

**CDC-RFA-OT21-2103:**  
***National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities***  
***Work Plan Guidance***

**Overview for Final Work Plan Submission**

This document is for health departments in states, localities, territories, and freely associated states (or their bona fide agents) applying for grant OT21-2103: *National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities*. It serves as additional guidance for completing the Work Plan.

The document is organized by common questions and answers (click on the question or appendix to go to the section).

- **What is the Work Plan template?**
- **How is the Work Plan organized?**
- **How do I complete the Work Plan?**
- **What will a completed Work Plan look like?**
- **How do I select the racial and ethnic minority population(s) of focus?**
- **If one activity relates to more than one strategy, should I repeat the activity under the other strategies?**
- **Should I include on the Work Plan any activities related to administration and management of the grant?**
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- **Appendix A—Example Activities by NOFO Strategy**
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**Questions and Answers**

**What is the Work Plan template?**

The OT21-2103 Work Plan is a one-stop shop for capturing your planned activities over the life cycle of the 2-year grant. It is designed in this way so that one document can be completed initially and then updated to indicate progress quarterly in the REDCap reporting system. This template and future REDCap usage will reduce the progress reporting burden. Please note that CDC will upload your completed Excel-based Work Plans into REDCap.

### How is the Work Plan organized?

The Work Plan is housed in a Microsoft Excel workbook. The workbook is organized into seven tabs.

- **Tab 1:** Instructions
- **Tab 2:** Cover sheet; asks a few questions about your organization
- **Tabs 3–7:** The remaining five tabs represent the five possible strategy areas from the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): 1) Resources and Services, 2) Data and Reporting, 3) Infrastructure Support, 4) Partner Mobilization, and 5) Other. All activity information should be captured on these tabs.

### How do I complete the Work Plan?

We recommend working through the following steps to complete the Work Plan.

- **Step 1:** *Enable the macros* in the Excel workbook by clicking on the Enable Content button. This will allow you to have full functionality of the workbook, such as the ability to select multiple responses from a dropdown list.
- **Step 2:** Read the instructions tab.
- **Step 3:** Complete the cover sheet, including your organization’s name and submission date.
- **Step 4:** Determine in which of the four strategy areas listed in the NOFO your organization will address (Appendix A). You may propose additional strategies. You are not required to implement all four strategies; rather, you should select the strategies and activities that best address your jurisdiction’s priorities and needs. Complete only the tabs for strategies in which you propose to conduct activities. For example, your organization may choose to work on activities related to two strategies. If that is the case, your organization will complete *only* those two tabs in the workbook, leaving the remaining strategy tabs blank. You cannot put all your funding into one strategy or activity.

#### NOTES:

- All activities should be listed on the strategy tabs. Do not list activities on the instructions tab.
  - Dropdown lists are provided for some of the fields (Appendix B).
  - The template includes 20 activity tables per strategy. However, if you have more than 20 activities, you may add more activity tables. For guidance on how to add more activity tables, see Appendix C.
  - Recipients are encouraged to develop collaborative and/or fiduciary relationships (e.g., community-based grants programs) with partners. Please make sure to include those type of activities under the activities and/or Key Contracts and Consultants sections of the Work Plan.
- **Step 5:** When completing the tabs for the strategy areas in which your organization will work, complete all relevant fields. The instructions tab provides specific directions about what types of information should be included in those fields. If a field is not applicable (e.g., you are not working with a consultant or contractor on an activity), leave it blank.

### What will a completed Work Plan look like?

The following information provides detailed instruction for completing the strategy information and an activity table. An example is provided to illustrate how the information will appear in the fields. For this example, the recipient plans to address Strategy 4—Partner Mobilization to mobilize partners and

collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health as they relate to COVID-19 health disparities among populations at higher risk and that are underserved.

