



## Request for Proposals

New York State Vaccine Education and Adoption Project of the  
CONVINCE USA Initiative at CUNY SPH – Vaccine Sentiment Surveying

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Date Due: April 30, 2021 by 12:00pm EDT

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### **About CUNY SPH**

Launched in 2016 as the 24th independent school within the City University of New York, the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (“CUNY SPH”) is committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service. We work collaboratively to create a healthier New York City and healthier populations across the globe, living on a healthier planet. CUNY SPH is a leader in promoting equitable and evidence-based solutions to build healthy cities everywhere. Located in the vibrant Harlem neighborhood within the global metropolis of New York, and a vital part of the City University of New York, CUNY SPH is known for our innovative programs and our inclusive culture. As New York City’s public school of public health, CUNY SPH is committed to advancing health equity and social justice locally and globally; creating affordable, accessible, and supportive educational opportunities for all, including students from underrepresented communities, working adults, and first-generation scholars; and preparing public health professionals for the challenges of tomorrow.

### **About CUNY SPH Foundation**

The CUNY SPH Foundation is an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization. Its mission is to advance the achievement of CUNY SPH’s mission, vision and values as New York City’s public school of public health through fundraising, building strategic partnerships and providing services as a champion for the school’s students as they embark on public health careers and its faculty as they work to educate the next generation of public health professionals. We serve three communities of the school - it’s students, the broader CUNY system of 25 institutions of higher learning serving 500,000+ current and continuous learners, and the public health of the city and state where we live and work.

### **About CONVINCENCE USA Initiative at CUNY SPH**

CONVINCE (COVID-19 New Vaccine Information, Communication, and Engagement) is a global initiative to promote vaccine literacy generally, and confidence in COVID-19 vaccines in particular. Its mission is to encourage sufficient global vaccine acceptance to achieve the level of population immunity needed to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. CONVINCENCE is the product of a series of global dialogues over the course of the pandemic with CUNY SPH, the Vaccine Confidence Project at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Wilton Park, an agency of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. It coordinates and fosters collaboration among existing networks, partnerships, and activities that support vaccine literacy efforts worldwide. Currently, CONVINCENCE has regional representation in the USA, Asia Pacific Region, and Canada, with initiatives forming in Africa and Europe as well.

CUNY SPH is CONVINCENCE USA’s home and coordinates research and communication strategy development for United States audiences. Working at the national, state and local level, across the public, private and NGO sectors, CONVINCENCE USA includes both independent and collaborative programs to create support for COVID-19 immunization and the science behind it. The New York Vaccine Education and Adoption Demonstration Project (“Project”) is a joint activity of the CUNY SPH Foundation, CONVINCENCE USA Initiative at CUNY SPH and CUNY SPH. It supports the adoption of COVID-19 vaccines among hesitant population groups through the democratization of high-quality data informatics and trainings for use in varying settings to educate and address misinformation and hesitancy among key population groups.



## **Background**

We are facing the greatest public health threat the country has seen in over a century. Now, with vaccines to immunize people against the COVID-19 virus, there is a chance to slow the spread of the virus and achieve herd immunity. To that end, New York State is delivering one of the largest mass vaccination campaigns in human history. It is of critical importance that all people choose to be vaccinated against COVID-19 without concern. The CONVINCENCE USA Initiative at CUNY SPH is part of a global coalition to promote COVID-19 New Vaccine INFORMATION, Communication, and Engagement. We will mount a bold response to influence decision-making and build trust among New Yorkers as a means to end this pandemic through the New York Vaccine Education and Adoption Demonstration Project ("Project").

There is an urgent need for government agencies, community-based organizations, and businesses to monitor the progress of vaccine acceptance as it translates to actual immunization over the next 18 months. Creation of a cohesive and reliable information source that captures this data is not only useful but also essential. Fostering a vaccine literate public will help to ensure that people are able to receive the evidence-based information they need to take the vaccine despite a fluid and evolving situation. Achieving widespread vaccine uptake is an ongoing challenge to overcome hesitancy, motivate action, and counter misinformation, yet it is also a moving target as new logistical challenges and changes to vaccine sentiments occur. A data-driven, sustainable community-level response to affect change is needed to move the needle on vaccine uptake and adapt to any needs that arise in the ever-changing COVID-19 vaccine landscape.

