



May 14, 2021

Benton County COVID-19 Vaccination Equity Plan

Benton County is committed to the OHA goals of reaching parity in vaccination rates by closing gaps in race and ethnicity vaccination rates by August 31, 2021, ensuring vaccine access to all populations with a focus on populations experiencing racial and ethnic vaccine inequities, and encouraging and facilitating local public health partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) and employers in its jurisdiction.

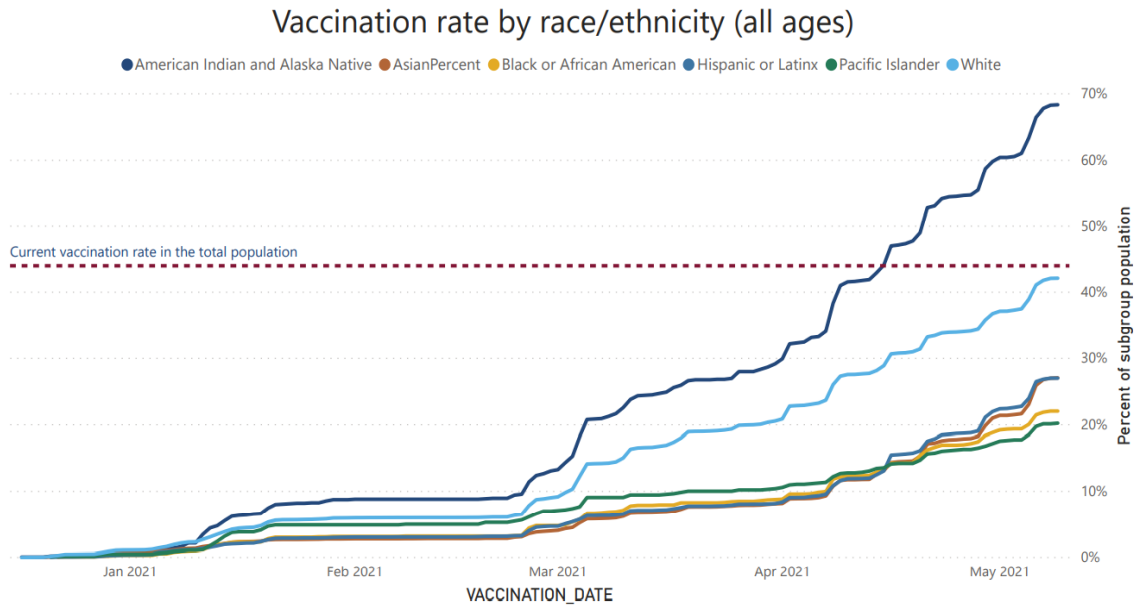
- 1. Please review race/ethnicity data for the LPHA jurisdiction on the OHA website and the race/ethnicity vaccination rate data shared weekly with the LPHA. Based on the experience of the LPHA and its partners, including community-based organizations, what are the operational, policy, and systemic barriers or strengths demonstrated in these data?**

Fig 1. Benton County vaccination rate by race/ethnicity

Demographic group	Number vaccinated	Population (estimate)	Percent vaccinated
American Indian and Alaska Native	993	1,453	68%
Asian	2,135	7,890	27%
Black or African American	398	1,805	22%
Hispanic or Latinx	1,821	6,740	27%
Pacific Islander	212	1,048	20%
White	34,147	81,061	42%

*ALERT data current through 5/9/21

Fig 2. Benton County vaccination rate by race/ethnicity over time



*ALERT data current through 5/9/21

Operational barriers: Days and hours of clinic availability, language barriers, literacy-level barriers, scarcity of vaccine, geographic distance, transportation barriers, digital disparities

Operational strengths: Later and weekend clinics, access to support in multiple languages, materials in plain language, rural clinics, free transportation, priority scheduling into reserved appointments at mass vaccination clinics

Policy barriers: OHA eligibility guidelines: racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 but were not widely, separately prioritized. This made facilitating vaccine access for underserved populations challenging before eligibility was opened to ages 16 and above and caused friction with some community partners.

Policy strengths: OHA eligibility guidelines considered equity within the eligibility criteria.

Systemic barriers: Racial disparity: the legacy of abuses and ongoing discrimination against non-White groups helps to undermine credibility of institutions. It has been vital to build and maintain relationships with community leaders to promote the vaccine among groups who have been historically marginalized and maligned.

Systemic strengths: Benton County Health Department has longstanding relationships and a foundation of trust with many community partners.

2. What steps have the LPHA and its partners already taken to address specific racial and ethnic vaccination inequities in the community?