1. **Provide strategy information:** For this example, select the “(Strat 4) Partner Mobilization” tab. The first table provides information related to the overall strategy (Table 1).
  - a. **Strategy Description:** This information is already provided and can be used to confirm that you are working in the correct tab.
  - b. **NOFO Outcomes:** Select which of the NOFO outcomes the proposed activities under this strategy will achieve. This is a multiselect dropdown list, which allows you to select more than one as needed. *You must select at least one NOFO outcome.*
  - c. **Other Outcome(s):** If you have identified outcomes other than NOFO outcomes that your activities will achieve, you may add them to the “Other Outcome(s)” field. Please use directional language, such as increase, decrease, reduce, improve.
  - d. **Data Source(s) Used to Identify Population(s) of Focus:** Describe the data sources used to identify the populations that will be addressed under the strategy. This information includes all populations addressed across activities.
  - e. **Estimated Amount of Funding Allocated to Strategy:** Provide the estimated amount of funding you will allocate toward activities implemented under this strategy. Include the percentage of total proposed funding and dollar amount.
  - f. **Estimated Amount of Strategy Funding Allocated for Rural Activities:** If your allocating *any* funding under this strategy to address rural communities, provide the percentage and dollar amount of the funding for these activities.
  - g. **Technical Assistance Needs:** If you anticipate needing technical assistance to implement activities under this strategy, please describe those needs.

Table 1. Example: (Strat 4) “Partner Mobilization” Tab—Strategy Description Table

<b>Strategy Description</b>	4. Mobilize partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health as they relate to COVID-19 health disparities among populations at higher risk and that are underserved		
<b>NOFO Outcome(s) Addressed</b> (Select all that apply)	Reduced COVID-19-related health disparities  Improved and increased testing and contact tracing among populations at higher risk and that are underserved, including racial and ethnic minority groups and people living in rural communities		
<b>Other Outcome(s) (as identified by applicant)</b>	Improve workplace policies to increase access to testing and vaccination		
<b>Data Source(s) Used to Identify Population(s) of Focus</b>	For this strategy, we will focus on three populations spanning multiple activities—people living in rural areas, Blacks or African Americans, and Hispanics, Latinos or Latinx.  We identified these populations using data from the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index, a community health assessment, and the COVID-19 Tracker.		
<b>Estimated Amount of Funding Allocated to Strategy (% of Total Funding and Dollar Amount)</b>	% of Total Funding: 25% Dollar Amount: \$500,000	<b>Estimated Amount of Strategy Funding Allocated for Rural Activities (% and \$ Amount) (if applicable)</b>	% of Strategy Funding: 50% Dollar Amount: \$250,000
<b>Technical Assistance Needs</b>	Yes	<b>If Yes, please describe</b>	Need technical assistance for evaluation efforts

2. **Enter descriptive information about the activity and population(s) of focus:** For each activity proposed under the strategy, an activity table must be completed. The activity table provides details about how the activity addresses the problem or barrier, what populations will be reached, and what organizations will provide support for the activity (Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4).
  - a. **Activity Title:** For each activity, provide a short, descriptive title.
  - b. **Activity Focus:** Select the focus area(s) for your proposed activity from the dropdown list provided. If your proposed activity does not align to the dropdown options, you may select “Other.”
  - c. **Other Activity Focus:** Provide a brief description of the activity’s focus, if it does not align with the focus area provided.
  - d. **Racial and Ethnic Population(s) of Focus:** This NOFO emphasizes reaching racial and ethnic minority populations. Select the racial and ethnic minority population the activity addresses from the multiselect dropdown list provided. You may also indicate that the activity does not address a racial or ethnic minority population.
  - e. **Describe the Racial and Ethnic Minority Population(s) of Focus:** For each specific racial or ethnic population selected, provide a detailed description of the population, such as the racial or ethnic subpopulation(s). For example, if you selected Asian and you are working with a large Vietnamese population, describe this subpopulation in the provided field.
  - f. **Other Population(s) of Focus:** In addition to racial and ethnic minority populations, the NOFO is intended to address other underserved populations, such as people living in rural areas. In this field, select the underserved population(s) of focus from the multiselect dropdown list provided. You may also indicate that the activity does not address other underserved populations.
  - g. **Describe the Rural Population Served:** If you select “people living in rural areas” as your population of focus, provide a description of the rural population served by the activity. We encourage you to include data if it provides relevant context for how the activity will support this population.
  - h. **Other Population(s) (if applicable):** If the racial and ethnic minority population or other underserved population you are addressing is not included in the provided dropdown list, describe the population(s) in this field.
  - i. **Estimated Reach of Population of Focus:** For each population of focus, enter the number of people who will be reached by the activity. In the example, the population of focus is people living in rural areas—specifically, Johns County. The estimated reach is 15,000 people over the age of 16.
  - j. **Geographic Area:** Using the provided dropdown, indicate whether the activity will be implemented in an urban area, a rural area, or both.
  - k. **Setting:** Select the type of setting in which the activity will take place from the dropdown list provided. In the example, the activity’s setting is “worksite” because the recipient is partnering with businesses to implement an intervention at worksites.
  - l. **Other Setting:** If the setting type is not provided in the dropdown list, describe the setting in this field.

