVID-19 vaccines.

Chapter 4 - Vaccine Hesitancy: An introduction to vaccine hesitancy, common concerns expressed by people experiencing homelessness, and the relationship between racial trauma and vaccine hesitancy.

Chapter 5 - Promoting Vaccine Confidence: Tailored strategies to address common vaccine concerns among people experiencing homelessness, and sample responses to those concerns using messages that are proven to work.

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Sections of this toolkit have been adapted and/or directly sourced from public materials developed by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), HUD Community Compass Technical Assistance teams, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Certified Community Health Specialists (CCHS) Foundation, and MHP Salud. We are grateful to benefit from the work of these organizations and privileged to share it with the community of homeless advocates working to promote vaccine confidence among people experiencing homelessness.



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has required homeless service agencies, health providers, and public health specialists to partner in new ways and develop shared strategies to protect and support people experiencing homelessness (PEH). As communities begin and sustain vaccination campaigns, these cross-sector partners are faced with a new challenge: promoting vaccine knowledge and confidence among a sector of the population which has a long history of discrimination and negative interactions with medical services.

A small-scale pilot study conducted in Los Angeles County in February 2021 found that 48% of PEH surveyed reported vaccine hesitancy and 41% did not accept a vaccine when offered. While this initial research includes a small sample, it is consistent with anecdotal impressions being reported by homeless services staff and medical providers regarding vaccine fear and hesitancy expressed by PEH.

Many communities have prioritized PEH for early vaccination; however, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on targeted efforts to educate PEH about their vaccine options, dispel vaccine myths, and nurture vaccine confidence. Homeless advocates – people with established and trusting relationships with PEH – including homeless services staff, volunteers, faith leaders, and people with lived experience of homelessness themselves are uniquely positioned to achieve these goals.

Homeless advocates have worked alongside health professionals since the COVID-19 crisis began. As communities move into the next phase of the pandemic, one in which vaccination is widely available, homeless advocates have an important role to play. Through this toolkit, we call on you to join us in the important work of vaccine ambassadorship.

About This Toolkit

This toolkit is provided as a resource for outreach, shelter, housing, and other service programs supporting PEH during the COVID-19 pandemic. It promotes a layperson approach to vaccine ambassadorship that readies homeless services staff, volunteers, people with lived experience of homelessness, and other trusted community members with honest, accurate information about COVID-19 vaccination and trauma-informed strategies to help PEH overcome vaccine fears and build vaccine confidence.

Our approach draws on the principles of successful community health worker/promotores and peer support models to help homeless advocates with limited or no health training support vaccination efforts in the local community. This community-based outreach model acknowledges that we are all both teachers and learners – and that we learn more and are better able to question and interrogate our personal beliefs when we are comfortable and at ease with those around us.

The toolkit is divided into five chapters:

- Chapter 1: Vaccine Ambassadorship: An overview of our approach to vaccine ambassadorship and the critical role that homeless advocates can play in promoting vaccine confidence among PEH.
- Chapter 2: COVID-19 Basics: General information about COVID-19 and its effects.
- Chapter 3: Vaccine Basics: A general overview of currently available COVID-19 vaccines, side effects, safety, and efficacy.



Chapter 4: Understanding Vaccine Hesitancy: An exploration of the most common reasons people may be hesitant to accept the COVID-19 vaccine.

Chapter 5: Promoting Vaccine Confidence: A review of common concerns and vaccine fears, conversation starters, and strategies to build vaccine confidence.

A Note on Employing Dedicated Staff or Volunteer Vaccine Ambassadors

In many communities, organizations are employing dedicated staff or volunteer community health outreach workers (CHOWs) as vaccine ambassadors. This toolkit is not designed to provide guidance for dedicated CHOW programs and should not be used to replace more comprehensive education and planning to incorporate CHOW activities at your organization.

If your organization is interested in employing dedicated CHOWs as staff or volunteers, we encourage you to consult local health professionals, established community health worker/promotores programs, and applicable community health worker certification requirements in your area.

The UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative's [Community Health Outreach Worker Key Considerations for Vaccine Ambassador Programs](#) and [Vaccine Ambassador Program and Job Description](#) provide an introduction to dedicated Vaccine Ambassador strategies for PEH.

Frequently Used Terms

This guide includes a number of terms and acronyms which may be unfamiliar to you.

Community Health Outreach Worker (CHOW): Community Health Outreach Workers are frontline public health workers who have a close understanding of the community/communities they serve and provide community-based health advocacy and education. Many states have adopted registration/certification standards for CHOWs.

Homeless Advocate: We use this term throughout this guide to refer to people who provide supports, services, and/or other types of assistance to people experiencing homelessness. The term has been chosen because of its broad application to people working in outreach, shelter, day center, coordinated assessment, navigation/diversion, housing, and supportive service programs as well as faith leaders and communities that provide meal assistance and/or other physical/spiritual nourishment, librarians, municipal leaders, and people experiencing homelessness themselves.

People/Person Experiencing Homelessness (PEH): This term and acronym are used throughout this guide to refer to people in sheltered and unsheltered homeless situations. This guide is not written to align with any specific definition of homelessness and can be broadly applied to people served through a variety of homeless assistance programs.

Promotores/Promotoras de Salud: Promotores/Promotoras are trained professionals who provide community-based health education and advocacy targeting Latinx communities. Promotores/Promotoras receive specialized training and may be lay workers or CHOWs.



Racial Trauma: Racial trauma refers to the cumulative effects of racism on an individual's mental and physical health. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States are exposed to racial trauma as a result of living under a system of white supremacy.

Vaccine Ambassador/Ambassadorship: Vaccine ambassadorship refers to concentrated efforts to provide honest, accurate information that increases vaccine confidence and uptake in the community. Vaccine ambassadors are people who have educated themselves about COVID-19 illness and vaccines, and committed to spreading the word and promoting vaccination in ways that they are able.

Vaccine Confidence: Vaccine confidence is the trust that people have in recommended vaccines, the providers who administer them, and the processes and policies that lead to vaccine development, authorization, manufacturing, and recommendations for use.

Vaccine Hesitancy: Vaccine hesitancy refers to delay in acceptance or refusal of a vaccine despite availability of vaccine services. Vaccine hesitancy is complex and context specific. It varies across time, place, and vaccines. Vaccine hesitancy is influenced by factors such as complacency, convenience, and confidence.

Vaccine Uptake: Uptake refers to the number of people who accept a vaccine. This term is used along with vaccine confidence throughout this guide to focus conversations on the goal of encouraging and increasing vaccination rates among PEH.

Toolkit Updates

This toolkit will be updated as needed based on changing conditions and lessons learned in the field. As communities across the country respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and advance vaccine strategies among PEH, we will all be learning from each other. We welcome input and recommendations from your work with PEH to improve and expand this toolkit. Please email your suggestions to tpch@tucsonaz.gov.

Updates to this toolkit will be posted at www.tpch.net/vaccine-toolkit.

Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness

Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) is a community-based coalition of non-profit organizations, government agencies, faith communities, volunteers, and people with lived experience of homelessness working together to prevent and end homelessness in Tucson and throughout Pima County. As the region's U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care, we serve as the regional planning and coordination body for homelessness prevention and homeless assistance programs throughout Pima County.

TPCH is administratively supported by the City of Tucson Housing & Community Development Department (Continuum of Care Lead Agency/Collaborative Applicant) and the Pima County Community & Workforce Development Department (Homeless Management Information System Lead Agency).