



Illinois Public Health Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Pandemic Health Navigator Program Issues Call to Partner with Illinois Community-Based Organizations

The Illinois Public Health Association seeks to contract with community-based organizations to recruit navigators to support State's response to COVID-19.

Springfield, January 26, 2021- The Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA), in partnership with the Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA), today announced a call for letters of interest for community-based organizations (CBOs) to participate in the COVID-19 Pandemic Health Navigator Program (PHNP). The new program will help integrate community health centers, community-based organizations, and public health partners to coordinate Illinois resources for the most vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This program has four main objectives:

- Address unmet community needs in coordination with local, regional and state partners.
- Provide COVID-19 education and outreach to communities and impacted populations.
- Ease the navigation of care resource coordination for regional COVID-impacted residents.
- Assist with contact tracing support to the Illinois Contact Tracing Collaborative.

“This pandemic has affected every aspect of our lives, and many Illinois communities face unique challenges. The PHN Program offers the opportunity to provide residents of Illinois the help they need,” said Tom Hughes, Executive Director, IPHA. “We are looking forward to partnering with community-based organizations to establish a well-trained, expanded workforce of pandemic health navigators and community partners who will provide education, outreach and critical services to reach the most impacted and vulnerable populations. Additionally, the program will provide hundreds of jobs across the state and position these communities for recovery as we overcome this crisis.”

“Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we go above and beyond to support the healthcare needs of our communities, especially the Black and Latinx communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Cyrus Winnett, Interim President and CEO, IPHCA. “This program will bring together the expertise of local health departments and community health centers to provide Illinoisans with the health education, outreach, and support they need to be healthy and safe. It will also strengthen our healthcare workforce, which has been a significant healthcare barrier for too long.”

The IPHA, in partnership with the IPHCA, was awarded a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to serve as the Regional Coordinator for regions 2-9 of the PHNP to ensure coverage for these activities through direct services and/or sub-awarding to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and other community-based agencies.

IPHA and IPHCA will sub-contract with FQHCs and community-based agencies in Illinois COVID-19 regions 2-9 to recruit the navigators for local COVID-19 education and outreach, to support contact tracing as needed, and to connect cases and contacts with critical services and resources. This may include resources for meals, medicine, mobility support, immigration matters, work and income resources, mental health support, support for unsafe living conditions (e.g. domestic abuse), etc., during isolation and quarantine. In addition, the PHNP team will collaborate and coordinate across the assigned regions with the public health system, including with local health departments (LHDs), to support contact tracing efforts and ensure all communities receive needed assistance and to help reduce disparities in health outcomes.

Navigators recruited by CBOs and FQHCs will be paid a living wage with benefits for the duration of the program. Community-based organizations with a focus on any of the following impacted populations are encouraged to submit a letter of interest in the PHN program:

- Racial and ethnic minorities, including, but not limited to African American/Black, Arab American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native
- Foreign-born individuals
- People with limited English proficiency
- Undocumented immigrants
- People living close to or below the federal poverty line
- Disconnected youth
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who live in rural areas
- People with disabilities (including Deaf and Hard of Hearing)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning or Queer people
- Older adults

For more information about the criteria and funding levels to serve as a sub-contracted agency, visit the IPHA website at <https://www.ipha.com/> to view the [Call for Letters of Interest from CBOs](#) for the Pandemic

Health Navigator Grant. Letters of interest will be accepted on a rolling basis through January 31, 2021. Community-based organizations interested in submitting a letter of interest may request an extension to gather required information.

About The Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA)

The Illinois Public Health Association is the oldest and largest public health association in the state of Illinois. As one of the largest affiliates of the American Public Health Associations, IPHA is widely recognized as the leader in the field of public health advocacy, health education and promotion. For more information, visit <https://www.ipha.com/>.

About Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA)

IPHCA represents Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) or community health centers—entities created by Congress to meet the health care needs of underserved communities and high-risk patients. These centers fill a void by providing care for those whom other providers often do not serve. Since FQHCs must, by law, serve the medically underserved regardless of their ability to pay, CHCs are located in geographic regions designated as having a shortage of medical providers who serve this population. In addition, the medically underserved may be low-income, uninsured, homeless, affected by HIV/AIDS, struggling with substance abuse and/or have special needs. IPHCA is committed to fulfilling its mission of helping communities help themselves by advocating and expanding community primary care services across Illinois, and assisting member organizations in fulfilling their goal of community empowerment through health care choice. By advocating on behalf of members’ interests, IPHCA also advocates for underserved citizens and communities. For more information visit <https://www.iphca.org>.

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