

Playbook

Office of Community Partnerships and
Strategic Communications



April 10, 2024

Foreword

The Office of Community Partnerships and Communications (OCPSC) manages California's highest priority community engagement and public awareness efforts. Built on the State's investment and success of the California Census 2020 and Vaccinate ALL 58 campaigns, the Office has an effective infrastructure to reach our communities facing the greatest social and health inequities.

This *Playbook* describes the building blocks of the Office's system and infrastructure, including:

- **CBOs as Trusted Messengers.** To reduce significant disparities in well-being across race and ethnicity, geographical areas, and linguistic groups by partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs).
- **Consultations with Communities.** To enhance the skills of decision makers to engage and be accountable to the public by informing, listening, and learning from them.
- **Data-Informed Decisions.** To build equity in communities by focusing on populations with the greatest needs using data-informed decision making.
- **Amplifying Community Voices with Ethnic Media.** To provide news and information by catering to diverse audiences in many different languages and formats.
- **Partnering with State Departments and Agencies.** To leverage the state's knowledge and expertise to benefit the public by partnering with state departments and agencies.

The OCPSC infrastructure provides an effective and efficient system for the State to meet the dynamic nature of California's diverse population.

For more information, contact info.ocpsc@opr.ca.gov



CBOs as Trusted Messengers

Purpose

To reduce significant disparities in well-being across race and ethnicity, geographical areas, and linguistic groups. Community-based organizations or CBOs can help state agencies achieve equity-driven mandates.

Outcome

Incorporating CBOs as trusted messengers is a smart strategy for achieving better outcomes in equity-driven initiatives. CBOs have a deep understanding of community dynamics and cultural nuances to implement effective approaches.

Process

State government agencies have resources, data, and policymaking authority. CBOs have grassroots knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and social connections necessary to reach and engage diverse populations. When the state and CBOs work together transparently and cohesively, they can address disparities in health and social outcomes.

Perspectives

We are experts on our communities as trusted messengers, and we are learning about new topics like water conservation. We use the fresh information and messaging from OCPSC and our own strategies for engaging with our communities.

Lizette Arzola, Central City Neighborhood Partners

Good Practices

- ☑ Deepen the State's knowledge of CBOs and their context by listening to their experiences and appreciating their expertise.
- ☑ Consider the agreement not as a transaction, but as a relationship.
- ☑ Get to know them by name and provide them with 5-star customer service.

Tip

CBOs can partner with the state for various roles, including:

- Information dissemination
- Connectors to services
- Convenors
- Promotion of policies and programs
- Education and awareness campaigns
- Community research
- Facilitators
- Local and regional collaborators

OCPSC Examples

- **Building on an Efficient Infrastructure.** Building on the infrastructure of the California Census 2020 and Vaccinate ALL 58 campaigns, OCPSC manages and supports a network of CBOs to respond effectively to community needs amid changing levels of trust in government, evolving policies and messages, new economic challenges, and upheavals caused by natural disasters.
- **Engaging Small, Grassroots CBOs.** United Way of Northern California serves as an intermediary to smaller, local CBOs providing them with sub-grants, support for administration, and financial reporting. CBOs are often seen as a trusted source of information because some residents mistrust government institutions.
- **Advancing Equity.** The LGBTQ+ community is long accustomed to extending care to their own in response to historical or ongoing discrimination and systemic erasure. Equality California partners with their network to frame educational messages around their community's health and well-being.



Consultations with Communities.....

Purpose

To enhance the skills of decision makers to engage and be accountable to the public. Informing the public and listening and learning from community members are essential ingredients for an effective and equitable program.

Outcome

Improved decision-making by capturing the experience and variations in the needs and assets of different population groups.

Process

Promoting meaningful debates involving multiple stakeholders requires intentional planning of dialogue and deliberation for different actors to express their views, listen to others, and engage in a meaningful discourse.

Perspectives

The Orange County OCPSC CBOs feel that not only have they been invited to have a seat at the table, but we are also being asked to help create the menu.

Mario Ortega, ABRAZAR, Inc

We're seeing the change. With OCPSC we feel like we're part of the campaign and creating the future. We see our feedback recorded and know our voices are being heard which is a big part of making a difference for the community.

