

## **Santa Barbara County 2021 CSAC Challenge Executive Summary**

**Overview:** The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department reduced health inequities related to COVID-19 by establishing the Latinx and Indigenous Migrant COVID-19 Response Task Force during the initial phase of the pandemic to work directly with communities.

**Challenge:** Providing up-to-date resources, education, referrals, and communications between the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, community partners, and populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Santa Barbara County is home to expansive hospitality, farming, and agricultural industries that largely employ new immigrants, many of whom may be undocumented, prefer to speak Spanish, or are monolingual in an indigenous language. While the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected communities of color across the United States, these groups in particular make up a large percentage of the local population and have borne a substantial proportion of the disease burden in Santa Barbara County. Observing the early impact the pandemic had in these populations, Santa Barbara County Public Health sought to gain firsthand input and cultural insight to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

**Solution:** The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department worked with community partners to form the Latinx and Indigenous Migrant COVID-19 Response Task Force (LIMCRTF), with the goal of reducing the number of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in these groups. The LIMCRTF initially began with a group of core allies, and eventually grew to 96 formal participants. Conversations in this space helped to reaffirm the department's commitment to providing information in English, Spanish, and several variants (dialects) of Mixteco. Culturally and linguistically appropriate messaging was crafted and disseminated collaboratively with partners trusted in these communities as well as through media outlets, virtual town halls, and marketing materials. This network also distributed personal protective equipment (PPE), and messaged about testing resources and vaccination opportunities.

**Innovation:** The LIMCRTF provided a forum for community leaders and the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to exchange information critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19 in health equity metric areas. These meetings offered organizations and businesses serving and comprised of priority populations opportunities to speak directly with Public Health Department Staff and Leadership to identify and mitigate health inequities related to COVID-19. Guided by a steering committee of trusted community leaders dedicated to health equity and language justice, the LIMCRTF also created three workgroups to address mental health issues related to COVID-19 in the Latinx and Indigenous communities, and COVID-19 response efforts in both the prison and farmworker communities.

**Results:** The work conducted by Task Force Partners has resulted in enhanced COVID-19 response efforts within the Latinx and Indigenous communities living in the health equity metric areas, and thereby reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Santa Barbara County. These culturally and linguistically appropriate response efforts included collaborative development and promotion of Public Health Department policy and COVID-19 program initiatives, accessible COVID-19 related care throughout the Public Health Department and other medical providers, increased access to COVID-19 testing in under-resourced communities, mental health support groups, isolation and quarantine assistance, and multilingual, equity-focused vaccine clinics in easily accessible locations.

**Replicability:**

Efforts similar to the LIMCRTF can be replicated and tailored to other counties by evaluating the health inequities that exist locally and identifying communities affected. Working collaboratively with community partners who are trusted and engaged in these communities is key to understanding and addressing both perceived and real barriers to health.

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