



Expanding Vaccination Coverage Through Partnerships: Resources and Real-World Experiences

NACCHOSM
National Association of County & City Health Officials

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This report shows examples of 25 Local Health Departments (LHDs) working with partners in their communities with support from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted longstanding gaps in vaccine confidence and access—particularly among young children, adolescents, and communities historically underserved by the healthcare system.

Misinformation, historical distrust, and structural barriers continue to shape public attitudes toward vaccination and can hinder efforts to achieve universal immunization coverage.

Local Health Departments (LHDs) play a critical role in promoting vaccine confidence and addressing these challenges. However, their success increasingly depends on the strength of their partnerships with trusted, community-rooted institutions. Faith-based organizations (FBO), early care and education (ECE) centers, and community messengers are uniquely positioned to engage families, convey accurate health information, and build trust where traditional public health efforts may not reach.

Collaborating with these institutions fosters culturally relevant and community-driven approaches to vaccination outreach. Faith leaders can offer moral guidance and trusted counsel, ECE providers can reach families during early developmental stages, and schools can engage youth and caregivers through established educational networks. These trusted partners also serve as essential messengers in shaping communications around immunizations across the lifespan—from early childhood through adolescence and adulthood—reinforcing consistent, relatable, and accessible messages at every stage of life.

This resource was developed to share LHD experiences, lessons learned, and best practices collaborating with partners from different sectors. This document should be used for partnership planning and implementation. Templates, tools, and resources can be used to support the development of partnerships in your community.

14 LHDs with ECE partnerships were used to inform the information in this report:

- Adams County Health Department, Illinois
- Bear River Health Department, Utah
- Brazos County Health District, Texas
- Charles County Health Department, Maryland
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Ohio
- Dallas County Health and Human Services, Texas
- Harris County Public Health, Texas
- Hill County Health Department, Montana
- Linn County Public Health, Iowa
- Long Beach Department of HHS, California
- Mecklenburg County Health Department, North Carolina
- New Philadelphia City Health Department, Ohio
- Niagara County Department of Health, New York
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Washington

Faith-Based Organizations Partnerships

Equally essential are partnerships with faith-based organizations, which play a powerful role in building trust and addressing vaccine hesitancy in communities with historical healthcare system distrust. Many underserved or underrepresented community groups turn to faith leaders as trusted health advisors, making these leaders crucial allies in dispelling myths and misinformation. NACCHO empowers LHDs to work with faith leaders to provide culturally responsive, accurate vaccine information. These relationships increase community confidence in vaccines and improve healthcare access for individuals facing barriers to vaccination. Six LHDs with faith-based partners were used to inform this report:

- Durham County Department of Health, North Carolina
- IMPACT Ulysses, Kansas
- Mobile County Health Department, Alabama
- Monongalia County Health Department, West Virginia
- Rockland County Department of Health, New York
- Trumbull County Combined Health District, Ohio

Adolescent Partnerships

For adolescents and their families, unique challenges around misinformation, social influences, and gaps in healthcare access have contributed to lower vaccine uptake. Recognizing these needs, NACCHO supports LHDs in collaborating with community organizations, youth advisory groups, and parents to promote vaccine confidence in adolescent populations. Through community-level education and accessible vaccine events, this partnership encourages adolescents and their families to make informed health decisions. This approach not only addresses immediate vaccination needs but also strengthens trust in public health messaging, creating a ripple effect that fosters healthier communities. Throughout this report, five LHDs with adolescent partnerships are highlighted:

- Cass County Health Department, Illinois
- Los Angeles Department of Public Health, California
- Putnam County Health Department, West Virginia
- Panhandle Public Health District, Nebraska
- St. Mary's County Health Department, Maryland

National Partnerships

Early Care and Education Partnerships

- Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA). Working with a network of over 500 child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies, CCAoA enhances child care quality, conducts research, and advocates for policies that benefit children and families. NACCHO contracted with CCAoA to provide over 150 hours of technical assistance, develop resources for providers and families, and convene experts to support provider mental health. Key resources developed in partnership with NACCHO include a COVID-19 Mitigation Checklist, an ArcGIS Child Health Map, and the LHD-ECE Partnerships Toolkit.

