

# COVID-19 Communication Toolkit: A Health Equity Lens

Executive Summary | U.S. Digital Response | March 2021

**Executive Summary:** The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified health inequities, leading to unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes. Differences in access and availability to resources are driven by structural inequities like racism and classism. These inequities arise from social determinants of health conditions such as access to information. Therefore, the need for timely, accurate, and transparent communication about COVID-19 to all patients, communities, and the public is important. As local and state governments started to distribute vaccines in January 2021, we created a [vaccine website template](#) and a [COVID-19 communication toolkit](#) from a health equity lens. This guide aims to provide step-by-step guidance to help health communicators, content developers, educators, and health promotion leaders put health equity recommendations into COVID-19 communication action. We created resources in three key areas:

1. **Health equity framework** to help communication and content development teams apply best practices on several digital health communications issues,
2. **Templates and tools** to apply tangible digital and analogue communication with messaging that resonates with residents alongside real-world case studies, and
3. **Important topics** such as vaccination acceptance, intergroup relations, and transcreation for bilingual speakers.

## Research Methodology:

1. **Landscape research:** What are the types of messaging that resonate with
2. **Remote interviews:** we are conducting continuous multilingual 15+ interviews with diverse residents, oversampling with BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color communities) in one-on-one conversations. Interview participants are selected based on their vaccine priority demographic group, COVID-19 stress levels, age, employment type, language preference, position in vaccine acceptance continuum, and ethnicity/race.
3. **Remote usability testing:** We are currently conducting usability studies with four local and state government partners with social media content and designers with residents in Spanish and English for initial impressions, level of engagement, and degree of health literacy and understanding.

**Research Limitations:** To date, these recommendations are not statistically significant nor representative to all states. However, we plan on conducting quantitative research to measure the impact of the proposed communication interventions on resident sentiment and engagement levels nationwide. This toolkit provides themes and trends aggregated across multiple qualitative data points and other data reporting measures such as COVID-19 dashboards. It does not aim to predict how people will react or engage with digital and analogue COVID-19 communication. Instead, the templates and tools highlight how communication teams might start to think about messaging that resonates with their residents and understand the persona of who they serve.