



Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation Initiative

AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION

HECCOP & COVAC: ONE YEAR LOOKBACK

As the American College Health Association looks back at the past year of working on U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Cooperative Agreement CK20-2003, we consider how the Higher Education COVID-19 Community of Practice (HECCOP) and [Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation \(CoVAC\) Initiative](#) have both advanced the mission of ACHA and served the field of higher education during this time of historic importance. The following represents selected highlights from HECCOP and CoVAC activities from February 2021 to February 2022.

Raising ACHA's National Profile and Shaping the Pandemic Response in Higher Education

As a result of the HECCOP and COVAC projects, ACHA has expanded and strengthened relationships with federal and state governmental entities, as well as national higher education organizations. In addition to deepening ACHA's partnership and collaborative efforts with the CDC, ACHA built extensive partnerships with the 20+ organizations serving on the project [Advisory Committees](#) (including the National Association of County and City Health Officials [NAACHO], Immunization Action Coalition, and others) and those signed on to the CDC Cooperative Agreement. Through these partnerships, ACHA:

- Provided extensive support to the White House to successfully launch the [COVID-19 College Vaccine Challenge](#) and consultation on other White House strategies
- Joined the [COVID Collaborative](#) National Advisory Council
- Shaped national dialogue through joint statements on relevant issues with the [American Council on Education \(ACE\)](#) and with [NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International \(ACUHO-I\)](#).
- Contracted with [Langer Research Associates](#), the firm responsible for the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's Societal Experts Action Network (SEAN) COVID-19 Survey Archive, to conduct research and analysis on college populations and successfully placed a demographic item on multiple waves of the Axios Coronavirus Index .

Building Multidisciplinary Community and Deepening Student Engagement

Recognizing that COVID-19 mitigation on campus is every community member's work, the two ACHA projects prioritized working across the silos that typically impede progress in higher education.

Building Professional Community

- The [Higher Education COVID-19 Community of Practice Discussion Forum in ACHA Connect](#) has over 9400 participants and over 530 posts as well as 24 shared resources. The active discussion forum is open to all campus personnel, not just ACHA members, drawing from allied fields including student affairs, dining, emergency management and more.
- We've hosted 18 Strategy Sessions, including several sessions specifically for members in states with COVID-19 public health restrictions. These sessions provide space for college health professionals to share challenges, successes, and find support from similarly situated colleagues. These sessions have informed our activities and given the COVID-19 Task Force an opportunity to hear in-the-moment input from the field.
- The HECCOP and CoVAC Year 1 and Year 2 Mini-Grant recipient listservs have served as an invaluable connection, so much so that Year 1 recipients requested that ACHA staff keep the listservs going after the grant period ended.

Deepening Student Engagement

- Both the HECCOP [Student Ambassador Toolkit](#) and the [VaxForward Vaccine Confidence Toolkit](#), developed with [CommunicateHealth](#), focused on engaging students as critical stakeholders in preventing the spread of COVID-19 on campus.
- HECCOP mini-grants were awarded specifically to facilitate student engagement in COVID-19 risk-mitigation strategies at 20 campuses. Seventy-three percent of CoVAC mini-grant recipients reported working with student ambassadors.
- The Juicer social wall on ACHA's CoVAC Website features student social media posts from the #Vaxforward [Social Media Engagement Campaign](#) with [Youth Marketing Connection](#).
- The Digital Peer Network launched in January and now has almost 100 student participants from 55 institutions and 29 states. The network is a virtual space for students active in COVID-19 mitigation to share resources and support and receive training in digital media strategies and other topics including how to best support students with disabilities and chronic health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prioritizing Health Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the health disparities that persist across settings, including on college and university campuses. We have endeavored to center equity on each project.