- Penn State Extension Better Kid Care provides evidence-informed professional development for ECE and youth development professionals to improve the quality of care and educational practices. Its online platform offers over 300 relevant training courses for childcare professionals. In collaboration with NACCHO, Better Kid Care developed three online training modules, facilitated webinars, provided technical assistance to ECE providers and caregivers, and disseminated a range of resources to support the ECE workforce.

Faith-Based Partnerships

- YB Consultants, LLC (YBC) provided technical assistance to support efforts to improve vaccine access, education, and outreach through faith-based partnerships. Founded in 2020, YBC offers guidance and actionable solutions in clinical and public health to organizations needing technical expertise, development and implementation of training, education, guidelines, policies, and procedures. YBC is an organization with extensive experience in health care, immunizations, and partnering with faith-based organizations, and is a champion for advancing health for all populations.

Adolescent Partnerships

- The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS): NACCHO supported Teall Properties Group (TPG) to create new messaging and utilize channels for national and local communication campaigns to promote confidence in and access to COVID-19 and routine vaccines for adolescents through partnership with NFHS. Primary activities and goals included reaching middle school and high school administrators via email marketing; a collaborative social media campaign conducted by NFHS and NACCHO; NACCHO involvement in the National Athletic Director Convention; and recognition in NFHS's monthly publication.

Stories from the Field

September 2023 - September 2024

NACCHO Expanding Vaccination Coverage through Partnerships: Stories from the Field

Early Care and Education Center Sites

Faith Based Organizations Sites

Adolescent Sites

Dallas, Texas

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In an effort to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates among children aged 0-5, Dallas County Health and Human Services leveraged their participation in NACCHO's Expanding Vaccination Coverage through Partnerships with Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs project to foster meaningful partnerships and innovative outreach.

Ulysses, Kansas

[click to read](#)

In the heart of Ulysses, Kansas, a dynamic initiative is reshaping public health outreach. IMPACT Ulysses, in collaboration with the Church of the Nazarene District, is leveraging community trust and engagement to improve vaccine education, confidence, and accessibility.

St. Mary's, Maryland

[click to read](#)

In St. Mary's County, Maryland, a dedicated focus on community engagement and collaboration is transforming public health efforts to address vaccine hesitancy.

New Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

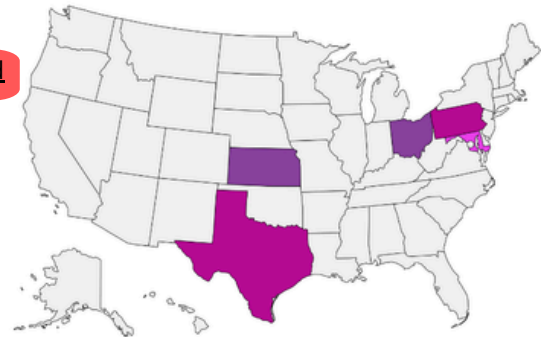
[click to read](#)

In New Philadelphia, Ohio, the New Philadelphia City Health Department is bridging gaps in childhood immunization by partnering with trusted community groups to boost vaccine confidence and access, especially among the growing Hispanic and Latino population.

Trumbull, Ohio

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In Trumbull County, Ohio, a powerful partnership between the Trumbull County Combined Health District (TCCHD) and Bazetta Christian Church (BCC) has been instrumental in improving vaccine access and education for the faith-based community.



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Visit our [Immunization](#) website to learn more about NACCHO's work towards enhancing vaccine coverage across the country.

Toolkits

Early Care and Education Toolkits

- Collaborating for Child Well-Being: A Toolkit for Local Health Departments & Early Care and Education Programs: This comprehensive resource, developed by Child Care Aware of America in partnership with NACCHO and Penn State Extension Better Kid Care, offers LHDs and ECE providers practical guidance, tools, and examples for building and sustaining partnerships that promote child and family well-being. Key features include steps for initiating partnerships, defining goals, roles, and communication plans, implementing evidence-based strategies to improve child health, and sustaining partnerships through ongoing communication, evaluation, and adaptation. Designed for both new and established collaborations, the toolkit provides actionable steps, customizable templates, and real-world examples. Informed by feedback from LHDs and ECE providers, this toolkit is tailored to meet the evolving needs of its users, ensuring its relevance and impact.

Adolescent Toolkits

- NACCHO's School-Located Vaccination Clinic Toolkit: School-located vaccination clinics are one approach to increasing community health while promoting routine vaccination uptake. To best support LHDs, schools (K-12 education), and other public health stakeholders, NACCHO has created this School-Located Vaccination Clinic (SLVC) toolkit that is a repository of information and resources to assist in facilitating immunization community outreach in the grade-school settings.

Tools, Resources, and Communication Products

Early Care and Education Resources

- Engaging Families and Communities to Promote Child Health: Strategies for Local Health Departments: Children's earliest experiences and environments play a crucial role in shaping their future health and development. Research shows that a healthy early childhood lays the foundation for lifelong success,

influencing everything from academic achievement to chronic disease prevention. Local health departments play a vital role in ensuring children have the resources they need to thrive. This document outlines strategies for effective family and community engagement, with a focus on collaborating with the child care system to better reach and support families.

- Engaging Families and Communities to Promote Health: A Guide for Early Care and Education Professionals: Investing in early childhood health is an investment in a child's future. Research shows that positive early childhood experiences lay the foundation for lifelong success, influencing everything from academic achievement to chronic disease prevention. As trusted community members, child care professionals are uniquely positioned to advocate for children's health. This document provides an overview of community engagement strategies to support child care professionals in promoting health effectively.
- Strategies to Communicate about Vaccines for Young Children: Effective communication is essential in helping families, caregivers, educators, and community members make informed decisions that protect the well-being of young children. This document outlines key strategies for communicating the importance of vaccines for young children, emphasizing clarity, cultural sensitivity, and supportive engagement throughout the communication process.
- Building Collaborative Partnerships Between Local Health Departments and Early Care and Education Programs to Support the Health and Well-Being of Children and Families in the Community: The *Building Collaborative Partnerships Evaluation Tool* provides guidance for local health departments and early care and education programs to strengthen partnerships that support child and family health. This resource offers strategies for effective collaboration, readiness assessments, step-by-step partnership development, and ongoing evaluation to ensure long-term success.
- Data for Change: Building Bridges Between Public Health and Early Childhood - Child Care Aware® of America: Child Care Aware of America's interactive mapping tool connects public health and childcare systems by visualizing key factors such as childcare center locations, local health departments, and community resources alongside community health data. It supports efforts to plan vaccination drives, address disparate impacts, and strengthen local partnerships for more positive outcomes. Users can explore data on childcare availability,

public health trends, and non-medical drivers of health to inform decision-making and improve child care access.

- NACCHO Spectrum of Opportunities Worksheet: This worksheet serves as a strategic tool for identifying and engaging key ECE and vaccine uptake stakeholders to advance public health initiatives. It provides a structured framework for assessing agency priorities, partnerships, and resource-sharing opportunities while addressing barriers to collaboration. This worksheet supports efforts to enhance ECE quality, improve child health outcomes, and strengthen vaccine uptake initiatives.
- Partnership Engagement Plan: is a structured tool designed to help ECE programs and LHDs identify, engage, and collaborate with key community partners. It provides a framework for defining roles, outlining responsibilities, and addressing potential barriers to effective partnership development. This resource supports strategic planning to enhance public health initiatives, including immunization efforts, mental health awareness, and family engagement.

