

Quality and Productivity Commission
34th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Leading with Excellence"

2021 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: ANGELENOS IN ACTION: WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: May 20, 2020

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2020)

CHECK HERE IF THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR THE **COVID-19 IMPACT AWARD ONLY**. (Projects must be implemented on or before December 31, 2020. **Note:** Projects implemented less than one year ago will not be eligible for any other PQA awards. In addition, once a project is submitted, you cannot submit the same project for awards consideration in subsequent years).

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

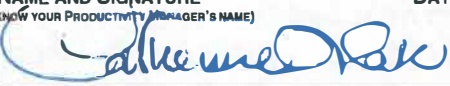

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 Traditional public health surveillance relies on patient interactions with the healthcare
 2 system. COVID-19 complicated this surveillance, making it hard to monitor. Our solution
 3 was to engage the community directly. We proposed an innovative approach to the
 4 Commission, which funded a PIF grant for Angelenos in Action (AiA) to set up a network
 5 engaging volunteers from all over the County. They received an automated weekly text
 6 asking about COVID-19 symptoms. To reach vulnerable populations, bilingual ads were
 7 released on Hip-Hop and Latino radio stations, as well as online African American
 8 newspapers. Due to both this innovative system and our simple survey, we achieved a
 9 high community enrollment of 17,458 persons. While no follow-up occurs in AiA, the
 10 implications of our system are expansive, facilitating nearly real-time monitoring that
 11 complements existing systems. This approach requires fewer resources and costs less
 12 to develop and maintain than other traditional surveillance methods. Due to the success
 13 of AiA, other jurisdictions requested we share through webinars/ workshops, as well as
 14 the conference for the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. We submit this
 15 project for consideration for the Community Inclusion award, among others.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Public Health 313 N. Figueroa Street, 8 th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90012		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 288-8117
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Aryana Amoon, PhD, MPH EMAIL aamoon@ph.lacounty.gov		TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-288-7112
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Catherine Mak, MBA 		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 288-724 EMAIL: cmak@ph.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Barbara Ferrer, MPH, MEd, PHD 		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 288-8117

****ELECTRONIC, WET, OR SCANNED SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE****

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and specify assessment time frame. Use Arial 12 point font.

CHALLENGES:

Monitoring illness trends is essential for controlling the COVID-19 pandemic. However, all COVID-19 infections that occur in Los Angeles County (LAC) cannot be measured. Many with mild illness will not seek medical care, even if testing is encouraged. Therefore, these persons would not be detected by traditional monitoring systems that required either a test or a medical visit.

Engaging our community directly will help solve this problem. We approached the Commission with our Productivity Investment Fund (PIF) grant proposal to recruit volunteers from across LAC to receive weekly text messages from an automated system, to ask about COVID-19-like symptoms. In addition, we asked for zip codes and basic demographic information to better understand who is participating and who is becoming sick and to ensure that our project is inclusive and reaching a significant portion of the diverse population in our County.

No comparable datasets existed at the time we initiated this project. There were a few citizen science platforms such as Flu Near You, and later, COVID Near You, but these were crowdsourced platforms with only a few users.

SOLUTION:

The funds from the Productivity Investment Fund (PIF) grant were used to establish the survey and text messaging system as well as to partner with a media company to help us recruit volunteers through a variety of channels, primarily press releases and social media ads.

To ensure representation of vulnerable communities, both the survey and recruitment material were available in English and Spanish, and we included radio spots on local Latino and Hip-Hop radio stations, as well as running digital web banners on an African American online newspaper website. Several different types of messaging for ads were utilized to appeal to a wide range of ages as well. We also allowed for people to receive emails instead of texts to include more people as well.

BENEFITS:

Creating a sufficiently large and representative network of volunteers can help us monitor the health of communities in near real-time and provide another indicator of COVID-19's circulation in LA County to inform public health response. This program also provides an opportunity for *the community to engage with Public Health directly* and help us understand their needs.

