



Get Vaccinated Chattanooga
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Get Vaccinated Chattanooga Coalition Focus Group Report



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Prepared by Ochs Center

Focus Group Information



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- Focus group with coalition leaders conducted on November 1, 2021, using Zoom platform
- 12 coalition leaders participated in the group



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Groups represented

- Advocates for people with disabilities and special needs
- African American community
- Arts community
- County Commission
- Homeless and Re-entry community
- K-12 Schools
- Latinx community
- Older adults
- Pediatrics



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Assigned Grades for Coalition and Working Groups

- 60% assigned an “**A**” for the overall efforts of the coalition
- 64% assigned an “**A**” for their individual working group
- No one assigned a grade below a “**B**” for the coalition or working groups



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Successes and Rewards



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The coalition itself is the success

Formation of the coalition leveraged experiences and talents of leaders across sectors to meet community needs.

➤ ***“....being able to leverage all of these organizations and these skillsets and mindsets during the pandemic was a huge accomplishment. More so how we organized and strategically placed them in terms of their skillsets and how we knew how to tackle this was really an accomplishment.”***



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The coalition itself is the success

The coalition facilitated discussions and brainstorming opportunities to increase vaccination rates in Chattanooga.

➤ *“This group pushed itself to do better and not settle. Any group could have done some of the tasks but the way the tasks were done and **not accepting “No” for an answer on any level and thinking outside of the box was very refreshing and inspiring.**”*



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The coalition itself is the success

The Coalition exposed and raised awareness about unique barriers experienced by different communities.

➤ *“Though we share many of the same barriers, the Latino community has some unique ones. By having people at the table who could speak to those particular challenges provided a lot of insight about what the community is experiencing and what they are hearing and saying. Being able to work on different levels as part of an overall objective was really helpful.”*



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The coalition itself is the success

The Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga was key to the cohesion and success of the coalition.

- ***“The leadership from the Community Foundation has been key in the coalition being so cohesive.”***
- ***“The foundation brought everybody together in the same room which I felt was very helpful. At the time, I was able to work alongside other working groups... to make sure we weren’t doing a vaccine clinic at the same time.”***



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Reduced barriers

The coalition leaders recognized barriers community members were facing and took the vaccine to the people.

- *“Many heard of COVID but if you are a single mother with 4 kids working 3 to 4 jobs, if you are diabetic or have a heart problem – it’s not that it’s not important but when you are trying to hustle out there and trying to make ends meet – which one do you focus on? So it comes down to how do you get in front of that young mother? That was another success of this coalition. **We took resources to them.**”*



Created a consistent message

Get Vaccinated Chattanooga was able to build a “brand” that was recognized across the city.

- *“Consistency is really key here. From a marketing perspective it’s really quite remarkable ‘Get Vaccinated Chattanooga’ has so **much brand awareness** in just a matter of months.”*
- *“It was a very good job of messaging. **It seemed like a community effort** – it looked like a community initiative that everybody was embracing. I would still see the same messaging no matter what part of the community I was in.”*



Created a consistent message

Get Vaccinated Chattanooga included the art community which helped to create a “healing” message that was more palatable to the community.

- *The coalition was able to “message it as a healing process - taking it away from clinical to more celebratory. **We turned our vaccine events into overall health events** and were able to expose communities to the arts to help them heal and educate them.”*
- *“**The education was more palatable** when you had music and artists out sharing.”*



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Getting people vaccinated and building trust in the community

A key measure of success was people getting vaccinated and returning for their second dose.

- *“Seeing the shots in the arms. Seeing the end result of all of the hard work.”*
- *“Seeing repeat recipients. Realizing that we have earned their trust and seeing them come back for their second shot. Earning the community trust was huge. It meant a lot and kept us going.”*



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Challenges



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Timing

Some partners had already developed their approach to meeting the needs of the community they served. Partnering with the coalition resulted in some loss of momentum.

- *“We were ahead of where this group started out. ... It kind of felt like backtracking a little bit early on.”*
- *“There were transportation issues and things that there were barriers ... to get the vaccine that **we had already solved** so it was difficult to come up with new ideas and really mesh with the other parts of the group.”*



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Use of allocated funds

Partners developed their budgets independently and included duplicative efforts. The duplications made it challenging to spend the allocated funds.

➤ *“.... we all applied as the only agency doing the project so later down the road when we collaborated, we could have reduced our budget.”*



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Ability to create effective communication

- Information about the pandemic and vaccines was constantly changing. Creating effective messaging for the community in an ever-changing environment was challenging.
- Lack of established media outlets for non-English speaking communities added a layer of complexity for effective communication.



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Lack of data to measure impact on special needs community

Tools to collect demographic information did not include questions about special needs or disabilities. Lack of data challenged the special needs working group's ability to measure success.

- *“We don't have access to data about vaccination rates for people with disabilities ... so I have no idea how well or not well our group is doing. I can only work anecdotally with the groups that I work with. **It's hard to measure your success.**”*



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Recommendations for Future Activities



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Next Phase

The next phase of Get Vaccinated Chattanooga will focus on two areas:

- Efforts to increase the number of adults who are fully vaccinated – including the booster vaccine.

- Efforts to increase the number of children aged 5 years and older who are vaccinated.



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Leverage Brand Recognition

One recommendation for next phase is to build on current brand recognition to ensure accurate information is available.

➤ *“We have built trust and people are looking for us to host events and respond to questions about where they should go. We are a resource – a trusted portal for our community.”*



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Maintain presence on social media

Maintaining a presence on social media is crucial for sharing accurate information.

- *“So a lot of the issues with unvaccinated folks is **lack of awareness or misinformation**. What is powerful about this campaign is that we are able to debunk a lot of the misinformation.”*
- *“But this **thing is really confusing**. So just being on top of the information and pushing it out as soon as possible before myths start developing is really crucial.”*



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Develop culturally appropriate messages

Messaging should be adapted to inform non-English speaking residents and overcome cultural barriers.

- *“There’s a large Guatemalan population with a native language with Spanish as their second language. Additionally, there is low health literacy and explaining how the vaccine works and why it’s important to get as we move forward in the world of COVID – there is some **cultural and religious contradictions** there.”*



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Ensure messaging is accessible to all

A concerted effort should be made to identify an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for the Spanish-speaking community.

- *“We couldn't find a person who can listen to **Spanish and then interpret it in ASL.** May need to rely on captioning only for those videos.”*



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Overcome barriers for vaccinating children

Unique challenges are faced when trying to increase vaccination rates for children. Two strategies were identified:

- Identify providers who have access to correct dosage for children.
- Increase number of providers who are willing to administer vaccine to children.



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Expand mission of coalition beyond COVID-19

Coalition should stay engaged to further expose and educate the public about health disparities in the region.

- *“I can see in the future – there are a lot of health disparities so we can work to promote advocacy among individuals we serve and **educate the health community on the disparities**, so these things stop happening. We can do it differently, and we can all contribute. “*
- *“It has to be restructured now to **take on a broader view in terms of all health disparities of all our subgroups but also looking at social determinants of health.**”*



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Closing Thoughts

“For the community, built by the community”.

“I am privileged and honored to be a part of such an amazing group.”

“I know our presence had a residual effect.”

“Hopefully it doesn’t stop here but is just the beginning for how we can address health disparities.”