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Request for Proposal

Naloxone in Black: Post-campaign Evaluation in 7 US Cities

New York, NY
Date: March 12, 2025
Sites: Louisville (KY), Detroit (MI), Newark (NJ), Albuquerque (NM), Durham (NC), Philadelphia (PA), and Milwaukee (WI)

ABOUT VITAL STRATEGIES

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by a strong public health system. Our team uses innovative evidence-based strategies to develop and support sound public health policies and programs, including through the use of strategic communication campaigns for policy and behavior change. Our programs include tobacco control, road safety, maternal and child health, food policy, RESET alcohol, and overdose prevention. We work with governments and civil society in 105 countries to design and implement evidence-based strategies that tackle the most pressing public health problems. Our goal is to see governments adopt promising interventions at scale and as rapidly as possible. We use policy advocacy and strategic communication to urge governments to adopt proven strategies and partner with them to build the systems to implement these life-saving public health "best buys."

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Vital Strategies is designing and launching a media campaign to center and destigmatize harm reduction for Black communities as an effective, non-punitive, health-based response to drug use, and specifically to promote naloxone access and availability as prevention for overdose death. This campaign responds to the problem of disproportionately high and rising overdose mortality in the Black population in the United States with a focus in key cities and through targeted national media channels.

We have lost close to half a million people to overdose in the United States in the past five years. As momentum grows for a health-based response to drug use, overdose has also risen sharply in Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities. Overdose deaths in the Black population in the United States escalated sharply with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, by 44% from 2019 to 2020, a markedly higher rate than the already remarkable 30% increase in overdose deaths observed overall during this period. Notably, the problem of opioid overdose in the Black population was already increasing steadily over the 2010s, and overtook the white population mortality rate in 2018. Similarly, since the latter part of the last decade, stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamine have played a growing role in opioid-involved overdose deaths. In most parts of the country, poly-substance deaths now constitute more than half of all overdose deaths.

Despite significant broader efforts across the United States, there is substantial evidence and reports that harm reduction resources have not been effective in engaging Black people who use drugs through traditional methods and approaches. Critical information and tools such as naloxone medication to reverse opioid overdose are not reaching Black communities at the depth and scale necessary to reduce

overdose deaths. Given the dramatic increase in overdose in Black populations across the United States, targeted efforts designed in partnership with community leaders are urgently required to increase awareness and uptake of naloxone and, more broadly, to raise awareness and action to reverse the high and rising incidence of overdose mortality.

The Naloxone in Black project will create, launch, and evaluate a media campaign to destigmatize and promote naloxone awareness and uptake. The campaign will reach and speak to Black communities in the United States, with a particular focus on highly impacted local communities in Louisville (KY), Detroit (MI), Newark (NJ), Albuquerque (NM), Durham (NC), Philadelphia (PA), and Milwaukee (WI).

The goal of the proposed media campaign is to center and destigmatize harm reduction for Black communities as an effective, non-punitive, health-based response to drug use, with a specific focus on naloxone access and availability to prevent overdose deaths.

The communication objectives of the campaign are:

1. To **elevate awareness** about the rising and inequitable toll of overdose deaths in the Black community and, build support and urgency around harm reduction as a solution.

2. To **increase awareness** in highly impacted Black communities in the US with a particular focus on those in Louisville (KY), Detroit (MI), Newark (NJ), Albuquerque (NM), Durham (NC), Philadelphia (PA), and Milwaukee (WI), about the **utility and availability of naloxone** for reversing overdose and saving lives, and to promote access, demand and uptake.

3. To **center voices from Black communities** impacted by the overdose crisis, reduce stigma and normalize the use of naloxone.

4. To offer **harm reduction as an approach** and naloxone as a resource that counteracts the historical arc of punitive responses to drug use and the war on drugs legacy of racism.

