

Let's Do It.



Engaging Arts & Culture for Vaccine Confidence

Quick Start Guide for Building Sustainable Partnerships



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



Vaccinate with **Confidence**
Strategy to Reinforce Confidence in Covid-19 Vaccines

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence/art.html>

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Who is this guide for?

State and local health departments and other public health entities that want to promote vaccine confidence and COVID-19 vaccines and immunizations more broadly for people of all ages.

What is the purpose of this guide?

This evidence-based guide encourages public health professionals to recognize arts and culture as valuable and available resources in communities, and to engage them as critical partners in promoting vaccine confidence and uptake. It will help public health and health communication professionals:

- ◆ **understand the value** and synergies of partnering with local artists, culture-bearers, and arts and culture organizations to promote health behaviors;
- ◆ **develop effective and durable partnerships** for advancing vaccine confidence through more engaging, tailored, and [culturally responsive and sustainable programming](#);1-4 and
- ◆ **stimulate more accessible, equitable, and responsive programs** that reduce barriers to vaccine confidence and uptake.

Communities across America are rich with arts and cultural assets that people turn to in both good and challenging times.

Partnerships that use the knowledge and strengths of both the public health and arts and culture sectors can empower and accelerate vaccine confidence and uptake.

What is “arts and culture”?

In this guide, the term “arts and culture” refers to the wide range of cultural identities, traditions, and creative expressions that exist in communities. It includes art forms such as music, dance, spoken word, painting, and theater, as well as graphic design, culinary arts, spiritual practices, and celebrations of local places and histories. Arts and cultural activities take place in arts and cultural centers, schools, libraries, homes, places of worship, local businesses, in parks, and on streets. Arts and culture are available resources in communities.

Who are artists and culture-bearers?

Artists include creators and makers of all kinds. Culture-bearers are those who embody and transmit practices of particular cultures.⁵ Both are often trusted and influential community members. Artists and culture-bearers have long been translators and trusted messengers of vital information within communities through dialogue, performances, installations, and participatory events and activities.

Powering-up vaccine confidence with arts & culture



Why Arts & Culture?

Arts and cultural activities are central to building trust, making connection, facilitating communication, and inspiring social change.⁶ They are rooted in culture and place, and they can make vaccine information more personally and culturally relevant and tailored to specific populations. They also make health information more understandable, memorable, and actionable.⁷⁻¹⁰

Artists and culture-bearers are often trusted community members.

They connect with people in trusted places and in ways that can resonate more deeply than traditional public health communication.



Arts and culture partnerships can help public health programs achieve their goals with higher levels of participation, cultural responsiveness, and efficiency. Artists and culture-bearers can be influencers. They are extremely adept at translating information and ideas within and across populations. They provide trusted platforms for urgent communications and can reach more expansive and inclusive audiences than health departments and government agencies.¹¹

Arts-based health communication programs that are rooted in culture and place have been shown to enable more effective health communication and behavior change than traditional means.¹²

This understanding has long made arts-based health communication, like [Rock Point 256](#), standard practice in other parts of the world.¹³

Public health + arts and culture partnership is at the heart of these highly impactful programs.



To learn more about the value of arts and culture for advancing health in communities, see the [Creating Healthy Communities through Cross-sector Collaboration](#) white paper.⁶

Promising Practices

While not yet standard practice in the United States as it is in other parts of the world, cross-sector collaboration between public health and arts and culture is not new. There are many examples of promising practices that build on the knowledge and skills of each sector related to, and beyond, vaccine confidence.

Say "Yes" Summer Series, Atlanta, GA

- ◆ **Partners:** CDC, Dashboard, Living Walls, Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE) Georgia, and the Georgia Department of Public Health.
- ◆ **Program:** Multi-modal Georgia Department of Public Health vaccine confidence campaign, featuring a series of large-scale projections and banners designed by local artists to stimulate social cohesion, solidarity, and positivity around COVID-19 vaccines, and to share vaccine information in a range of priority communities. Also includes educational events and COVID-19 vaccination opportunities at installation sites, educational materials, and web-based resources.
- ◆ **Partnership Structure:** CDC funded the arts organizations as subject matter experts and empowered them to make curatorial recommendations and decisions. All partners collaborated on project design in alignment with CDC vaccination goals; the arts organizations produced multiple art events with CDC funds; CDC provided information for supplemental materials and events; and all partners collaborated on program promotion and assessment.
- ◆ **Observations:** This project exemplifies a strong group of partners who represent local perspectives, goals, assets, artistic excellence, and up-to-date public health information and expertise. The partnership has benefitted from a structure of regular meetings, clear articulation of roles, equitable compensation of artists, and development of a culture of respect, transparency, and appreciation within the partnership itself.



San Francisco Creative Corps, San Francisco, CA

- ◆ **Partners:** City of San Francisco, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), Paint the Void, San Francisco Bay Area Theater Company (SFBATCO), Dance Mission, Carnival San Francisco, and the San Francisco Mayor's office.
- ◆ **Program:** An initiative designed to employ 60 performing artists as Community Health Ambassadors (CHAs) to engage their neighborhoods in person and online, sharing critical vaccination and pandemic safety messages through the performing arts, murals, and video.
- ◆ **Partnership Structure:** YBCA, SFBATCO, Dance Mission, and Carnival San Francisco collaborated on casting the performers who served as CHAs. YBCA worked with the City of San Francisco departments to train CHAs, identify site locations, and outline the key COVID-19 safety language. YBCA routed funds to Paint the Void to engage visual artists in creating murals on boarded-up windows throughout the city.
- ◆ **Observations:** This partnership converges the complementary goals of the partners to provide economic opportunities for San Francisco artists who are underemployed due to COVID-19 and to achieve public health goals related to vaccine uptake and safe health behaviors. The programs focus on speaking authentically and through the voices and community members to the challenges of living through the pandemic and how communities can work together to be safe and healthy.



Promising Practices

Healthy Home, Healthy Community; Louisville, KY

- ◆ **Partners:** IDEAS xLab, Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness, Bates Community Development Corporation, and community members
- ◆ **Program:** Billboards and digital ads in Smoketown and West Louisville, KY, featuring artwork created with local youth and community members to communicate what a healthy home and a healthy community means to them. The campaigns are designed to prevent lead poisoning and the spread of COVID-19, and include interactive art-making, poetry, and writing activities and take-home worksheets.
- ◆ **Partnership Structure:** IDEAS xLab, an artist-run organization and the lead organizer, facilitates community engagement and translates artwork to billboards and ads. The Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness provides public health education and resource navigation. Bates Community Development Corporation hosts the community programming.
- ◆ **Funding:** Grants, individual donors, and the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness provide funding for the campaign. Costs per campaign range from \$25,000-\$50,000, including payments to artists and community members.
- ◆ **Outputs and Outcomes:** The project installed eight billboards that generated over 1 million impressions, a geo-fenced digital ad that generated 600,000 impressions, and two Facebook Live events that reached more than 1,000 community members. The program generated messaging that led to increased access to public health resources, COVID-19 information, and childhood lead poisoning prevention.



5Voices@6, Jackson, MS

- ◆ **Partners:** Jackson Medical Mall and local artists
- ◆ **Program:** Jackson Medical Mall is an abandoned shopping mall that was turned into a community hub for healthcare, arts and culture, retail, and social service programs. One of many programs offered at the mall is 5Voices@6 (a component of Care4me Services), which aims to reduce the prevalence of HIV and enhance wellness and medical adherence among young men of color using arts and culture as a platform for leadership, empowerment, and prevention. The program also aims to build foundations of support and enable men to be a voice in their communities.
- ◆ **Partnership Structure:** The mall provides space for the program and markets it to community members. Local artists facilitate the arts activities.
- ◆ **Funding:** ViiV Healthcare provided \$220,000 for 3 years of 5Voices@6 programming.
- ◆ **Observations:** The mall itself is an outstanding example of partnership for co-location of healthcare and arts and cultural programming. The 5Voices@6 program values participants as experts in their communities and uses their shared and life experiences of HIV through storytelling and creative expression to foster awareness and preventive initiatives. Care4me hosts mobile clinics in all 82 counties in Mississippi, where people can get tested, receive HIV educational materials, and observe community members' lived experiences through art, dance, live music, and storytelling.



