



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Funders Collaborative on COVID Recovery announces grantmaking to support vaccine uptake

CLEVELAND (March 23, 2022) – The Funders Collaborative on COVID Recovery (FCCR) has announced seven recipients of Vaccine Uptake Initiative grants. The initiative aims to increase COVID-19 vaccination in neighborhoods that have experienced high rates of coronavirus transmission and relatively low vaccine uptake. Grant funding will support projects focused on: community outreach and communications that reduce vaccine hesitancy; equitable access to vaccines through services such as translation, navigation, and transportation; and vaccine administration.

These grants are part of an effort to coordinate communications and access initiatives supported by the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund, the organizational predecessor to the FCCR. The [Guardians CLE](#) campaign—a communications apparatus that provided resources to trusted neighborhood ambassadors to deliver accurate vaccine information through multimedia and in-person conversations—launched in early 2021 and was based on guidance from a group of 17 community organizing, faith, and public health leaders.

In parallel, the RRF created the Hub-and-Spoke network of 71 community organizations to ensure equitable access to the COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Site for residents of neighborhoods disproportionately burdened by the pandemic. Together, these agencies developed and executed tailored approaches to outreach, education, registration, and individual follow-up within their service areas, leading to members of historically marginalized communities receiving their COVID-19 vaccination. In all, more than 11,000 people received their vaccines with help from Hub-and-Spoke partner organizations.

Today, organizations funded through this initiative will build on previous efforts by working in tandem with the Guardians CLE campaign. Projects will focus their efforts in Cleveland neighborhoods where vaccination rates are particularly low by deploying communications street teams and using traditional and social media channels to amplify vaccination messaging, offering multi-lingual assistance in scheduling vaccine appointments, coordinating transportation to vaccine clinics, distributing cash incentives for those getting vaccinated and those that referred



them, and providing vaccines to individuals in settings that are both convenient and culturally responsive.

“Cleveland cannot afford to go backward. That’s why the FCCR is doubling down on our commitment to making sure everyone in Cleveland has the information and resources they need to get the COVID-19 vaccine,” said Daniel Cohn, Vice President of the Mt. Sinai Health Foundation and founding partner of the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund. “The course of this pandemic remains uncertain, but our focus is not. We have been at the table and will stay at the table, and we invite more partners to join us in vaccinating our community’s highest risk members.”

In recent months, the FCCR has also worked closely with Mayor Justin Bibb to help coordinate community-wide COVID efforts. Upon taking office in January, Mayor Bibb and his team formed the COVID Task Force to ensure best efforts to maintain healthy and safe workplaces while the City continued to operate on behalf of its citizens during the pandemic. As the recommendations from the CDC change, sometimes daily, the Task Force reassesses priorities with the input from its members, relying on their valuable expertise. The Task Force was instrumental in guiding return to work policies, masking, and vaccination protocol. The Task Force also recognized the importance of acknowledging the hardships of this pandemic, by celebrating a Remembrance & Resilience Day on March 15<sup>th</sup>, where faith leadership united to remember those lost, and those who overcame illness. Currently, the Task Force is focusing on increasing vaccination rates and test kit distribution.

“With the creation of the COVID Task Force, the community has come together to collectively increase the vaccination rate, one resident at a time. Over the course of twelve weeks, faith leaders, CMSD, CMHA, leaders of medical institutions and higher education, grass roots organizations, and so many more have worked tirelessly to move the needle from 45% to 48% with the goal of promoting steady progress throughout the year,” said Mayor Justin Bibb.

The recipients of the FCCR Vaccine Uptake Initiative grants are:

- Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc.: To deploy a street team to deliver COVID-19 vaccine information in Buckeye, Central, and Kinsman communities and to distribute incentives to people who get vaccinated and the street team members who refer them.
- The Centers: To provide vaccines to people living in central and east side neighborhoods of Cleveland through the Dollars for Doses program in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Congregations and during the Homeless Stand Down 2022 event.
- Greater Cleveland Congregations: To expand the Dollars for Doses cash incentive program for community members of the central and east side neighborhoods of Cleveland who get vaccinated and those who refer them to pop-up vaccine events at faith-based congregations.



- May Dugan Center: To provide access assistance to residents living in near west side neighborhoods of Cleveland through a multi-lingual vaccine scheduling hotline and transportation to and from COVID-19 vaccine appointments and pop-up events.
- Neighborhood Family Practice: To launch a new COVID-19 vaccine communications campaign tailored to the west side neighborhoods of Cleveland via La Mega Radio and WOJU, social media, posters in bus shelters, and information distribution through community partners.
- University Settlement: To deploy outreach teams in the Broadway-Slavic Village area to provide information through door-to-door canvassing and to guide those interested in getting vaccinated to its partner clinic, MetroHealth Broadway Health Clinic.
- Young Latino Network: To conduct listening sessions on emerging vaccine sentiments among community members of neighborhoods on the west side of Cleveland and to provide translation services and host community vaccination events in the Clark-Fulton neighborhood.

For more information about future plans for the Funders Collaborative on COVID Recovery or to donate, visit [ClevelandFoundation.org/COVIDRecovery](https://ClevelandFoundation.org/COVIDRecovery).

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**About the Funders Collaborative on Covid Recovery:** The Greater Cleveland Covid-19 Rapid Response Fund was established in March 2020 to respond to pressing needs laid bare by the pandemic. It was designed to complement the work of public health and other public-sector agencies and expand nonprofit capacity to respond to health, safety and basic needs of residents throughout the region. Since September 2020, the Fund has expanded its scope beyond basic needs to include nonprofit resiliency, long-term recovery, and coronavirus vaccine uptake. To date the Fund has raised more than \$20 million and made grants to 675 nonprofit groups and organizations in Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties. In September 2021, the Rapid Response Fund evolved into The Funders Collaborative on Covid Recovery, a group of more than 50 foundations and nonprofits dedicated to helping our region recover from Covid-19 and come back stronger.