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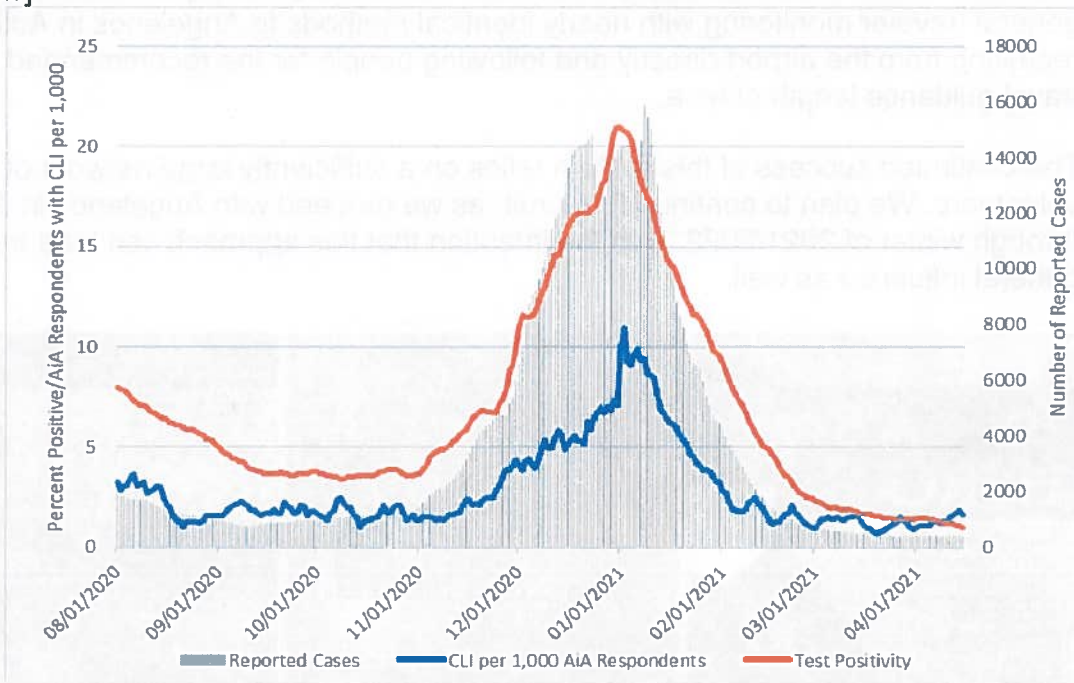
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While the purpose of this specific project is primarily disease surveillance; no follow up or contact tracing occurs, this innovative text-messaging system has fundamentally changed how we can interact with the community and quickly and efficiently gather information, or conversely, distribute it: participants who are ill are referred to County resources. Information on vaccination has been shared with all participants as well. The implications of this design are expansive: both increasing efficiency of monitoring health among certain populations. This approach requires less resources and costs less to develop and maintain than other traditional surveillance methods.

Additionally, the weekly questions are simple and easy to understand and to respond to, giving Angelenos in Action an unusually high response rate: **nearly 85% of all enrollees were responding** on a weekly basis through 2020. We did see some drop-off as participants have gotten vaccinated, but we are still seeing between 50-60% response rates. Typical public health surveys of similar ilk average in the 30%'s.

At the time of this application, we have 17,458 enrollees, with about half still responding every week. The data collected is shared every morning with public health leadership as part of the 'morning report' packet they get with other measures of COVID-19 in LAC. Trends seen with Angelenos in Action respondents' reporting illness coincide with other indicators, including the number of confirmed cases and the test positivity rate (number of positive tests divided by total number of tests). [See below]



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Angelenos in Action has received widespread interest from other governmental and health jurisdiction bodies intent on implementing similar surveillance systems for themselves. The software company we used for the surveys and text messages, invited us to speak on a panel titled “Driving Citizen & Government Employee Confidence from a Distance” with Recreation.gov, and astronaut Mae Jamison that was attended by hundreds of government officials from across the United States. A second, more informal panel-style seminar among health jurisdictions already using the same software followed a month later. For both sessions, the focus was on **our level of engagement with the community**.

These panels generated many questions from other jurisdictions about our project. We were asked to conduct a workshop walking through the actual set up of such a system and explaining how we achieved our success. The 3-part workshop was attended by over 80 software users from a variety of health jurisdictions interested in utilizing something similar software package for other diseases as well as in addition to COVID, where applicable.

Indeed, the implications of such an innovative system will allow for **easier monitoring of other diseases**, for example, influenza. In fact, we are already planning on adapting Angelenos in Action to include flu for the coming winter seasons. We have also implemented a similar system to monitor travelers coming from countries with current Ebola outbreaks. We are soon to implement a more general traveler monitoring with nearly identical methods to Angelenos in Action, recruiting from the airport directly and following people for the recommended COVID travel guidance length of time.

The continued success of this system relies on a sufficiently large network of volunteers. We plan to continue to recruit, as we proceed with Angelenos in Action through winter of 2021/2022, with the intention that this approach can be adapted for general influenza as well.



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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12-point font.

Angelenos in Action aligns with the Strategic Plan Goals III.2.2, III.2.3, and III.3.8. It leverages technology to send text messages to participants. At the end of our weekly surveys, we have the ability to update the concluding message to remind participants of new resources available to them. The implications of this project include a messaging system similar to the emergency notifications people get on their phones, that would be opt-in and could inform about the different resources available to county residents, maybe even based on geographic location or other demographic information.

Finally, specifically, Angelenos in Action is functioning as a potential early warning tool for COVID-like symptoms in the community. With a further expansion of enrollment and some changes in the questionnaire, a similar system can be replicated for other diseases such as influenza. The system would potentially detect diseases of unknown origin circulating in the community, or an unseasonal influenza such as H1N1 which appeared in the late spring rather than the traditional late winter or fall. This could provide an early warning system regarding a new circulating virus.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12-point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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