Faith-Based Resources

- Resource Repository: YBC gathered, organized, and maintained a collection of materials and resources that catered to various immunization topics and needs. Resources included articles, trainings, websites, and toolkits/guides organized by the following topics: News and Hot Topics; General Vaccine Information (adults and children/youth); Vaccine Confidence (addressing misinformation and vaccine messaging /communications); Vaccines and Partnerships; Addressing Vaccine Access; and Evaluation. YBC included materials from reliable sources, such as professional organizations, government agencies, and non-profits along with journal articles and other industry sources.
- Suggested Steps for Cold-Calling Faith-Based Organizations: This document provides an example of how a cold call might unfold, where a local health department is reaching out to a faith-based leader for the first time to enlist them as a trusted messenger for vaccine education and promotion. This sample script can be used by LHDs to ensure their conversation is respectful, informative, and engaging with the goal of laying the groundwork for a productive partnership. The information in the script can also be used to compose an introductory email to a faith-based organization.

- Titles of Faith Leaders by Religion: This resource offers LHDs a comprehensive listing of prominent titles for faith-based leaders across various religions. By understanding the proper titles and roles of faith-based leaders within different religious communities, health officials can engage more respectfully and effectively with these leaders, who often play a crucial role in influencing their congregants' attitudes toward health practices. LHDs can use this resource to enhance community outreach, build trust, and improve public health initiatives.
- Train-the-trainer slides: YBC developed a slide deck on vaccine basics that were designed to prepare LHDs, faith-based partners, and other individuals to present to a lay audience about vaccines. The customizable slide deck included an instruction sheet and speaker notes.
- Conversation cards: To increase community conversations about vaccines, YBC created conversation cards that included common questions about vaccines, as well as up-to-date answers that were written in plain language. The cards were intended to open lines of communication and facilitate mutual understanding about vaccines in a nonthreatening, easily implementable way. The cards are provided as a PowerPoint document and could be customized to meet each organization's brand standards.
- Literature review: To further identify and share published best practices, successes, and challenges for improving vaccine access, education, outreach, and uptake through faith-based partnerships, YBC conducted a limited literature review of 15 journal articles published between 2014 and 2024. The report contained two sections: a summary of best practices and lessons learned that were broken down into 11 themes and an annotated bibliography of the articles reviewed. In addition to the full report, YBC developed an overview document that summarized the identified themes.
- Spotlight Stories: LHD's were interviewed to highlight key themes for success, including effective communication, creating and utilizing partnerships, and earning the trust of FBOs and surrounding communities by meeting them where they are. Once the LHDs established trust, many of the initiatives flourished and were amplified through local health fairs, community and FBO events. LHDs were also able to fully highlight their services to communities outside of just vaccinations. Some challenges that were highlighted included timing of messaging, alignment of LHD goals with community needs, and overcoming access barriers to services. Many of these challenges were overcome through the LHDs valiant efforts.

LHD Developed Products:

- Durham County Health Ministry Network: The Durham County Department of Public Health has developed a number of tools and publications as resources for faith-based organizations. Check out their website to learn more.
- Hit Me With Your Best Shot Campaign: Developed by IMPACT Ulysses, this comprehensive toolkit is designed to help counties launch their own child vaccination initiatives with engaging materials, proven strategies, and community-driven insights. Explore our ready-to-use resources, including posters, brochures, social media content, infographics, and more, to tailor the campaign to your community.