Promising Practices

East Los High; Los Angeles, CA

- ◆ **Partners:** WISE Entertainment, Advocates for Youth, AltaMed, Bedsider, Sex, Etc., Break the Cycle, California Family Health Council, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, National Domestic Violence Hotline, Planned Parenthood, Population Media Center, East Los Angeles Women's Center, Art & Global Health Center, and more.
- ◆ **Program:** The five-season, Emmy nominated Hulu series East Los High is an interactive health drama geared toward Hispanic/Latino teens. The show uses storytelling and drama to address issues such as sexually transmitted infections, teen pregnancy, dating violence, and LGBTQ+ identity. Carefully crafted narratives and characters with relatable lived experiences accurately depict health challenges and choices, while connecting viewers with community resources through Vlogs, call-in lines, and widgets that link to health services.
- ◆ **Partnership Structure:** The East Los High creative team (writers, producers, directors, actors, choreographers, and designers) create and produce the show and its linked media, with attention to aesthetic experience and realism. Latino teens and community members serve as consultants to ensure realism and aesthetic relevance. Public health partners identify issues, curate and review content, and partner on access to resources and widgets.
- ◆ **Outcomes:** Studies have documented increased awareness about topics such as teen pregnancy and LGBTQ+ experiences, as well as increased decision-making capabilities surrounding reproductive health and healthy relationships.^{12, 14}



“Time to Health” COVID-19 Song & Tool-kit; San Bernardino, CA

- ◆ **Partners:** El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center, Young Visionaries Youth Leadership Academy, community healthcare workers/promotores
- ◆ **Program:** The “Time to Heal” COVID-19 song and tool-kit features an upbeat song about how Black and Brown communities can come together to fight COVID-19 through distancing, masking, and vaccination. The tool-kit provides resources to address mental health during the pandemic as well as informational videos, downloadable lyrics and graphics, and a media toolkit. Everything is provided in English and Spanish on the El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center website.
- ◆ **Partnership Structure:** El Sol partnered with Young Visionaries to create the COVID-19 song. Community health workers/promotores work collaboratively with El Sol to develop culturally responsive and sustaining mental health and vaccine information. Community Health Workers and Promotores engage the community through word of mouth, pop-up clinics, door-to-door outreach, and phone calls. El Sol administers the program funding.
- ◆ **Funding:** Various sources, including foundations, government, and private entities.
- ◆ **Observations:** The COVID-19 song was distributed to radio and TV stations to reach the surrounding communities. The tool-kit is used by other organizations, such as faith-based organizations, for similar mental health and COVID-19 awareness in the area.



See the [Vaccine Confidence Arts Response Repository](#) for more examples of partnerships and programming designed to increase vaccine confidence and uptake. You can also add your own programs to the repository.

How-tos



Don't wait for the next emergency. Find local artists and cultural partners now to establish relationships that can be leveraged routinely and quickly in response to emergencies.

Engage artists and culture-bearers as valuable and equal professional partners — ensure that they are compensated for their time and expertise, and articulate mutual and equitable value propositions.

How-to #1:

Find and engage artists, culture-bearers, and arts and cultural organizations

- ◆ Don't wait for the next emergency. Find local arts and culture partners now to establish relationships that can be leveraged routinely and quickly in response to emergencies.
- ◆ Who are they? They are people who listen in their communities, and people, groups, and places that bring people together, including:
 - › artists, arts and cultural organizations and groups, community organizers, and spiritual leaders;
 - › community-based organizations such as arts, cultural and historic centers, libraries, arts and history museums, arts and cultural festivals, and clubs; and
 - › places such as parks, youth centers, senior centers, recreation centers, technology and innovation centers, and businesses like coffee shops, hair salons, and [barbershops](#).
- ◆ See the [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies](#) for a complete list of state arts and cultural agencies. State agencies have contact information for county and city agencies and often for community-based artists.
- ◆ Attend local arts and cultural events to learn, meet people, and build relationships.
- ◆ Invite potential partners to your space, ask to visit their space, or meet in a location of *their* choosing. Don't make assumptions about transportation or comfort with government-associated offices.

How-to #2:

Build equitable and lasting partnerships for COVID-19 response and immunizations more broadly

- ◆ Engage artists and culture-bearers as valuable and equal professional partners; ensure that they are compensated for their time and expertise, and articulate mutual and equitable ways in which the partnership bring value to each partner.
- ◆ Create a learning and growing partnership – share the knowledge, theory, values, and practices of each sector.

How-tos

- ◆ Take time to listen and learn about community values, histories, concerns, needs, and priorities from and with these partners.
- ◆ Use the arts as a means for trust-building and knowledge sharing within the partnerships.
- ◆ Recognize the historical and ongoing injustices that drive distrust of government and health systems within LGBTQIA+, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/Arab American, Asian American, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander communities, and create partnerships that are self-reflective, responsive, and change-oriented.¹⁵
- ◆ Carefully consider expectations for both fiscal and non-fiscal resources, and look carefully to uncover hidden expectations unique to each professional and social/cultural group.
- ◆ Create equitable and accessible structures for transparently managing time, communications, and expectations across professional and social/cultural norms.
- ◆ Collaborate with these partners in every stage of program planning, implementation, and evaluation/refinement.
- ◆ Make time for nurturing the relationships and partnerships.

