

MONTEREY COUNTY
2020 CSAC Challenge Award Entry
Issue Area: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management
Population: Suburban County Category

Monterey County – COVID-19 Public Messaging Campaign

OVERVIEW: The COVID-19 Public Messaging Campaign creates and disseminates messages to educate the public and reinforce public health practices to stem the spread of COVID-19.

CHALLENGE: In the early days of the pandemic, the County struggled to stay abreast of dynamic events and to keep pace with the public’s need for consistent and accurate information. Messaging was initially handled by the County’s two (2) Public Information Officers (PIOs), but the volume of information, and need to reach both English and Spanish speakers, proved overwhelming. The Board of Supervisors directed that the County Administrative Officer (CAO) develop a more robust public messaging strategy.

SOLUTION: The COVID-19 Public Messaging Campaign was developed to communicate public health best practices aimed at dramatically reducing community spread. The campaign targets residents, businesses and visitors in a manner which achieves deep market penetration using print, social media, radio/television public service announcements, billboards and handout materials. The campaign is designed to help “flatten the curve” and create consistent branding of messages.

INNOVATION: The campaign is innovative in several ways. First, it is planned and coordinated via a weekly Zoom meeting by a collaborative team including the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, CAO, Health Director, Health Officer/Epidemiologist, PIO staff, and TMD Creative (the County’s private sector marketing design firm). Messaging is coordinated with local schools, cities and private sector industry associations (e.g., Monterey County Visitor and Convention Bureau, Monterey County Hospitality Association, Chambers of Commerce) and agricultural trade groups (e.g., Monterey County Vintners Association). Messaging is prepared in English and Spanish and placed extensively in local media markets and on social media. All content is shared freely via a Dropbox file, which has helped to successfully reach the community and built a collaborative “We are all in this together” spirit. And, messaging is specifically designed to address concerns particular to our community such as large social gatherings and techniques to maintain good public health practices in high density, shared living situations.

RESULTS: The program has been highly successful in reaching a majority of the population. The combination of traditional media (television, radio, print and outdoor) and digital media (web, social media, and digital targeting) achieved the strategic objective of reaching the largest cross section of the County's citizens. In the first phase of the campaign, the traditional media plan will reach over 80% of County residents with seven (7) impressions through various mediums. The digital campaign, largely aimed at Spanish speakers, has achieved a very high response rate of 23 times the national average. Social media channels have experienced tremendous utilization during the campaign period (post engagements are up 21% and post reach up 34%). TMD engaged Spanish speaking celebrities to help communicate important messages to the Spanish speaking population, which garnered tremendous positive feedback from the Spanish speaking community and community leaders. To reach the maximum number of households with children, TMD created a partnership with the Monterey County Office of Education to distribute a "COVID-19 Family Smart Guide" in English and Spanish which was received by nearly 80,000 households. Third-party independent research indicates that the campaign will reach over 85% of the County's population by the end of the calendar year.

REPLICABILITY: The County's program can easily be replicated. It involves the joining together of the Board of Supervisors, the County's health professionals, front line PIO staff, the CAO and a media marketing firm familiar with local demographics and an understanding of the techniques and messaging styles that most resonate with the local populace. This group acts as a steering committee to craft messaging content and to select the best platform for message delivery.

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION:

TV PSAs: [COVID-19 Kids PSA - ENGLISH](#)
[COVID-19 Don Cheto PSA - SPANISH](#)
[COVID-19 Eddie "Piolin" Sotelo PSA - SPANISH](#)

Print Ads: [How to Protect Yourself and Others in Your Household](#)
[Good Public Health is Good for Business](#)

One-Sheets: [Getting Back to Business](#)
[Visitors: Greetings and Welcome to Monterey County](#)