Table 2. Example: Activity Title, Populations of Focus and Setting—Activity Table

<b>Activity 1 Title</b>	Johns County: Providing Access to Testing and Vaccination Through Worksite Promotion		
<b>Activity Focus</b> (Select all that apply)	Testing Vaccine administration support		
<b>Other Activity Focus</b> (if applicable)			
<b>Racial and Ethnic Population(s) of Focus</b> (Select all that apply)	Activity does not address racial or ethnic minority populations	<b>Describe the Racial and Ethnic Population(s)(if applicable)</b>	
<b>Other Population(s) of Focus</b> (Select all that apply)	People living in rural areas	<b>Describe the Rural Population Served (if applicable)</b>	Based on the County Health Rankings, Johns County is among the least healthy counties in the state - 33% of residents are uninsured, 36% of residents are obese and 29% receive an annual flu vaccination. 55% of households have access to broadband (American Community Survey).
<b>Other Population (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Estimated Reach of Population(s) of Focus</b>	Rural: 15,000 people aged 16 or over		
<b>Geographic Area</b> (Select one)	Rural		
<b>Setting</b> (Select one)	Worksite		
<b>Other Setting (if applicable)</b>			

3. **Input activity details and partner information:** In the activity table, provide a detailed description of the activity and information about the proposed contributing partners.
  - a. **Activity Description:** Describe the activity that will be implemented in support of the strategy. When describing your activity, please be detailed and ensure that it aligns with the activity focus. Four key elements should be included in the activity description:
    - i. The problem, such as structural, systemic, or contextual barriers, that the activity will address.
    - ii. The approach you will take to address the problem, such as policy change, program, or intervention.
    - iii. The process for implementing the activity, including the specific tasks you will complete.
    - iv. The key milestones that will be used to determine whether the activity is on track. Table 3 provides an example activity description.
  - b. **Contributing Partners:** List the partners and collaborators, if any, that will support the activity. Please provide the full name of the partner organization.
  - c. **Partner Type:** For each contributing partner, select the type of partner organization represented. A dropdown list is provided.
  - d. **Other Partner Type:** If the partner type is not listed in the dropdown, enter the type of partner organization.

Table 3. Example: Describing the Activity and Contributing Partners—Activity Table

Activity Description	Contributing Partners	Partner Type (Select one)	Other Partner Type (if applicable)
<p>Johns County is a vast rural county centrally located in the state. There is no coordinated approach to reaching local workers for COVID-19 testing and vaccination. The largest employer is a locally owned plant that employs 3,000 people. People work long shifts and are typically unable to take time to get tested or vaccinated. This activity intends to address this issue by partnering with the local chamber of commerce and local businesses, including the plant, to create a centralized hub for scheduling and distributing tests and vaccines. We will work with the businesses on allowing employees to receive paid time to get tested or vaccinated. Employees will use the centralized online hub to schedule appointments and receive information and tips about COVID-19 testing and vaccination. We will also establish a transportation network to shuttle workers to and from the testing/vaccination site. There are four key milestones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a formal partnership with the local chamber of commerce and local businesses</li> <li>2. Create an agreed upon business policy that allows workers to use company time to get tested and vaccinated</li> <li>3. Develop an online tool that coordinates scheduling appointments and transportation for testing and vaccinations</li> <li>4. Convene monthly check-ins with partners to monitor compliance and make improvements as needed</li> </ol>	Johns County Chamber of Commerce	Nongovernmental organization	
	Johns Plant Industries, Inc.	Business, corporation, or industry	
	Johns C Bus Service	Business, corporation, or industry	

4. **Input consultants and deliverables information:**

- a. **Key Contracts and Consultants:** List the contracts and consultants that will be hired to provide support for the activity. Provide the estimated dollar amount for each contract or consultant. In this example, the online centralized tool will be developed by Technology Solutions, Inc. for \$100,000.
- b. **Key Deliverables/Outputs:** List the products or tangible results of the activity, such as services provided, tools created, policies established, number of vaccines administered.
- c. **Start Date:** Indicate the anticipated date the activity will start.
- d. **End Date:** Indicate the anticipated date the activity will end.