- The CoVAC Initiative [Health Equity Statement](#), drafted with input from Advisory Committee members to guide all future efforts, incorporated definitions from ACHA, CDC, and the World Health Organization.
- Discussions of health equity were a consistent presence throughout professional education opportunities; however, assets specifically focused on health equity included a [two-part webinar series](#), a list of [credible multilingual resources](#), and the publications "[Key Considerations for Vaccine Planning](#)" and "[Building the Case for Vaccine Confidence](#)."

- Applicants for [CoVAC Mini-Grants](#) (Cycles 1 and 2) were required to review the Health Equity Statement and describe how their program activities would support health equity on their campuses. Recipients in Cycle 1 were asked to do the same in evaluating their work.
- Data collection and analysis efforts by ACHA and [Langer Research Associates](#) explicitly examined disparate impacts and health disparities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic among students, faculty, and staff.
- ACHA staff have facilitated connections between the [CDC State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support Task Force](#) IHE Investigations Team and IHEs disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically mini-grant recipients and HBCUs, for focus groups and sharing of research opportunities.

Expanding the Pipeline of Professional Education and Development

The projects augmented ACHA's COVID-19 Task Force and staff efforts to provide robust and diverse opportunities for professional development and dissemination of guidance from CDC.

- With input from subject matter experts, HECCOP and CoVAC provided 17 webinars with 1,552 participants. Topics ranged from timely scientific updates on variants to modeling and testing to promoting health equity and student engagement. In 2022, CoVAC launched a monthly [digital media strategies](#) series.
- In addition to the Student Ambassador and VaxForward Toolkits, project publications have focused on areas of need (e.g., [Federal Support to Institutions of Higher Education for COVID-19 Testing and other Mitigation Strategies](#) and opportunities for professional innovation (e.g., [Using TikTok to Combat COVID-19: A Call to Action for Higher Education](#)).
- After observing the digital media challenges experienced by Year 1 Mini-Grant recipients, the CoVAC Initiative brought on a digital media and health communications consultant to offer [tutorials](#) and open office hours to grant recipients and ACHA members. CoVAC also produces [COVID In Focus](#) to support campus communicators with messaging and digital media assets.

Building the Knowledge Base, Synthesizing Learning, and Developing Best Practices

There was no existing playbook for higher education or the world in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The public health and college health fields continue to build this plane as we fly it. Core components of the projects focused on applying existing knowledge to the COVID-19 pandemic and coalescing developing knowledge to create promising, and eventually best, practices.

- [Langer Research Associates](#) ensured there would be a continuous stream of national level data on college populations and provided regular analysis of that data.
- HECCOP launched a [searchable online database](#) of campus COVID-19 policies and programs with 91 entries and over 1,300 views.

- HECCOP collaborated with the COVID Collaborative and eight other higher education partners to produce a [white paper](#) documenting key learning from campus response to COVID-19.
- HECCOP and CoVAC produced summary reports of the Year One mini-grant programs to inform future initiatives.
- The CoVAC Initiative Monthly Brief synthesizes timely information on COVID-19 management for campus decision makers.
- The projects' staff offer technical assistance for mini-grantees and ACHA members, fielding questions about resources and networking opportunities regularly through direct email and monitoring of the ACHA Connect Communities. The staff will also offer technical assistance to attendees of the 2022 ACHA Annual Meeting.

Actionable Next Steps

Based on our experiences in Year 1, we recommend that future CoVAC Initiative and ACHA efforts:

- Maintain and build connectivity with other national higher education organizations and government partners.
- Incorporate lessons learned from the projects into existing ACHA structures and strategies.
- Continue to center health equity in all COVID-19 efforts.
- Deepen use of social media to expand public facing engagement beyond ACHA membership.

HECCOP & COVAC BY THE NUMBERS

FEB '21 - FEB '22

HECCOP
Toolkit
Downloads

1060

126
Institutions
receiving
Mini-Grants

437.9k

Instagram Impressions
from YMC Ambassadors

9457

Community
of Practice
Discussion
Forum
participants

30+

Organizations
on Steering/
Advisory
Committees

1552

Webinar
Participants



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