Campaign Target Audience:

Gender	Men and Women
Primary audience	Community leaders (formal and informal) in Black communities
Secondary audience	Black communities in the Louisville (KY), Detroit (MI), Newark (NJ), Albuquerque (NM), Durham (NC), Philadelphia (PA), and Milwaukee (WI)

Using out of home (OOH)/ digital out of home (DOOH), digital displays, local radio, search engine marketing, earned media/public relations and paid social media advertising, the campaign will spotlight overdose response and increase **public awareness and understanding about overdose risk and response, support for health interventions, and demand for naloxone, the overdose reversal medication.**

Vital Strategies is seeking the services of a research agency to conduct two complementary studies:

1. A representative post-campaign evaluation survey for the upcoming media campaign.
2. A qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with selected stakeholders to assess knowledge, attitudes and behavior towards overdose risk and response, and demand for naloxone in the community. We ideally hope to interview a mix of formal and informal community leaders including faith-based leaders, local business owners, and social connectors.

Research agencies may submit proposals for one or both studies. Preference will be given to a single agency that can conduct both studies in-house.

RESEARCH DETAILS

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the **post-campaign evaluation survey** are to assess:

The effectiveness of a strategic media campaign to increase public awareness and uptake of naloxone and to destigmatize overdose response in Black communities.

Campaign effectiveness will be assessed by measuring the following indicators:

1. Assess campaign reach, recall and reactions towards the campaign by media channel. Reach can be calculated based on extrapolating the survey results, the numbers in the population that can be estimated to have been reached by the campaign.

2. Assess the reception of campaign message, including acceptability, persuasiveness, effectiveness and talkability, including in the Black population and the public.

3. Assess campaign-attributable changes in:
   a) Awareness, support, stigma and barriers for naloxone uptake in the black community
3. Increased knowledge of naloxone and overdose risk and response among the Black population.
   b) Understanding of opioid overdose as a significant local issue, including perceptions of risk and severity.
   c) Public beliefs about health services for people who use drugs (PWUD), focusing on naloxone use.
   d) Enhanced support for naloxone as a legal and accessible tool for preventing overdose deaths.
   e) Improved attitudes towards naloxone distribution and possession in the Black community.
   f) Greater willingness to use naloxone among community members.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Study 1: The Post-Campaign Survey

Sample and Method

The methodology must be capable of producing a scientific, representative sample of Black communities in the seven campaign cities (KY, MI, NJ, NM, NC, PA, WI).

Sample **inclusion** criteria: The sample should be representative of the Black population in Louisville metro area (KY), Detroit (MI), Newark (NJ), Albuquerque (NM), Durham (NC), Philadelphia (PA), and Milwaukee (WI) aged 25-70 years.

Sample **exclusion** criteria**:** The sample will exclude those that work in tobacco, alcohol, and market research industries, and those who are not local residents.

The target sample size is up to 200-400 respondents per city reflecting key socio-demographic groups (age, sex, socio-economic class). Please also provide cost-estimates for the following options:

a) Three options for questionnaire length – 10 mins, 15 mins, 20 mins
b) Within each of these, costs for surveys based on likely achievable maximum sample of the target audience (ex. 200-400 participants per city).

Use the template below:

10 mins

	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins			
Campaign City	Louisville	Detroit	Newark	Durham	Philadelphia	Milwaukee	Albuquerque	Scripting, SPSS, Data Tables	Project management & reporting	
Sample Size N=200-400										
Cost										**Total**

15 mins

	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins			
Campaign City	Louisville	Detroit	Newark	Durham	Philadelphia	Milwaukee	Albuquerque	Scripting, SPSS, Data Tables	Project management & reporting	
Sample Size N=200-400										
Cost										**Total**

20 mins	20 mins	20 mins	20 mins	20 mins	20 mins	20 mins	20 mins			
Campaign City	Louisville	Detroit	Newark	Durham	Philadelphia	Milwaukee	Albuquerque	Scripting, SPSS, Data Tables	Project management & reporting	
Sample Size N=200-400										
Cost										**Total**

It is anticipated that the survey will be conducted either online or via telephone. Please provide justification for the method recommended. Please describe in detail what your sample frame will be, and how the sample will be drawn. Please provide different sample size options with margin of error ranging from 3% – 6%. The sample size should be sufficiently large to enable statistically valid comparisons on the following variables: gender; age; education; SES (high vs. medium vs. low). To improve the efficiency of the sample, you may use quotas for critical variables. Please describe in detail how you will decide what the quotas for these variables ought to be. Please also describe the appropriate statistical adjustments (weighting) that will be applied to enable accurate analysis of the aggregated data. Please describe in full detail what your statistical adjustment approach will be.