Benton County Health Department (BCHD) is taking a multi-prong, data-informed approach to ensuring equitable vaccine administration among our highest risk and underserved community members, such as unhoused, migrant seasonal farm workers, immigrants and refugees, BIPOC, individuals with limited English proficiency, intellectual and developmental disabilities, low-literacy, or digital disparities. This includes meeting people where they are (e.g., rural areas, CBO sites, farm sites, at home, etc.) and working with CBOs, community leaders, and navigators to address vaccine confidence, promote, register for, and host vaccination events.

Communication Strategy

Benton County's Joint Information Center (JIC) continues to produce COVID-19 vaccine information in Spanish to reach Spanish-speaking community members in Benton County. This includes weekly Spanish language videos, social media posts, website materials, and radio spots to promote vaccine opportunities in Benton County. In addition, the JIC has produced videos in Mam, Arabic, and ASL. All videos include subtitles to assist community members who are hearing impaired.

As a part of the vaccine confidence strategy, the JIC developed the [Partner Resource](#) page, which includes downloadable vaccine facts, social media cards, and text for an organization's publication in Spanish and English. These community partner resources will continue to be shared with and informed by community based organizations (CBOs) and the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

Priority Scheduling for Mass Vaccination Clinics

Before the Oregon State University (OSU) Reser Mass Vaccination Clinic moved to a drop-in option, local CBOs, school districts, and Benton County's Health Navigation team scheduled underserved populations into reserved appointment spots for the clinics each week. These agencies provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support over the phone or in-person in the field, take time to answer questions about the vaccine, and are trusted among the communities that they serve. This approach also ensured access to vaccine appointments for underserved populations that otherwise filled up extremely quickly though the regular online and phone registration process. The organizations that participated in this effort included: Casa Latinos Unidos (Latinx), Cornerstone Associates (intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities, low-income), Corvallis Housing First (low-income), Community Services Consortium (Latinx, low-income, frontline essential workers, agricultural workers), Benton County Health Navigation (agricultural workers, Latinx, low-income), International Moms Group (international families connected to OSU), Strengthening Rural Families (rural, low-income), Stone Soup (unhoused, low-income), Corvallis School District School Navigators and Family Liaisons (Latinx, Arabic-speaking, BIPOC, unhoused, low-income). These organizations continue to engage in vaccine confidence building and assist community members with finding and signing up for vaccine opportunities in the community.

Mobile Clinics

BCHD partners with Samaritan Health Services and CBOs, community leaders, and farm sites to promote, register, and/or host small and mobile vaccination events for highest risk and underserved populations. CBOs and employers can choose how to collaborate based on staffing capacity of the organization. This works well for vaccinating unhoused community members both sheltered and unsheltered, migrant seasonal farmworkers, and rural communities that experience additional barriers with attending a mass vaccination clinic.

Since the general population has become eligible, BCHD has increased the use of mobile clinics for community members with limited English proficiency and/or BIPOC community members through ongoing community partnerships. Specifically, Benton County Health Navigation has an ongoing partnership with Casa Latinos Unidos to provide education and outreach to agricultural workers and host mobile clinics at farm sites.

Federally Qualified Health Centers

The Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties, which are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) serving uninsured, underinsured, underserved, and migrant and seasonal farmworkers, called their eligible patient panel to schedule vaccine appointments and continue to host weekly vaccination clinics. The main Corvallis site now hosts drop-in clinics every Thursday for patients and the general public at the Corvallis Community Center. In addition to promoting this opportunity through Benton County Health Services and Benton County's social media pages, it continues to be promoted through the Vaccine Confidence Coalition and other existing networks as a small, safe, centrally located drop-in opportunity for underserved and marginalized community members.

Vaccine Confidence Coalition

Benton County's Vaccine Confidence Coalition includes members from key organizations, community leaders, and faith communities that represent unhoused, low-income, intellectual and developmental disabilities, BIPOC, rural, and faith communities. The Coalition is an opportunity to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and associated myths, gain access to resources to increase vaccine confidence, understand the vaccination process in Benton County, and share information with and support their clients and communities to receive the vaccine. The Coalition met three weeks in a row and has now moved to a bi-weekly meeting schedule.

Faith Communities

Key faith community leaders are represented on the Vaccine Confidence Coalition and additional outreach is occurring with the local mosque, Korean churches, and Latinx churches.

3. What steps do the LPHA and its partners plan to take to continue to address these inequities in the jurisdiction?

BCHD will take the following actions to continue to address inequities in Benton County:

- Continue to use OHA race/ethnicity vaccine data to inform strategies.

