



# CDC'S PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTERS FUNDED TO INCREASE COVID-19 VACCINE CONFIDENCE

In April 2021, CDC funded all 26 Prevention Research Centers (PRCs)<sup>1</sup> to create the **PRC Vaccine Confidence Network (PRC VCN)**, focused on increasing COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake. CDC was able to leverage all PRCs to address a national public health emergency and accelerate the COVID-19 vaccine response.

The PRCs are uniquely positioned to explore vaccine hesitancy in specific populations because of their experience in community engaged research and ability to build trust with the communities they serve. By assessing barriers and collaborating with trusted community partners, PRCs—both individually and as a network—are providing valuable insight into the social and behavioral factors contributing to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

## THE VACCINATE WITH CONFIDENCE FRAMEWORK

CDC developed the *Vaccinate with Confidence*<sup>2</sup> framework to guide efforts to build confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines, the providers who administer them, and the science behind vaccine recommendations. The *Vaccinate with Confidence* strategy aims to build trust, empower healthcare workers, and engage communities and individuals.

The PRC VCN is using the *Vaccinate with Confidence* framework to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake in diverse communities. The PRCs will gain insight into effective social and behavioral interventions to build the evidence base for future vaccine confidence strategies.



## CDC's Vaccinate with Confidence COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy

### BUILD TRUST

---

Share clear, complete, and accurate messages about COVID-19 vaccines and take visible actions to build trust in the vaccine, the vaccinator, and the health care delivery system in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies, tribal agencies, and partners.

### EMPOWER HEALTHCARE WORKERS

---

Promote confidence among healthcare workers in their decision to get vaccinated and to recommend vaccination to their patients.

### ENGAGE COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS

---

Engage communities in a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive way using two-way communication to listen, build trust, and increase collaboration.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

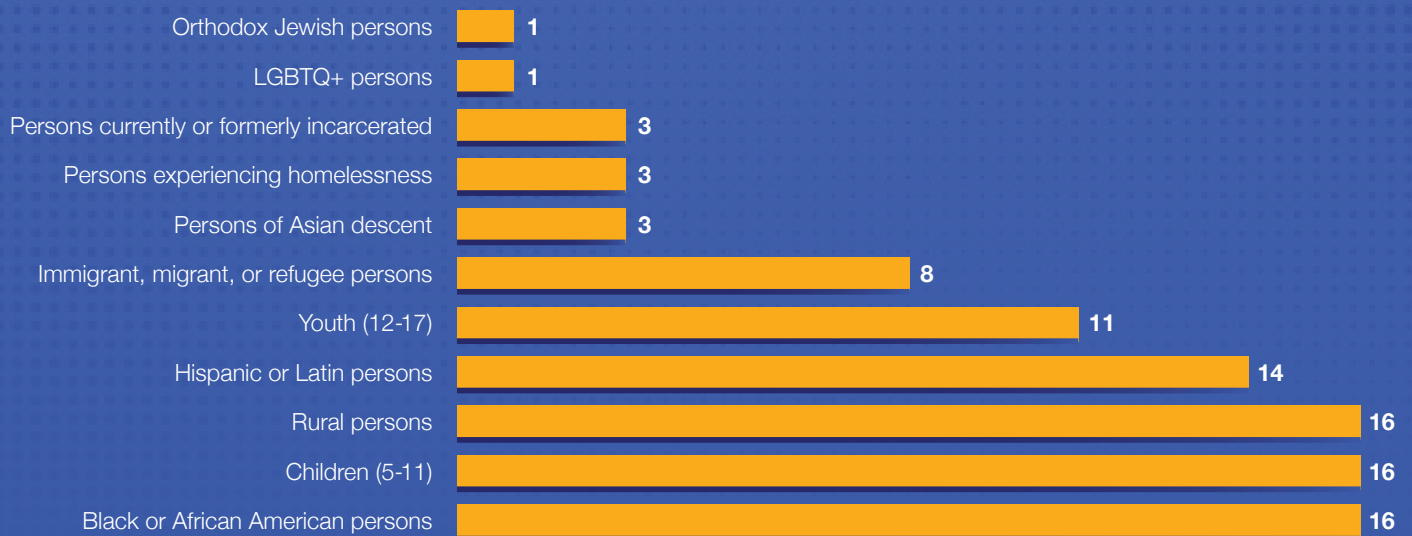
## THE POWER OF PRCs' COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The PRCs are academic research centers in the United States that study how people and their communities can avoid or reduce the risks for chronic diseases and other leading causes of death and disability. PRCs work to identify public health problems and to develop, test, and evaluate interventions that can be applied widely, especially in communities experiencing health disparities. Their community partners are trusted messengers from local health departments and community-based organizations. These relationships make PRCs ideal partners to help increase vaccine confidence and uptake because they already understand the needs and priorities of their communities.