Nelya Hyrb, Folsom Cordova Community Partnership

OCPSC Examples

- **Consulting with CBOs.** Consultation workshops can inform the design and roll-out of new products. A February 2024 workshop with 15 CBOs from the Trusted Messenger Network piloted a new methodology of inquiry and user-centered design that can be replicated.
- **Informing outreach and public awareness campaigns.** Focus groups by region or demographic groups provide feedback on messages resonating with a particular population. The results have informed OCPSC's work to combat fears and misinformation around COVID vaccinations and to craft culturally relevant messages around extreme heat.
- **Engaging directly with CBOs.** Community Connections is a series of meetings designed for state staff to engage directly with CBOs and other civil society organizations to gain a deeper understanding of priority communities, strengthen relationships between the state and CBOs, and create continuous feedback loops of information to shape strategies and plans.



Good Practices

- ☑ Clarify the scope and objectives at the beginning to all participants, otherwise you may create high or false expectations.
- ☑ Prepare to listen and be influenced.
- ☑ Ensure a well-facilitated and balanced discussion so it is not seen as window-dressing.
- ☑ Don't oversell the intended outcome.
- ☑ Report back to the participants as an acknowledgement of their interest and participation.

Tip

OCPSC employs a specific facilitation framework called ORID that enables a focused conversation for reflection on any subject. A series of questions elicit responses at four levels: Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional. Reference: *The Art of a Focused Conversation*



Data-Informed Decisions

Purpose

Data-informed decision making helps CBOs and other actors focus their efforts on populations with the greatest need and most to gain from their efforts, or more simply, act in a manner that builds equity within the communities they serve.

Outcome

By intentionally focusing on communities that have the greatest need, CBOs can serve those in need of the most help, invest their limited resources in areas of greatest need, and build increased community equity.

Process

CBOs have the grassroots knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and social connections necessary to reach and engage diverse populations. This knowledge coupled with Census data and social vulnerability indices allows CBOs to increase their effectiveness in delivering more equitable outcomes.

Good Practices

- ☑ Begin by understanding the populations most affected by the public health (or other) issue of focus (extreme heat, COVID-19, etc.)
- ☑ Identify zip codes in your service area that have an overlap of these priority populations.
- ☑ Use your deep knowledge of your service area to identify outreach strategies that will work in these zip codes.

OCPSC Example

- **The foundation of the Office is data and research, which informs strategy, guides resource allocations, and prioritizes people experiencing the greatest health and social inequities.** Using a custom-built online application (CORD), our data scientists share population and regional data to ensure outreach and communication resources are directed where they are needed most.

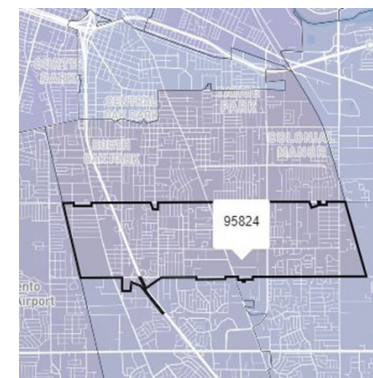
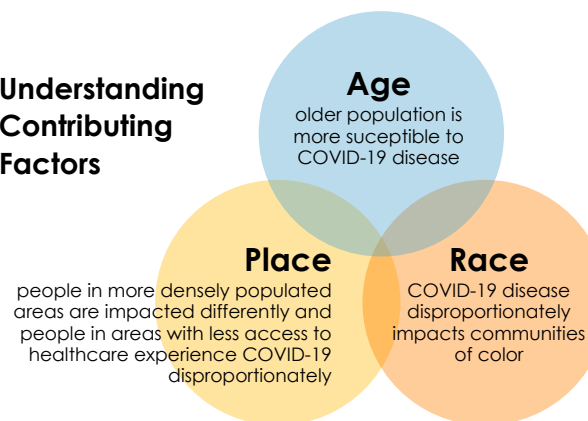
By working with state departments and agencies, the Office informs the public with accurate, timely information dispelling misinformation.

Use Case: COVID-19 Vaccine

Age, Race, and Place are contributing factors to increased death rates from COVID-19. Focusing CBO activity where these three populations overlap helps to prioritize the population in most need to be up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccines.

By selecting Latino and Up-to-Date COVID Vaccine rates for the 65+, CBOs in the Sacramento area can find zip code 95824, which has both a large Latino population and a low 65+ COVID Up-to-Date vaccination rate.

Understanding Contributing Factors



Amplifying Community Voices with Ethnic Media.....



Purpose

Ethnic media outlets are part of the media ecosystem. As mission-driven organizations, they provide news and information catered for their specific communities and audiences in different languages and formats, including TV, radio, newspapers, websites, and social media.

