

Challenges of Vaccine Outreach in Rural Areas

ADRC/NWD grantees have reported particular challenges in increasing vaccine access in rural and frontier areas. Building partnerships and identifying local trusted messengers are reported as helpful strategies. This resource provides practical tips for conducting outreach in rural and frontier communities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also has a [website](#) dedicated to rural communities.

Understand Your Community

Identify areas of low access. See [5 Steps for Pro-Active Vaccine Access](#) for more information.



Determine through existing research, or your own research through a community assessment, what factors could increase vaccine confidence in your low access communities. For example, does your community have many farm workers who may not be able to get to vaccine sites during regular business hours? Kansas mentioned offering shots at off hours to accommodate farm workers on the [June PAL call](#).

Locate and interview community leaders in low access communities. What are they hearing and seeing from people regarding vaccine confidence? What suggestions do they have? Do they know about the ADRC and your services?

Make a list of all partners you could approach to collaborate with on vaccine outreach. Make sure to explore [Forming Lasting NWD Partnerships through Collaboration on Vaccine Outreach](#) for ideas.

Partner with Faith-Based Leaders

Some grantees reported that local faith-based leaders are excellent partners in vaccine outreach as churches and other places of worship serve as an information hub and are trusted entities for advice, especially in rural communities. The [We Can Do This](#) campaign has toolkits for both [faith-based leaders](#) (available in both English and Spanish) and [rural communities](#) (available in English).



Both toolkits go over the roles faith-based leaders and advocates for rural residents can play to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence, provide sample talking points and facts on the COVID-19 vaccines, and include culturally-tailored template FAQs, fact sheets, infographics, social media messages, and bulletin announcements.

[Faith4Vaccines](#) is a multi-faith movement comprised of local and national religious leaders, as well as medical professionals, who work together with the government to identify and resolve current gaps in vaccine mobilization, outreach, and uptake of the vaccine. The website offers a [recording of the May 2021 summit](#) as well as short videos that showcase faith-based organizations' role in vaccine outreach.

Partner with Hospitals, Primary Care Practices, Pharmacies, and Health Plans

Health care providers in your community are connected to a broad range of individuals that may require additional support to access the vaccine. Partnering with them on vaccine outreach provides a way to reach more people.

Contact local primary care practices and offer to help connect patients to vaccines. The [Primary Care Collaborative](#) is a non-profit, membership-based, multi-stakeholder organization that works to increase access to comprehensive, coordinated primary care. Click [here](#) to learn about patient-centered medical home activity in your state. Medical homes focus on integrated, coordinated care. ADRCs are a natural partner.



Explore the American Hospital Association's [rural outreach initiative](#).

Pharmacies are a natural connection point for many individuals. As part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, the [National Association of Chain Drug Stores](#) launched a health equity initiative to facilitate access to the vaccine where they encourage development of local partnerships. Connect with local pharmacies to partner and offer vaccine access support. For example, do they have any delivery clients who need help with transportation?

Check out our new resource on [expanding outreach and engagement through healthcare collaboration](#) with health plans.

Partner with Local Business

Providers in the aging and disability network are partnering with local business to expand vaccine access and educate those in their communities to increase vaccine confidence. Most major grocery stores offer the vaccine now. Can your ADRC connect with them to help coordinate transportation for people unable to drive?



Grantees have also reported that dollar stores serve as community hubs in rural communities. Contact your local dollar store to see if you can partner.

Are there other businesses that may make sense for partnership? The [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) organized certain vaccine providers (e.g., community health centers, pharmacies, local chapters of national minority organizations) to work with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to coordinate vaccine appointments for eligible older adults.