## PRC VCN POPULATIONS OF FOCUS AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

To increase confidence and generate demand for COVID-19 vaccination, each PRC identifies specific communities or populations that are hesitant or unable to get the COVID-19 vaccine (Figure A). Some PRCs focus on multiple populations.

**Figure A.** Number of PRCs focusing on each community or population



PRCs use a **community-engaged approach** to develop strategies to address the specific behavioral, informational, and structural barriers identified by each population of focus. Partnering with trusted community messengers, they use key intervention methods to generate demand and confidence for the vaccine. The following examples represent some of the highlights of the PRCs' work during the pandemic.

### Community Engagement

- The [Rocky Mountain PRC](#)<sup>3</sup> engaged its rural Colorado communities through existing partnerships, local public health departments, and state organizations. Engagement opportunities with the San Luis Valley Community Advisory Board and the newly convened Community Advisory Council represent the PRC's ongoing grassroots efforts.
- The University of Washington Health Promotion Research Center is offering a free [COVID-19 Information Navigator Training](#)<sup>4</sup> for multilingual, multicultural adults. The PRC regularly surveys the training participants to gather community feedback and questions and uses that feedback to develop blog posts and guide the project's direction.

## Increased Access to Vaccination

- [The Washington University PRC in St. Louis](#)<sup>5</sup> developed a system to monitor the location of vaccination sites in St. Louis, Missouri, and vaccination rates by ZIP code. The PRC found that vaccination rates were lower in communities with lower incomes, predominantly African American neighborhoods. As a result of this work, four daily vaccination sites were added at local libraries in these and other neighborhoods throughout St. Louis.
- The [Prevention Research Center at Georgia State \(University\)](#)<sup>6</sup> works with community organizations representing five major refugee resettlement groups and the African American population in the Clarkston, Georgia, area to improve logistics and reduce barriers for residents seeking COVID-19 vaccinations and testing. The PRC provides resources that offer transportation assistance and a list of COVID-19 testing and vaccine sites.
- The University of Arizona PRC supports the [Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health \(MEZCOPH\) mobile health units](#),<sup>7</sup> which provide COVID-19 vaccinations and health screenings to Hispanic populations in rural Arizona at no cost to participants. No appointment is necessary.

## Tailored Messaging

- University of Massachusetts, Worcester PRC is compiling messaging for youth, by youth, with the [#PostVaxLife campaign](#),<sup>8</sup> a video/meme contest, and public service announcements.
- West Virginia University PRC and partners worked with trusted community advocates and ambassadors to create [videos](#)<sup>9</sup> answering COVID-19 vaccine questions. They used customizable billboards to reach the populations with higher vaccine hesitancy and increase confidence and uptake. They also created a communication toolkit, [social press kit](#),<sup>10</sup> and customized FAQs that have been shared with more than 300 community partners.
- As part of the [Communities Confronting COVID-19](#)<sup>11</sup> campaign, the University of Wisconsin-Madison PRC created videos and local radio ads featuring testimonials from local healthcare providers, faith leaders, government, and employers about their experience with COVID-19 illness or vaccination. This campaign was tailored to rural, largely white communities in southwest Wisconsin and incorporated values such as community solidarity, altruistic behavior, and influence of community norms.

## SHARING SUCCESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

---

A cornerstone of the PRC VCN is its ability to quickly build trust by using a community-engaged approach to learn about community vaccine concerns and develop interventions in response. CDC is working with the PRC VCN to evaluate these efforts and document lessons learned and promising practices resulting from PRC VCN activities. The information will be shared widely so that other community-based organizations can use successful approaches to increase vaccine confidence and uptake in their own populations of focus.



# References

- <sup>1</sup> Prevention Research Centers (PRCs), <https://www.cdc.gov/prc/index.htm>
- <sup>2</sup> *Vaccinate with Confidence* framework, <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence.html>
- <sup>3</sup> Rocky Mountain PRC, <https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/rmprc/research-practice/cdc-covid-19-vaccine-supplement>
- <sup>4</sup> COVID-19 Information Navigator Training, <https://depts.washington.edu/hprc/covid-19-information-training/>
- <sup>5</sup> The Washington University PRC in St. Louis, <https://prcstl.wustl.edu/>
- <sup>6</sup> Prevention Research Center at Georgia State (University), <https://prc.gsu.edu/covid-19-vaccine-confidence/>
- <sup>7</sup> Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (MEZCOPH) mobile health units, <https://www.publichealth.arizona.edu/outreach/mobile-vaccination-education>
- <sup>8</sup> #PostVaxLife campaign, <https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/postvaxlife>
- <sup>9</sup> Videos, <https://bit.ly/WVcovidVaxQAVIDs>
- <sup>10</sup> Social press kit, <https://thesocialpresskit.com/communityimmunitywv>
- <sup>11</sup> Communities Confronting COVID-19, <https://communitiesc3.org/>



**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT CDC'S PRC PROGRAM**

Visit CDC's [PRC Program website](#), [email the program](#), or search the [PRC Project Database](#) to view current projects.



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention