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## **The Sickle Cell Disease Foundation Receives \$1,000,000 HRSA Award**

*Award funding will support local community-based workforces to increase COVID-19 vaccine access*

**ONTARIO, CA** – The Sickle Cell Disease Foundation today announced the organization recently received a \$1,000,000 grant, “*Local Community-Based Workforce to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Access*,” from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA 21-40). The [program](#) intends to address persistent COVID-19 and increasing Delta variant health disparities by offering support and resources to vulnerable and medically underserved communities, including racial and ethnic minority groups and individuals living in areas of high social vulnerability.

“We are honored to have received this award,” said Mary Brown, President and CEO, Sickle Cell Disease Foundation. “Our Foundation is committed to mitigating the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on the BIPOC community by increasing vaccination rates. All Californians, regardless of where they live, their working environment or their social supports deserve to live a healthy life.”

Through this grant, Sickle Cell Disease Foundation (SCDF) will establish the ***Networking Sickle Cell for Vaccine Access in the Western Region*** project by utilizing its satellite offices and its existing network of Sickle Cell Disease community-based organizations (CBOs), the Pacific Sickle Cell Regional Collaborative, to rapidly assemble teams within the state to address vaccine access needs and get as many people vaccinated as possible. The workers supported with this funding will answer individual questions, help make vaccine appointments, and assist with transportation and other needs. Additionally, SCDF will collaborate with at least five other states, including Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Colorado, to increase vaccine access among the Sickle Cell Disease patient population. The ***Networking Sickle Cell for Vaccine Access in the Western Region*** project will build upon existing programs, services, and activities of CBOs throughout each state, to address COVID-19 vaccine education and increase access to vaccine sites during the 12-month project period.

“It’s absolutely critical that all Californians are vaccinated in order to help reach herd immunity,” said Asuquo Moses Akpan, President, Sickle Cell Foundation of Arizona. We’re so grateful to have this partnership with the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation and to be the messengers in our community to make sure *all* populations and *all* individuals are protected against COVID-19.”

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA 21-40) developed this program to address COVID-19 related health disparities and advance health equity by mobilizing community outreach workers, such as community health workers, patient navigators, and social support specialists, to educate and assist individuals in getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

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**About the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation**

*The mission of the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation (SCDF) is to provide life-enhancing education, services, and programs for individuals living with sickle cell disease. SCDF broadens public awareness, delivers effective advocacy initiatives, and promotes innovative therapies to ultimately find a cure. Learn more by visiting [www.scdfc.org](http://www.scdfc.org).*