



Vaccine Ambassador Program and Job Description

Program Overview

As communities embark on COVID-19 vaccine campaigns, they are confronting a long history of discrimination and negative interactions with medical services experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups and people experiencing homelessness (PEH), which can contribute to mistrust and vaccine hesitancy. To build vaccine confidence, communities should consider hiring Vaccine Ambassadors to engage PEH and homeless service providers by facilitating two-way communication and disseminating accurate vaccine information.

The program strategy is rooted in the same principles guiding the [rapidly growing peer workforce](#) which has been integral in behavioral health services -- a commitment to engaging people with a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach that builds respect and mutual understanding. The [ambassador concept](#) has been used to build trust and support among community members to help them make informed decisions about vaccination.

Who are Vaccine Ambassadors?

A Vaccine Ambassador is a volunteer or a paid employee who provides education about vaccine efficacy by sharing personal reasons for confidence in the vaccine based on real-world experience. Similar to peer specialists, this role should be filled by those with lived experience (i.e., experiences of taking the vaccine, of homelessness, as part of a racial minority group, or as a homeless services staff person) who are trusted community members, including:

- People with lived experience of homelessness who can engage people living in shelters or in unsheltered locations
- Homeless service provider staff who can engage other staff members
- Community organizers
- Faith leaders
- Other trusted community members who engage people experiencing homelessness, such as librarians and meal program volunteers

Key Considerations

- Employ Vaccine Ambassadors to engage PEH and staff before a vaccine event; plan for enough lead time to support meaningful two-way communication and opportunities to elevate and address concerns
- Hire people with lived experience of homelessness as Vaccine Ambassadors and pay them equitably for their time
- Hire and utilize staff from historically marginalized communities to facilitate trust and meaningful engagement among PEH and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), Latino and LGBTQ communities
- Equip Vaccine Ambassadors with the appropriate PPE and train them on expectations

Funding Options

- Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) annual or ESG-CV program funds
 - Emergency Shelter Component: Case Management
 - Street Outreach Component: Engagement or Case Management
- CoC Program Funds: Vaccine Ambassadors may be funded under Case Management as part of activities related to the provision of information and referrals to other providers
- Private and philanthropic funds

The next section includes a sample Job Description that communities could adapt to employ people with lived experience of homelessness as Vaccine Ambassadors.

Sample Job Description

Job Summary

Vaccine Ambassadors will provide ongoing outreach to people experiencing homelessness (PEH) to increase vaccine confidence. Ambassadors will disseminate clear and consistent information about the vaccine and facilitate two-way communication between PEH and public health and homelessness partners to support goals for equitable vaccine distribution. Ambassadors are people with lived experience of homelessness who provide peer support and can share real-world experience and personal reasons for getting the vaccine to inform others.

Responsibilities and Duties

- Attend trainings to learn about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines
- Provide ongoing outreach to PEH (through personal interactions and social media); provide pre-vaccination education and disseminate clear, consistent, and accurate information about the vaccine including common side effects
- Facilitate two-way communication between PEH, public health, and homeless sector partners to identify, elevate, and respond to any concerns about the vaccine among PEH
- Engage people by listening and validating individuals' concerns and sharing personal reasons for confidence in the vaccine
- Attend vaccine events and or accompany mobile vaccine units to provide peer support, and walk alongside people as they work through concerns, and liaise between PEH and healthcare providers
- Provide linkages to services and care for PEH who experience expected symptoms from the vaccine or have an adverse reaction
- Participate in vaccine distribution planning and coordination; provide an "ear to the ground," informing public health and homeless sector partners about equitable vaccine distribution strategies; inform local communications and community engagement strategies
- Talk to individuals about barriers to receiving the vaccine and support problem solving
- Learn about local requirements for receiving the vaccine and help PEH navigate these requirements to improve access (For example, identify where vaccines will be given and support PEH to bring the right documentation and coordinate transportation)
- Help individuals develop a plan for receiving the second dose of the vaccine in a timely manner, including scheduling check-ins and reminders
- Utilize safety principles that model risk reduction (i.e., wearing face covers or masks and other PPE, social distancing and handwashing)

Qualifications

You will be successful in this job if you:

- Have lived experience of homelessness and are a trusted and known member of the community
- Have cultural competence and experience working with diverse populations of PEH
- Have strong interpersonal and communication skills and an open, friendly, accommodating attitude
- Are willing to learn about the COVID-19 vaccine, common vaccine hesitations, and other COVID-19 risk reduction strategies
- Are well-versed in harm reduction principles and trauma informed care

Salary

- Identify salary range commensurate with the importance of the position in the community and the skills required to be effective.