- Continue to partner with community based organizations (CBOs) to inform vaccine confidence strategies, promote vaccine opportunities, assist with registration, and host specific vaccine clinics for BIPOC community members.
- Continue to host the Vaccine Confidence Coalition made up of key community stakeholders representing diverse populations.
- Work with the Vaccine Confidence Coalition, CBOs, school districts, and faith communities to identify trusted individuals that can serve as “Vaccine Champions” to tell their story and share their reasons for becoming vaccinated with their social networks.
- Further engage with faith communities with specific attention towards congregations serving English-language learners and BIPOC community members.
- Continue to build relationships with the local organizations serving BIPOC individuals to increase vaccine confidence and provide easy access to the vaccine among community members of color.
- Continue to build relationships with OSU Diversity and Cultural Engagement staff to increase vaccine confidence and provide easy access to the vaccine among students of color.

4. What plan does the LPHA and its partners have to close the specific vaccine equity gaps among specific racial and ethnic populations?

BCHD plans to collaborate with community based organizations (CBOs) and members of the Vaccine Confidence Coalition to identify key trusted community leaders among specific racial and ethnic populations to become “Vaccine Champions” and share their story on social media with the reasons why they became vaccinated. BCHD would also like to partner with Champions to host community dialogues about the COVID-19 vaccine, and encourage partners to attend the training offered through the Community Partner Outreach Program (CPOP).

Planned outreach by subgroup:

Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups - provide outreach and vaccine information to OSU Cultural Centers including the Asian and Pacific Cultural Center, faith houses including local Korean churches and the Chinese Christian Church, as well as to schools, after-school programs and youth sports. Identify key community leaders in the Pacific Islander community.

Black or African American - work on relationship building and collaboration with our local NAACP chapter, continue to provide outreach and vaccine information to OSU Cultural Centers including the Black Cultural Center, OSU Athletics, as well as to schools, after-school programs and youth sports.

Latinx - continue to produce weekly Spanish language videos, Spanish language radio spots, provide vaccine confidence building presentations, partner with Casa Latinos Unidos to host mobile clinics for agricultural workers and a Sunday clinic after mass for individuals that work Monday through Saturday. We will also continue to provide outreach and vaccine information to schools, after-school programs and youth sports.

5. **OHA has provided LPHAs county level survey data from OHA funded CBOs indicating their preferred involvement in vaccination efforts. In reviewing the CBO survey results that outline the interest of CBOs in your community to host, support, and/or promote vaccine events in your jurisdiction:**

- a. **What steps are the LPHA and its partners taking to engage and actively partner with these and other organizations to increase meaningful, culturally responsive, low-barrier access to vaccines?**

Benton County Health Department (BCHD) has actively partnered with several OHA funded CBOs to host, support, and/or promote vaccine events.

Benton County Health Navigation team is working in partnership with **Casa Latinos Unidos (CLU)**, a local culturally-specific community based organization, to provide vaccine outreach and education. In addition, CLU is partnering with Samaritan Health Systems Mobile Medical Van to provide on-site vaccination clinics for local farms and growers, participating in priority scheduling for the mass vaccination clinic at Reser Stadium on OSU campus to provide low-barrier registration, promoting other smaller vaccination events (e.g., Monroe, Alsea, Corvallis Community Center, Teen Vaccine Day, etc.), participating with BCHD on the OSU Extension-lad Linn/Benton Latinx COVID-19 planning group, and continues to participate on the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

Community Services Consortium (CSC) participated in priority scheduling for the mass vaccination clinic at Reser Stadium on OSU campus to provide low-barrier registration for close to 300 individuals. CSC continues to provide vaccine outreach and education, promote other smaller vaccination events, including the ongoing vaccination opportunities for unhoused community members at Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center, and participates in the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

Cornerstone Associates participated in priority scheduling for the mass vaccination clinic at Reser Stadium on OSU campus to provide low-barrier registration for the communities they serve. Cornerstone continues to provide outreach and education through the development of low-literacy materials addressing vaccine myths, partners to host ongoing vaccine clinics for unhoused community members at the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center, and participates in the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

Unity Shelter and other homeless services providers continue to provide vaccine outreach and education and promote the ongoing vaccination opportunities for unhoused community members at the Corvallis Day-time Drop-in Center. They also participate in the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

Jackson Street Youth Shelter (JSYS) continues to provide vaccine outreach and education to youth, promote and assist with signing youth up for the COVID-19 vaccine at local pharmacies, small clinics, and mass vaccination clinics, including

Teen COVID-19 Vaccine Day at Reser Stadium on OSU campus. JSYS will also table at the Teen Vaccine Day event and continues to participate in the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

b. How will the LPHA and its partners ensure that CBOs and navigators are aware of vaccine events so they can assist with registration and outreach as able?

