



The CDC funded REACH Ferry Corridor Good Health Project is a partnership between Cicitelli Associates Inc. (CAI) and the African American Health Equity Task Force (AAHETF) to address health disparities among historically marginalized communities in Buffalo, NY. The partnership works to resource the development

of an environment in Buffalo that promotes “living a life of wellness” for Ferry Corridor residents. The Corridor includes five zip codes in Buffalo with the most dramatic disparities in health outcomes for African American and Latinx residents. As part of the REACH Ferry Corridor Health Project, the REACH COVID Vaccination initiative aims to raise COVID-19 vaccine awareness and confidence among Corridor residents.

From April to August 2021, a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was completed to better understand community perspectives along the Ferry Street Corridor in Buffalo, NY about COVID-19 vaccination during the pandemic. Our partnerships under the Project Team Charter with the Health Equity for African American and Latinx/a/o (HEAAL) Communities were instrumental in the recruitment of CNA participants, administering surveys, delivering listening sessions, and holding panel and community forum sessions. Collectively, we spoke with 492 Buffalo community members (ages 12-90) using panels, community forums, listening sessions, and surveys.

### The Major Findings We Found Out Were:



**Family and friends play a substantial role in vaccine confidence. Family and friends can either motivate individuals to vaccinate or contribute to vaccine hesitancy and reluctance.**



**Mistrust in medical providers, the government, and public health agencies is prevalent throughout the community.**



**Historical trauma of events (e.g., Tuskegee Syphilis Study) contributes to mistrust of the government and ongoing reluctance to vaccinate. There were also great concerns about the content and quick development of the vaccine. Further, inconsistent information about the vaccine contributes to skepticism.**



**Widespread misinformation about COVID-19 vaccination has led to uncertainty about what is fact or fiction.**



**Certain individuals are not motivated to vaccinate.**



**Youth are more likely to be unmotivated to vaccinate than adults. The reluctance to vaccinate in this group exists despite many individuals knowing someone who has become seriously ill or died of COVID-19.**



**Incentives, information events, and witnessing testimonials about fighting COVID-19 or making the decision to vaccinate might influence certain individuals to vaccinate.**

We will use the findings of the CNA to identify best practices in developing messages about the COVID-19 vaccine as well as generate implementation strategies to increase vaccination rates most effectively in Black/African American and Latinx communities along Ferry Street and Buffalo-wide.