Adolescent Resources

- NFHS Partnership Overview: This slide deck highlights the successes of the partnership through the campaigns developed. This includes messaging products, social media impressions, data and metrics of reach, local activations, and more.
- NACCHO's NFHS Network Assets: Reaching families and teens via the NFHS Network, which included 14 million impressions delivered by un-skippable 15-second commercials streamed prior to the start of high school games, from August 2023-September 2024. It also included email marketing at an estimated six million NFHS Network emails. The streaming service includes, but is not limited to, football games, basketball games, and promotion of high school sports rivalry games.
 - Game Broadcasts - Un-skippable 15-second commercials just prior to the start of the games totaling an estimated 14-million impressions from June 2023-Sept. 2024
 - Email Marketing - Recognition on six million "National Game of the Week" emails throughout the 2023-24 football and basketball season

- Local Activations: To reach communities at grassroots levels, NFHS supported 10 local activations in areas of low vaccine uptake. At local sporting events such as tournaments, championships, or races bringing together several surrounding counties, brand ambassadors engaged with students and their parents to educate on the importance of immunizations and answer any health-related questions. Partnering with the LHD in the area, branded booths had the NFHS/NACCHO campaign logos, giveaway items, and informational flyers.
- High School Today: NACCHO received high profile recognition in the NFHS's monthly publication, High School Today, that is distributed to 20,000 high schools across the US.

LHD Developed Products:

- Social Media Toolkit: VaxTeensLA aims to promote vaccine confidence for youth and their families in Los Angeles County. The goal of the toolkit is to provide social media assets that can be used by youth leaders and community partners. The content of the social media toolkit includes 9 carousel style posts of clear and accessible information about vaccines and the diseases they protect against to help youth and their families make informed decisions about their health. Topics covered in this social media toolkit include what are vaccines, why vaccines are important, common myths and misinformation, and an overview of each of the recommended vaccines for adolescents. It also includes information about each corresponding vaccine preventable disease, disease transmission and common symptoms. Finally, the toolkit encourages the target audience to take action by speaking with their healthcare provider about the vaccines that are recommended for them.
- Vaccines for Teens, developed by Los Angeles County, is an infographic that provides information about each recommended vaccines for teens, why they are important, and where to go to get vaccines.

Webinars

Early Care and Education Webinars

- It's the Season: Staying Healthy and Up-to-Date on Vaccines (Flu, COVID-19, and RSV)(CCAoA): This webinar covered the flu season, rising rates of COVID-19 and RSV, the new COVID-19 booster, and vaccines for RSV and the flu. Dr. Katherine Fleming-Dutra from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) discussed how CCR&R staff and other child care professionals can support vaccine promotion to maintain healthy child care environments.
- Collaborating for Child Well-being (CCAoA): This webinar introduced the *Collaborating for Child Well-being Toolkit*, which provides practical guidance, tools, and resources to support the development and sustainability of partnerships between Local Health Departments (LHDs) and Early Care and Education (ECE) organizations. Whether exploring new partnership opportunities or strengthening existing collaborations, the toolkit offers actionable steps, templates, and real-world examples to guide participants through each phase of partnership development—from assessing readiness to evaluating impact.
- Introducing Workshop Strategies to Support Child Immunizations Webinar (BKC): This all-in-one course, *Workshop Strategies to Support Child Immunizations*, provides a workshop facilitation guide, learning activity materials, and a wealth of printable/downloadable fact sheets—everything needed to lead a community discussion. The webinar showed attendees how to access this and other courses in the *Penn State Better Kid Care On Demand system*. It also highlighted the tools provided and lessons learned from the pilot project.

Adolescent Webinars

- AIM Adolescent Immunization Sports Webinar (NFHS): During this discussion facilitated by immunization advocate Ethan Lindenberger, panelists shared their experiences incorporating adolescent immunizations into team sports and sporting events. Attendees received tools to implement adolescent immunization awareness and education programs across jurisdictions that knock vaccine-preventable diseases out of the park!

This document was created in collaboration with NACCHO's Immunization team and Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health team. For more information, visit our website:

[MCAH Webpage](#)
[Immunization Webpage](#)
[NACCHO's Webpage](#)

If you have any questions about this document, please reach out to the immunization team at immunization@naccho.org

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

1201 Eye St, NW, Suite 400 Washington, DC 20005

P 202-783-5550 F 202-783-1583

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