



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**For information**

Mary F. Holleran

Senior Vice President, Communications

[mholleran@racf.org](mailto:mholleran@racf.org) or 585.341.4351

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Community Foundation Offering Grants to Neighborhood Groups to Educate Residents About COVID and the Vaccine**

Rochester residents living in low-income ZIP codes have a vaccination rate slightly above 3 percent, while the average for the rest of Monroe County is four to seven times higher.

To address this troubling inequity, Rochester Area Community Foundation wants to help residents in these neighborhoods better understand why it's important to get vaccinated by offering grants to neighborhood and community-based groups to develop creative tactics or events to engage and educate their neighbors.

The goal of the Community Vaccine Education Grant program is to bolster vaccinations in Rochester ZIP codes with low vaccination rates and make sure citizens understand why it's important to protect themselves and their family and friends by continuing to be tested for COVID-19.

Neighborhood associations and community-based groups have built a great deal of trust with residents because of their leadership around grassroots collaborations and solutions to local issues. These groups also are often the first to know what is happening in their community.

"Relationships do matter, and we believe that peer-to-peer learning among neighbors regarding the facts and myths of the COVID vaccine is a way to make a real difference in the vaccination rates of low-income neighborhoods — and particularly within Black and Brown communities," says Maya Crane, program officer for equity at the Community Foundation.

As Rochester's history has shown, Black and Brown community members have received inequitable treatment since the early 1950s. Their distrust in government and health care-related matters is well founded. That history, coupled with lack of vaccine availability and information along with difficulties navigating online appointment portals have overshadowed vaccination efforts in the city.

The Community Vaccine Education Grant builds off the Foundation's NeighborGood Grants initiative, which has provided financial support to city neighborhood or resident-led groups to strengthen the communities in which they live since 1993.



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Neighborhood groups and community-based organizations eligible for a grant of up to \$3,000 must be located in these ZIP codes: 14604, 14605, 14606, 14608, 14609, 14611, 14613, 14614, 14615, 14619 and 14621. Details are available at [www.racf.org/VaccineEducation](http://www.racf.org/VaccineEducation).

Because education is a key component of this effort, groups eligible for a grant must collaborate with a COVID-19 resource organization that is not necessarily a government entity or health-specific business or nonprofit. Partners that have agreed to provide technical assistance for these projects include the Black Physicians Network, Interdenominational Health Ministry Coalition, the Rochester Black Nurses Association, and Monroe County Health Department.

Together, the neighborhood group and their local COVID-19 expert will determine the best and most innovative ways to reach residents and share important information related to testing for the virus and vaccines to improve vaccination rates and decrease COVID cases.

Groups interested in this grant opportunity are encouraged to attend a Community Foundation-hosted webinar at **6 p.m. on April 1 or April 6** to get more details. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/VaccineEducation>.

For information on the Community Education Vaccine Grant program, contact Maya Crane at [mcrane@racf.org](mailto:mcrane@racf.org) or 585.341.4368.