Outcomes

Collaboration between government and ethnic media can lead to more effective, culturally and linguistically relevant community engagement.

Process

Ethnic media journalists often wear many hats. They are, first and foremost, journalists. They make the news relatable to their audience. They show how current events are directly impacting their communities and often focus on issues overlooked by mainstream media.

Perspectives

What is the best way to approach ethnic media as partners?

Reach out to us so that we can help best match you. We'll be able to put you in touch with the media...We are all connected to this office [OCPSC] now, which is so wonderful. And I think this matchmaking is going to make it even more powerful with us working together.

Regina Wilson, California Black Media

OCPSC Examples

While there are many ways to engage with ethnic media, OCPSC has found success by forging collaborative working relationships for:

- **Coordinating campaign messaging.** Stories from communities highlight diverse perspectives and elevate community voices to increase awareness.
- **Facilitating on-the-record roundtable meetings, forums, and briefings.** Ethnic media outlets learn about campaign news from subject matter experts and gain an understanding of OCPSC's unique work with communities.
- **Amplifying community voices.** Ethnic media newsrooms spotlight disparities so underrepresented voices become part of the conversation.



Vaccine Disinformation Preys on Black Community's Well-Earned Distrust

Ethnic Media Services Mar 29, 2023

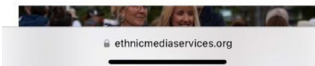
Richmond Pulse | Low levels of trust in the medical system among African Americans stemming from a history of systemic racism has allowed misinformation about the pandemic to flourish.



Covid Myths Among Latinos in California Begin to Recede

Ethnic Media Services Mar 29, 2023

La Opinion | Medical experts in California say they are seeing signs that misinformation among Latinos about Covid 19 is beginning to recede.



ethnicmediaservices.org

Tips

- Community news outlets have strong ties to the community. They reach large and often bypassed audiences, including many underserved, monolingual communities.
- Because they understand the historical, social and emotional context, communities are more receptive to messages received through ethnic media.
- Ethnic media are well-positioned to share essential information and enhance public awareness.
- As trusted messengers, ethnic media outlets can also help combat misinformation.

Partnering with State Departments and Agencies



Purpose

To leverage the state's knowledge and expertise to benefit the public by partnering with state departments and agencies.

Outcomes

Convening state agencies can increase skills and awareness of innovations and good practices among state employees. Increased knowledge of state agencies' efforts expands reach and facilitates access of services and information to all Californians.

Process

OCPSC provides a dedicated space for strengthening state agency partnerships for collaborating on public awareness and outreach campaigns.

Perspectives

Collaborating with the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC) has been invaluable.

They serve as a vital conduit, helping us share our messaging effectively and receive important messages to and from other departments. Centralizing statewide efforts and fostering community partnerships, OCPSC has significantly enhanced our ability to engage Californians. I look forward to our continued partnership in advancing public awareness and community engagement while further unifying the state's collective brand.

Connie Nakano, California Department of Aging

Good Practices

- ☑ Identify internal and external resources and subject matter experts for education and awareness.
- ☑ Clarify "POP" or purpose, outcome, and process when engaging in new partnerships or projects.
- ☑ Share lessons learned from CBOs to inform other state agencies and partners about context and demographics of specific geographic areas.
- ☑ Strengthen trust and relationships with community members and their representative by respecting their perspectives and valuing their knowledge and time.



OCPSC colleagues partnered with Office of Planning and Research colleagues to organize the *Climate Resilience Nexus 2024*. The team presented a collaborative vision to address extreme heat, a growing global concern. By amplifying voices of communities, local government, and environmental experts and advocates, participants learned of different perspectives and solutions.

OCPSC Examples

- **Convening the State Agency Work Group (SAWG).** OCPSC leads a collaboration of over 40 state agency representatives who convene monthly to leverage subject matter expertise, disseminate resources aligned with OCPSC priority issues, and facilitate cross-agency relationships.
- **Partnering with State Agencies.** OCPSC partners with various state departments and agencies to leverage expertise. These partnerships have widened the state's exposure to community member feedback and CBO participation and inclusion.
- **Implementing the Community of Practice on Public Awareness.** On September 13, 2022, Governor Newsom signed an Executive Order directing state agencies and departments to take additional actions to embed equity analysis and considerations in their mission, policies, and practices. OCPSC launched a series of virtual learning forums to share equity-centered approaches to address disparities for historically underserved and marginalized communities.