BCHD communicates upcoming vaccine events through existing and new networks such as the Benton County Community Health Improvement plan master list, Food Security providers, Homeless Services providers, K-12 School leadership, Vaccine Confidence Coalition, Benton County Health Navigators, and Benton County School Navigators and Family Liaisons. The Benton County Joint Information Center also shares upcoming vaccine events in Spanish and English on the Benton County website, social media, weekly videos, and through radio advertisements.

6. The agricultural employer survey results were shared with the LPHA and the LPHA has provided information to its Regional Emergency Coordinator (REC) about how the LPHA and its partners plan to use the survey results. OHA will be reviewing the information provided by the LPHA to the REC.

a. Does the LPHA have any additional updates regarding work to serve agricultural workers in its jurisdiction since the LPHA last provided information to the REC?

The BCHD Health Navigation team and community partners continue to survey and provide outreach to agricultural sites. Many Benton County agricultural sites reported small numbers of workers needing vaccination who could be scheduled into the mass vaccination site. BCHD has facilitated one vaccination clinic and two pre-clinic vaccine education sessions with agricultural employers in Linn County.

7. What steps have the LPHA and its partners taken to actively address vaccine confidence in the community?

As mentioned in the response to question #2, Benton County Health Department (BCHD) convenes a Vaccine Confidence Coalition made up of community based organizations (CBOs) and individuals representing unhoused, low-income, and intellectual and developmental disabilities, BIPOC, rural, and faith communities. The Coalition provides an opportunity for BCHD to hear from local CBOs and community leaders about what they are hearing from the communities that they serve (e.g., myths, concerns, access issues and barriers, suggested solutions, etc.) which allows process adjustments, identification of resource and information needs, and informs the Benton County Joint Information Center's (JIC) vaccine confidence communication strategy. For example, Benton County's [Partner Resource](#) page, which includes downloadable vaccine facts, social media cards, and text for an organization's publication in Spanish and English, was conceptualized by the JIC based on research and further informed by the Coalition (e.g., a broad social media campaign sharing that no social security number or health insurance is required to receive the vaccine). These community partner resources will continue to be shared with and informed by community based organizations (CBOs) and the Benton County Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

Before the OSU Reser Mass Vaccination Clinic moved to a drop-in option, local CBOs, school districts, and Benton County Health Navigators were scheduling underserved populations into reserved appointment spots for the mass vaccination clinics each week. These agencies are trusted among the communities that they serve and take the time to answer questions about the vaccine, dispel myths, and address concerns in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

In addition, by partnering with CBOs and community leaders to conduct outreach and engagement, promote, register, and/or host vaccination clinics, community members have an opportunity to hear personal stories and learn about the vaccine during these encounters helping to improve vaccine confidence. BCHD and Casa Latinos Unidos continue to partner to host vaccine confidence presentations for agricultural workers and Mam-speaking community members from Guatemala. Additional presentations to increase vaccine confidence are planned for families with youth 12 years and older and Samaritan Health Services Latinx mothers group.

8. What plans do the LPHA and its partners have to continue addressing vaccine confidence?

The Benton County Joint Information Center (JIC) will continue to adjust and adapt the vaccine confidence communication strategy based on input provided by community based organizations (CBOs) and the Vaccine Confidence Coalition.

BCHD will continue to provide outreach and vaccine information to and in partnership with CBOs, faith communities, schools, and other key community leaders serving hard to reach, underserved, and marginalized community members.

Led by OSU Extension Service, BCHD will continue to participate in the Linn/Benton Latinx workgroup tasked with developing strategies to better reach Latinx community members in both Linn and Benton Counties.

The Vaccine Confidence Coalition will continue to provide opportunities to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and associated myths, gain access to resources to increase vaccine confidence, understand the vaccination process in Benton County, and share information with and support their clients and communities to receive the vaccine.

BCHD will promote a Community Partner Outreach Program (CPOP) training for community leaders, community stakeholders, outreach workers, and more on how to host community dialogues about COVID-19 vaccine.

9. What is the communications plan to dispel misinformation through a comprehensive, multi-modal communications strategy for communities experiencing racial and ethnic vaccine inequities in your jurisdiction? Examples could include: Spanish language radio spots, physically distanced outdoor information fair, training local faith leaders and equipping them with vaccine facts and information to refer a community member to a health care professional for follow up, etc.