How-to #3: Overcome common challenges and barriers in cross-sector partnerships¹⁶⁻¹⁸

- ◆ **Time:** Time is a common barrier to partnership. It takes time to reach out to a partner and engage in collaboration. Nurturing the partnership can feel like a barrier when it is not yet routine. However, investing time in the cultivation of partnerships will yield substantial returns in the forms of broader access to priority populations, resource sharing, knowledge and skills sharing, and ultimately better outcomes and impacts. Plan for upfront time investment in partnerships, remembering that time and other resources will be saved in the long run.
- ◆ **Unclear or hidden value propositions:** Trust is essential to partnership, and transparent communication is essential to trust. Partnerships must be built on clear and mutual value for each partner. What each partner brings and wants to get from the partnership must be clearly communicated, even as things change along the way. Sharing resources is important. Theatre and creative writing exercises can be used to explore and share mutual benefits in the partnership.
- ◆ **Funding and Resources:** Cross-sector partnerships can provide access to new funding sources and opportunities to build relationships with new funders. Clear communication between partners is essential to get, share, and administer funds and resources. Partnerships also increase non-fiscal resources, including knowledge, skills, and access to priority populations. See CDC's [Engaging Arts & Culture for Vaccine Confidence: Short Guide to Building Programs and Creative Campaigns](#) for specific funding opportunities.
- ◆ **Language and Communication Barriers:** Public health and arts and culture, as sectors, have different vocabularies. Sharing definitions in relation to program goals and functions is essential to communication, trust, collaboration, and efficiency. Take time in the early stages of the partnership to explore language and communication styles and to establish shared systems for both. Invite arts partners to facilitate these processes with the arts.
- ◆ **Differences in Professional Cultures:** Fundamental differences in professional cultures (different ways of thinking, communicating, and doing, as well as different priorities) are complex. If embraced with curiosity and openness, these differences can be tremendous assets, providing a broader range of viewpoints and solutions. Take time to share theoretical assumptions, organizational values, and ways of working, with a willingness to try those of partner organizations. Ask questions when decisions or viewpoints are not clear. In partnerships that value and draw upon different expertise and lived experiences, the benefits easily outweigh the costs.

How Do Arts and Culture and Vaccine Confidence Connect?

Vaccine confidence is defined as the trust people and their families have in vaccines and providers and organizations that administer them.

Public health professionals regularly use principles of communication, marketing, and entertainment in health communication programs designed to build confidence.

Arts and cultural partners bring specific expertise that can strengthen vaccine confidence campaigns, recognizing that:

- ◆ Health communication is a social process.¹⁹
- ◆ Effective health communication is built on understanding of local cultures, histories, and beliefs, and is tailored to resonate with specific audiences.²⁰
- ◆ Health communication works better when participants are actively engaged.^{21, 22}
- ◆ Arts and cultural resources exist in every community.⁶
- ◆ Arts and cultural engagement can quickly influence health beliefs and behaviors.^{12, 13, 22}



San Francisco Creative Corps - An initiative designed to employ 60 performing artists as Community Health Ambassadors to engage their neighborhoods in person and online, sharing critical vaccination and pandemic safety messages through the performing arts, murals, and video.

The arts are rooted in local cultures, histories, practices, and places. As a result, arts-based materials and programs can provide a common language for reaching prioritized audiences and enabling highly tailored two-way communication that starts with trusted local influencers.

Experiential, interactive, and narrative approaches improve emotional engagement, learning, and behavior change, and they engage people individually and collectively at the same time.^{23, 24} Arts-based modes of communication make information more accessible, clearer, more memorable, and – importantly – more personally and culturally relevant.^{8, 25-27} For these reasons, arts activities can be particularly effective in helping to counter misinformation and provide resources needed for trust-based and actionable decision-making.^{28, 29}

How Arts and Culture and Vaccine Confidence Connect

COVID-19 has made the need for public health partnerships with arts and culture clearer than ever

Establishing partnerships in an emergency is challenging. Partnerships should be created for the long-term for three different circumstances of an immunization program:

1. routine immunization programming;
2. antigen-based campaigns for specific populations; and
3. public health emergencies or crises.