Table 4. Example: Identify Key Contracts/Consultants and Deliverables and Outputs—Activity Table

Key Contracts & Consultants	Key Deliverables/Outputs	Start Date	End Date
Technology Solutions, Inc. (\$100,000)	Online tool for scheduling COVID-19 tests and vaccination and finding resources Standardized policy on paid time for testing/vaccinations Signed partnership MOU	8/1/2021	7/31/2023

**How do I select the racial and ethnic population(s) of focus?**

Please select the racial and ethnic population that is the primary intended audience for the activity based on data and other evidence and provide a detailed description of the population. For example, if you selected Asian and you are working with a large Vietnamese population, describe this subpopulation in the provided field. In the Estimated Reach field, provide the number of people reached for each racial and ethnic minority population.

The racial and ethnic population categories are based on Office of Management and Budget standards:

- Alaska Native
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders

**If one activity relates to more than one strategy, should I repeat the activity under the other strategies?**

It is possible that the activity on which your organization chooses to focus encompasses more than one strategy. If this is the case, do not duplicate or repeat information to align activities to multiple strategies. *Simply identify the one strategy that best fits with the work and describe that activity on the corresponding tab in the Excel document/workbook.*

**Should I include on the Work Plan any activities related to administration and management of the grant?**

No, do not include activities related to grants management or administration (e.g., submission of timely reports to CDC, participation in CDC conference calls or site visits). The details in the Work Plan should be focused on your local priorities and activities related to COVID-19.

**What file type should be sent back to CDC?**

After you have completed your Work Plan, send the Microsoft Excel file back to CDC. *Do not send a PDF (portable document format) version.*

**Contact Information:** If you have any additional questions, contact [OT21-2103Support@cdc.gov](mailto:OT21-2103Support@cdc.gov).

**Appendix A—Example Activities by NOFO Strategy**

Strategy Tabs	NOFO Strategies and Activities, which may include, but are not limited to—
1. Resources and Services	<p>Expand existing and/or develop new mitigation and prevention resources and services to reduce COVID-19 related disparities among populations at higher risk and that are underserved.</p> <p>Activities can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand testing (including home test kits and mobile testing sites) and contact tracing among populations at higher risk and that are underserved, including racial and ethnic minority populations and people living in rural communities</li> <li>• Vaccine coordination, quarantine and isolation options, and preventive care and disease management among populations that are underserved and at higher risk for COVID-19</li> <li>• Tailor and adapt evidence-based policies, systems, and environmental strategies to mitigate social and health inequities related to COVID-19</li> <li>• Identify and establish collaborations with critical partners affiliated with populations at higher risk and that are underserved, including racial and ethnic minority groups at higher risk for COVID-19</li> <li>• Provide referral to wrap-around services for those receiving COVID-19 services</li> <li>• Other—please specify</li> </ul>
2. Data and Reporting	<p>Increase/improve data collection and reporting for populations experiencing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 infection, severe illness, and death to guide the response to the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data collection and reporting for testing and contact tracing for populations at higher risk and that are underserved</li> <li>• Build on plans for collecting and reporting timely, complete, representative, and relevant data on testing, incidence, vaccination, and severe outcomes by detailed race and ethnicity categories, taking into account age and sex differences between groups</li> <li>• Develop strategies to educate providers, community partners, and programs on: 1) the importance of the race and ethnicity data and appropriate strategies to collect it, 2) the importance of the race and ethnicity data and appropriate strategies to collect it, 2) how to address mistrust/hesitancy about reporting personal information including race and ethnicity, and 3) why this information is important to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19</li> <li>• Develop and implement plans to disseminate health equity-related data and related materials tailored to be culturally and linguistically responsive for diverse audiences</li> <li>• Develop key principles and resources for collecting, analyzing, reporting, and disseminating health equity-related data to inform action during a public health emergency</li> <li>• Assure adequate resources for data infrastructure and workforce to ensure alignment with data modernization</li> <li>• Other—please specify</li> </ul>
3. Infrastructure Support	<p>Build, leverage, and expand infrastructure support for COVID-19 prevention and control among populations that are at higher risk and underserved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the infrastructure to improve testing and contact tracing among populations at higher risk and that are underserved, including racial and ethnic minority populations and rural communities</li> <li>• Establish, enhance, or implement leadership-level health equity offices, workgroups, task forces, or positions to guide addressing COVID-19 among communities at higher risk and that are underserved</li> </ul>