As a part of the vaccine confidence strategy, the Benton County Joint Information Center (JIC) developed the [Partner Resource](#) page, which includes downloadable vaccine facts, social media cards, and text for an organization’s publication. The resources will continue to be shared and informed by community based organizations and the Vaccine Confidence Coalition. The JIC is also planning a “my story” campaign that features key community leaders who have received the vaccine and the reasons why.

Benton County’s Joint Information Center (JIC) is also producing weekly videos in English, Spanish, and Mam when resources are available. These videos are linguistically and culturally appropriate and contain subtitles for individuals that are deaf or hearing impaired. Spanish radio advertisements are used for small/mobile clinics in order to reach agricultural workers and other day laborers. In addition, all written communication produced by the JIC is in English and Spanish and follows low-literacy and readability standards. Easy to read communications about how to access the vaccine in Benton County are periodically sent to every household in the county.

The Vaccine Confidence Coalition will continue to provide opportunities to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and associated myths, gain access to resources to increase vaccine confidence, understand the vaccination process in Benton County, and share information with and support their clients and communities to receive the vaccine.

10. How has and how will the LPHA and its partners ensure language accessibility at vaccine events?

Mobile, small, and mass vaccine events in Benton County have bilingual signage, physical interpreters on site, and staff and volunteers trained to use video interpretation services, including ASL. Paper EUA and V-Safe informational materials are on site in multiple languages.

CBOs and navigators are adjusting their outreach strategies based on the communities that they serve. For example, inserting low-literacy analog materials in sack lunches for unhoused community members or food boxes at food pantries, posting information in Spanish or Arabic on appropriate social media sites, or engaging with community members in the field (e.g., farm sites, shelters, encampments, social service locations, churches, etc.).

11. What plans do the LPHA and its partners have to decrease transportation barriers to accessing vaccine?

Benton Area Transit is offering free transportation services to anyone in Benton County with a scheduled vaccine appointment, and the City of Corvallis has free bus service. Efforts are also being made to reach people where they are with small and mobile clinics to eliminate or minimize transportation barriers as much as possible (e.g., unhoused community members at shelters, RV/Car camping programs, and the daytime drop-in center, migrant seasonal farmworkers at farm sites, rural community members in geographically diverse areas of the county, etc.).

12. What plans do the LPHA and its partners have to ensure meaningful, low-barrier vaccine access for youth, especially those from Black, Indigenous, Tribal and other communities experiencing inequities in COVID-19 disease, death and vaccination?

BCHD and its partners will continue to provide outreach and opportunities for vaccination for youth and will closely follow data to guide our efforts.

A Teen Day mass vaccination event will occur May 20 at Reser Stadium on OSU campus, welcoming youth age 12 and up and including age-appropriate and trauma-informed activities and incentives. BCHD consulted school districts in the development of the clinic which is being promoted to partners including the Philomath Youth Activities Club, Corvallis Boys & Girls Club, the Benton County Juvenile Department, Osborn Aquatic Center, Yes House, NAACP, Casa Latinos Unidos, Youth Climate Action Committee, Benton County Mental Health Youth Team, School Based Health Centers, and others. To increase accessibility, an on-site clinic will be held at the local alternative high school the same day and plans are being developed to vaccinate youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

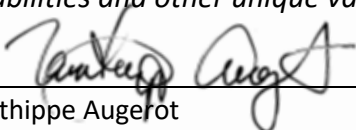
The flyer for Teen Day is available in the top four languages spoken in Benton County K-12 schools (English, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese) along with the parental consent form for 12 to 14 year olds.

13. How will the LPHA and its partners regularly report on progress to and engage with community leaders from the Black, Indigenous, Tribal, other communities of color to regularly review progress on its vaccine equity plans and reassess strategies as needed?

BCHD and its partners will share bi-weekly data and activity updates with the Vaccine Confidence Coalition. The Health Department will also routinely engage with community leaders representing underserved populations and will adjust plans and reassess strategies as needed.

We have each reviewed the attached responses to all questions and affirm that the LPHA jurisdiction will continue to make meaningful efforts to offer culturally-responsive, low-barrier vaccination opportunities, especially for populations in our jurisdiction experiencing racial or ethnic vaccine inequities. We commit to implementing this plan to close the racial and ethnic vaccine inequities in our jurisdiction.

The LPHA and its partners will continue to ensure that vaccine sites are culturally-responsive, linguistically appropriate and accessible to people with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities and other unique vaccine access needs.



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