While initial interest in vaccination is high, confusion remains. Conflicting messaging and existing mistrust will slow vaccination rates as the first waves of adopters are fully vaccinated. The urgency of vaccinating the public at large quickly will face resistance, and the amplification and alignment of messaging from trusted sources will encourage the "wait and see" segment to adopt the vaccine sooner. As the pandemic and vaccination efforts continue, the level of difficulty to convert individuals from "wait and see" to "adopters" will increase. The urgency of health communications during the pandemic will need to evolve along with the audience.

This initial phase of vaccine rollout and adoption will likely achieve vaccination rates between 40-60% of the population. Achieving herd immunity rates of 80% or greater will require substantial effort. Even if vaccine allocation continues to improve, conveying the necessity of vaccination may become increasingly difficult as the pandemic subsides, leaving communities vulnerable to subsequent outbreaks, surges, and new variants of the virus. This will especially need to happen as media attention dwindles and life begins to return to some semblance of pre-pandemic normalcy. More immediately, new communication challenges that arise abruptly will interrupt positive trends in vaccine uptake. For example, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine "pause" has both exposed the rapidly changing vaccine information environment as well as the scenarios that leave the public vulnerable to aggressive mis/disinformation. If these challenges persist, urgency will remain high, possibly higher, as attention and consideration of preventative measures like social distancing further decrease. Over time, the focus will shift toward outlier demographics, communities, and villages with lower vaccination uptake than their surrounding counterparts.



This project will build upon the robust and dynamic multi-sector approach with which CONVINCENCE USA is designed and will focus on tracking vaccine literacy attainment and uptake among populations across New York State that continue to identify, or newly identify, as hesitant, cautious, or skeptical.

### **Vaccine Sentiment Surveying**

Building upon CUNY SPH's established and proven successes in large scale surveying during the COVID-19 pandemic, the vendor will field a series of surveys to measure and track sentiments related to COVID-19 vaccination throughout the lower nine counties of the state. The vendor must use a mix-modality methodology for its surveys, mitigating the limitations of online-only or text-only polling and is able to include populations where landline use is more prevalent. The vendor will be required to implement an initial survey with five updated surveys over the course of an 18-month period from a representative sample of 3,000 New Yorkers from the nine counties identified. The data gathered will be uploaded into the dashboard and users will be able to track changes in sentiment and vaccine uptake over time broadly and within specific geographies based on zip code. Surveys will focus on the "wait and see" segments of the population who are hesitant to take the vaccine immediately and, for a variety of reasons, have chosen or will choose to delay. CUNY SPH Dean Dr. Ayman El-Mohandes and CONVINCENCE USA Initiative Executive Director Scott Ratzan will lead the development of the survey instrument with the vendor. The total budget proposal for this opportunity may not exceed \$60,000.00 over an 18-month period.

### **Vendor Requirements to Submit with Application**

- Current or prior client list
- Resume (if an individual)
- Business website
- List of key individuals who will participate in project with brief biographies
- Eligible to be employed in the United States (EIN or SNN required)

### **Restrictions**

Current CUNY employees or students will not be considered. If an individual, no benefits will be offered with this project.

### **How to Apply**

Submit a two-page statement including expertise, prior work and results, proposed plan, strategies, activities and timeline for completing work. Include maximum contract bid needed to conduct the work (do not exceed the maximum award noted in the above description), a primary contact for the bid (name and email address), and available start date.

All applications must be submitted to [fund@sph.cuny.edu](mailto:fund@sph.cuny.edu) with "Vaccine Sentiment Surveying" as the subject line.

### **Review and Selection Process**

Completed eligible applications submitted by the April 30, 2021 deadline will be evaluated and scored. All applicants will receive a notification of whether their proposal was selected for funding. The CUNY SPH Foundation will not provide scores or feedback to unsuccessful applicants.