Whatever the approach you choose to take (quotas/ oversampling etc.), **please include a table in your proposal that describes these** and please also explain how you have arrived at these estimates (i.e., what data sources you have used to calculate the expected number of completes). Please note: Response rate will need to be tracked and reported. VITAL STRATEGIES will base its research agency selection decision on the quality and scientific validity of the research methods proposed.

Questionnaire and Analysis:

We anticipate the survey length to be 20 minutes (please also price out the costs for a 10- and 15-minute survey). Vital Strategies will work closely with the selected agency on the development of the questionnaire. *The questionnaire must be pilot tested prior to full launch of data collection.*

Analyses of the data should include standard descriptive statistics (frequencies, means) with significance testing (t-tests, chi-squares etc.) and comparisons of key groups like gender, age, SES etc, to be decided prior to the analysis.

Standard descriptive statistics (frequencies, means) with significance testing (t-tests, chi-squares etc.) and comparisons of key groups like gender, age, SES, etc., to be decided prior to the analysis. The comparison of results in campaign aware vs unaware should be done.

Multivariate approaches (like regression analysis) to assess campaign-attributable changes in the population must be included. We require a rigorous logistics regression analysis or other advanced

analysis to assess the impact of campaign exposure on outcome indicators while holding potential confounders constant.

Study 2: In-depth Interviews (IDIs)
Vital Strategies will provide a list of stakeholders for in-depth interviews (IDIs), in addition to those recruited by the agency. Stakeholders may include workers involved in the delivery of services, religious and community leaders, business owners, and social connectors such as local radio and media personalities, activists, etc. The sample will exclude those that work in tobacco, alcohol and market research industries. We believe that at least 15-20 participants must be interviewed in total but welcome agency input on the total number of interviews.

Each interview will last 60-90 minutes and may be conducted either in person or via online face-to-face methods. The agency is expected to justify the recommended method.

Discussion Guidebook and Analysis

Vital Strategies will work closely with the selected agency on the development of the discussion guide. *The discussion guide must be pilot tested prior to launch of full launch of data collection.*

Analyses of the data should include descriptions of the participants (gender, age, SES, occupation, etc.) including a clear rationale of their selection.

Please describe the protocol to ensure that the thematic analysis is **rigorous and reliable,** such as clear and consistent method for coding and analyzing the themes from the narrative data, and how these were derived, setting checks for consistency of coding, verification of transcripts by participants, etc.

AGENCY DELIVERABLES
VITAL STRATEGIES will require a research agency to provide all the following:

1. Produce research tools for submission to the Institutional Review Board including study methodology, informed consent documents, questionnaire and discussion guide.
2. *For the survey:* Design a scientifically valid sampling plan and methodology; provide detailed documents that describe the sampling plan and relevant details. If weighting is conducted, then all relevant parameters, and basis for the development of the weights, must be provided.
3. *For the survey:*
   a) Training interviewers.
   b) Printing necessary materials.
   c) Overseeing all field activities and preparations.
   d) Pretesting the survey instrument(s).
   e) Monitoring quality of data collected; and
   f) Ensuring that agreed upon timelines and protocol are adhered to.
   g) Share the documents related to sampling.
   h) Develop weights and share the documents related to development of weights.
   i) Calculation of response rate.
   j) Share the documents related to quality control.

4. *Data requirements for the survey:*
   a) Clean and analyze data; Provide SPSS syntax file used for data analysis and data cleaning
   b) Create data tabulations/data tables in Excel (in English) by subgroups like age, gender, awareness of campaign and driving status etc.;
   c) Create a data file in SPSS format (in English); this datafile must contain all the variables calculated for the analysis, including weights.
5. ***For the IDIs:***
   a) Create and submit audio recordings, and narrative transcripts of the IDIs.
   b) Create and submit an NVIVO data file (compatible with NVIVO 20 on Mac OS), along with the coding framework utilized.
6. Prepare and submit topline and final reports in ppt/word format in English. Also submit PowerPoint version of the findings for use in stakeholder presentations.
7. Provide Vital Strategies with regular contact and meeting reports on progress of the research initiative until the project is complete, including at least four conference calls to discuss:
   a) the requirements of this project
   b) the protocol/questionnaire, to ensure it is clear.
   c) the practice exercise, and
   d) the overall impressions of this initiative once the survey is complete.
8. Any other tasks the agency deems necessary for successful implementation of the pre-testing protocol, and/or has been requested by Vital Strategies.

Deliverables for this RFP for both the studies are as follows:

1. A technical proposal, which includes research methodology, sampling (in detail), research objectives, areas of inquiry, deliverables of the study, timeline and work plan including quality check measures, recruitment etc.
2. Clear project management plan, including time frame with key milestones and activities indicated for pre-testing.
3. Evidence of the agency's capacity to conduct this study successfully:
   a) A clear statement of agency personnel, capabilities, capacity and experience
   b) Primary contact
   c) Detailed CVs of the actual person(s) involved in the study (including moderator(s) and his/her experience, data analysis person, project manager, investigators, report writer and other people who will be involved in the study)
   d) Demonstration of previous experience with similar studies (i.e. road safety), or other public health issues for multilateral, international, governmental or academic clients.
4. Quote of fees in US dollars and in local currency, inclusive of taxes and any additional charges.
5. Timeline of activities based on fieldwork (start dates required).
6. Relevant experience and capability: All information on relevant experience needs to be shared in annexes. Organization's capability in terms of its field offices (country specific and international), staff, etc. also needs to be provided. The format for sharing a list of relevant studies would be:

List of the relevant studies

Sr. No	Assignment Name	Name of the Client	Study (quantitative and/or qualitative) methods and details	Total sample and sampling strategies

Conflicts of interest
Vital Strategies will not entertain proposals from agencies that currently or within the past 2 years have held contracts or business relationships with tobacco, e-cigarette, or alcohol manufacturer or distributor industries.

Ethics and Internal Review Board (IRB)
Considering the scope of work outlined for this study, the agency will ascertain and advise Vital Strategies if for such studies, involving no or minimal risk, it needs ethics or internal review board approval as a human subject's research activity before proceeding with the work. In the event ethics or internal review board approval is required, the agency shall undertake the IRB work to obtain necessary approvals.

Timeline and Selection of Agencies
The scientific rigor of the proposed methodology will be a key factor in agency selections. The successful research agency will be selected by a panel of selectors within Vital Strategies based on the scientific merit, ability to deliver against project goals at the highest quality and within the scheduled time, and value for money.

How to Apply
Please send completed proposals, including a cost proposal with detailed budget by **Midnight ET** on **April 7, 2025**. Send the proposal to Melina S. Magsumbol (mmagsumbol@vitalstrategies.org) and Rachel Rothenstein-Henry (rhenry@vitalstrategies.org) with the subject as [Subject: Agency name - Naloxone in Black submitted proposal].

Budget
Please include a cost proposal and budget detail with your submission. We will consider a range of cost estimates and review these for best value and cost-effectiveness, however, we anticipate that our available budget for this work will be approximately $60,000.

Informational Webinar
Interested vendors are encouraged to attend our informational webinar on **March 25, 2025, 11 am ET** for a more detailed discussion about this project and an opportunity for a question-and-answer session before submitting proposals. **Please register to attend the webinar.**

Note: Agencies are encouraged to submit proposals for both studies; however, if they prefer to focus on only one study (either the survey or the qualitative study) based on their expertise, that is also acceptable.

For more information, please contact:
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