Strategy Tabs	NOFO Strategies and Activities, which may include, but are not limited to—
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene and facilitate multi-sector coalitions or advisory groups that include members of underserved communities and organizations that serve the community. These groups may provide advice, guidance, and recommendations for addressing COVID-19 and advancing health equity among their communities</li> <li>• Update jurisdictions’ COVID-19 plans and health equity plans to support communities most at risk for COVID-19 with the intention of setting up systems that put in place infrastructures and plans that can also support future emergency responses</li> <li>• Build and expand an inclusive public health workforce, including hiring people from the community (e.g., community health workers, social workers, other trusted community members) who are equipped to assess and address the needs of communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19</li> <li>• Other—please specify</li> </ul>
<p>4. Partners Mobilization</p>	<p>Mobilize partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health as they relate to COVID-19 health disparities among populations at higher risk and that are underserved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and implement cross-sectoral partnerships to align public health, healthcare, and non-health (e.g., housing, transportation, social service) interventions that decrease risk for COVID-19</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms such as community advisory groups that include leaders representing racial and ethnic minority groups and rural community leaders and members representing underserved populations to inform COVID-19 and future emergency response activities</li> <li>• Develop and disseminate culturally and linguistically responsive COVID-19 prevention communications through various channels (e.g., local media, local or community newspapers, radio, TV, trusted communications agents) written in plain language and in formats and languages suitable for diverse audiences—including people with disabilities, limited English proficiency, etc.—addressing and, as necessary, dispelling of misinformation and barriers to mitigation practices due to mistrust</li> <li>• Build community capacity that includes traditional organizations (e.g., public health, healthcare) and non-traditional partners (e.g., community health workers, churches, transportation providers, social workers) to reach disproportionately affected populations with effective culturally and linguistically tailored programs and practices for testing, contact tracing, isolating, vaccination, and healthcare strategies</li> <li>• Identify and establish collaborations with critical partners affiliated with and who provide services to populations that are underserved and at higher risk for COVID-19 to disseminate scientifically accurate, culturally, and linguistically responsive information and facilitate access to health-related services</li> <li>• Build capacity to provide referral to wrap-around services to those receiving COVID-19 services</li> <li>• Other—please specify</li> </ul>
<p>Other</p>	<p>NOTE: Most activities should align to the strategies above. If they do not, please describe them in the “Other” strategy.</p>

## **Appendix B—Response Options for Dropdown Lists**

### **Activity Focus**

- Testing
- Contact tracing and case investigation
- Quarantine and Isolation
- Vaccine administration support
- Evidence-based policies, systems, and environmental strategies to address COVID-19
- Other—please specify

### **Racial and Ethnic Minority populations**

- Alaska Native
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders
- Other - please specify
- Activity does not address racial and ethnic minority populations

### **Other Populations of Focus**

- People living in rural areas
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who are incarcerated
- People with disabilities
- People with substance use disorders
- Non-US-born persons
- Religious minority
- Adults aged 65 and over
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
- People living in other congregate housing (not legally bound)
- Other—please specify
- Activity does not address other underserved populations

### **Geographic Areas**

- Rural
- Urban
- Both

### **Setting**

- Childcare center/school
- Community-based organization
- Correctional facility or institution
- Faith-based organization (e.g., place of worship)
- Home

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- Local health department
- Medical or clinical site (e.g., hospital)
- Recreational facility
- Senior residence or long-term care facility
- Shelter/group home
- State health department
- Tribal nation or area
- University or college
- Worksite
- Other—please specify

### **Partner Types**

- Academic institutions (e.g., minority-serving institutions—historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, American Indian Higher Education Consortium, tribal colleges and universities, Asian American and Pacific Islander-serving institutions)
- Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution
- Business, corporations, or industry
- Community-based and civic organizations (e.g., fraternities, sororities, foundations, nonprofit with 501[c][3] status)
- Correctional facilities and institutions
- Faith-based organizations
- Governmental organizations focused on non-health services
- Healthcare providers
- Health-related organizations (e.g., pharmacies, testing centers, community health centers)
- Local governmental agencies and community leaders
- Nongovernmental organizations
- Rural health clinics and critical access hospitals
- Schools/school district
- Social services providers
- State offices of rural health (SORH) or equivalent
- Tribes, tribal organizations
- Other—please specify