Each circumstance presents different needs, opportunities, and resources that established partnerships can respond to and build on. Artists and culture bearers who are recognized as public health partners can provide community members – especially those historically excluded and distrustful of government and health systems – with alternate sources for information and entry points to public health programs and resources across this spectrum of circumstances.

These partnerships should be viewed not as supplemental, but as *fundamental* to culturally responsive and sustaining programming, and to the realization of public health goals at all times. Culture (both locally and broadly) evolves and changes rapidly in response to social, political, and other conditions, and is a critical conduit to understanding and responding to the information needs and goals of communities. Public health + arts and culture partnerships enable public health programs to be more attuned and responsive and enable communities to get what they need more efficiently and effectively.

Arts and cultural practices engage people in personally and culturally relevant narratives and experiences. They share stories,

Arts and culture partnerships can help public health programs achieve their goals with higher levels of participation, cultural responsiveness, and efficiency.

Artists and culture-bearers are influencers. They are extremely adept at translating information and ideas within and across populations.

They provide trusted platforms for urgent communications and can reach more expansive and inclusive audiences than health departments and government agencies.¹¹

and invite people to consider their own lives, values, and choices. They drive social dialogue that results in shared values and collective action – making vaccines or other healthy behaviors the socially-supported choice. The arts can make data visual, musical, dramatic, and poetic, and they can communicate in both highly localized and mass media scales.^{12, 27}

Mass media health communication campaigns and those featuring celebrities who share personal stories and views are highly effective in impacting health behaviors and outcomes, and in “moving the needle” on national behavioral trends. Notably, Angelina Jolie’s disclosure of her decision to have a preventive mastectomy led directly to increased information-seeking about breast cancer, and Magic Johnson’s disclosure of his HIV-positive status was correlated with increased knowledge and testing for HIV.^{30, 31} Many artists and culture-bearers are local celebrities and can have similar influence in their communities. And, when they communicate through their artforms and cultural practices, the impacts can be amplified.

Arts-based health communication programs that are rooted in culture and place, like the television drama *East Los High*, enable more effective health communication and behavior change than traditional means.¹² This understanding has long made arts-based health communication, like *Rock Point 256*, standard practice in other parts of the world. Public health + arts and culture partnership is at the heart of these highly impactful programs.

The Power of Partnering with Arts and Culture



[Amplifier](#), a nonprofit design lab that builds art and media experiments to amplify the most important movements of our times, has joined in on efforts to promote COVID-19 vaccination uptake.

In communities and across cultures, the arts are central to how people communicate, make meaning, and drive collective action and social change. Arts and culture have the power to connect people, expose root issues, center underrepresented and historically excluded voices and concerns, facilitate dialogue, and shift collective behaviors and sociocultural norms.⁶

Artists and culture-bearers are, as always, working to create healthier and more equitable communities. Public health needs artists and culture-bearers to reach and engage people. And artists and culture-bearers need public health partnership to communicate the most important information in times when collective action is needed to protect the health of all.

Resources

Sandro Galea, Dean of the Boston University School of Public Health: Paper on why public health needs the arts to advance the goals of public health

[Creating Healthy Communities through Cross-sector Collaboration White Paper](#)⁶: Examples and recommendations for public health and arts partnerships

[Arts and Culture in Public Health: An Evidence-based Framework](#)²⁵: Framework and evidence for using the arts in public health

[Community-based Organizations COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit](#): CDC toolkit to help community-based organizations educate communities

[University of Florida COVID-19 Arts Response](#): Advisory briefs, webinars, program/media repositories

[Health Promotion Practice Special Supplement on Arts in Public Health](#): 16 articles that discuss and exemplify collaborations, including practice and research between public health and arts and culture

[Art, Anti-Racism and Health Equity: "Don't Ask Me Why, Ask Me How!"](#)²⁶: Commentary on how art can help people unlearn misinformation and mitigate the health effects of racism

[Art-train National Training and Technical Assistance Program](#): Program for using federal COVID-19 funds for arts and public partnerships

[National Endowment for the Arts Guide to Community-engaged Research in Arts in Health](#): Guidance on how to partner effectively in documenting and studying the contributions of community-based arts programs to positive health outcomes

[Forward: How Artists Help Drive Better Health Outcomes](#): Commentary, case studies, and toolkit for public health and arts partnerships and programs

[What is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-being? A Scoping Review](#): World Health Organization Report on Arts in Health

Engaging Arts and Culture for Vaccine Confidence website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence/art.html>

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