

RRTF Communications Group

Campaign Proposal

Updated 3/8/21

RRTF Communications Proposal

Executive Summary

After wrapping up the successful, three-phase Back on the Bull public health communications program ending in December 2020, the RRTF Communications Group has prepared the following proposal.

Background/Current Situation

Durham residents seemingly have performed better than many other communities, both locally and nationally, in wearing masks, staying at home, and abiding by local government orders to prevent spread of the virus. The careful, proactive attention to education and communication has no doubt contributed our relative success.

While data demonstrates these measures and practices have been effective in helping control the virus in Durham with somewhat greater success than other communities, Durham has still seen surges in cases and variants are now active across the country and state. Vaccinations are underway in Durham, but we have a long way to go before we reach a level that can lower transmission and protect the wider population. Early surveys conducted by Public Health and community forums have revealed significant levels of vaccine hesitancy in Durham that could delay our recovery efforts.

Our recovery hinges upon most Durham residents getting vaccinated. Early data suggests that those communities at highest risk from COVID-19 (our Latinx and Black residents where we have seen the highest concentration of cases and higher rates of morbidity) are getting vaccinated at much lower rates. In addition to operational and logistical challenges of vaccine distribution, Durham will need a proactive strategy to address vaccine hesitancy that builds confidence in the vaccine based on science and the voices and testimonies of trusted messengers.

Additionally, there is a risk that we will see a decrease in compliance with public health safety measures now that vaccine distribution has started; however, we know from public health experts that we will need to continue to wear masks and practice the 3Ws – even if vaccinated – for at least several more months and likely longer. With new, more contagious variants of COVID-19 now in the U.S., we cannot let down our guard and give in to “pandemic fatigue” as we enter what is hopefully the last, difficult stretch.

Given these considerations, we recommend the City and County allocate additional funds to support ongoing communications efforts. The program is again divided into two phases, clearly demarking points

at which we will assess the needs and messaging for upcoming periods. At this time, RRTF's Communications Group seeks funding only for the first of the two phases, which would carry us through May 2021 that is designed to encourage vaccination and continued practice of the 3Ws.

Audience

After the initial rollout of the program, community health ambassadors have proven most effective in driving business participation in the Back on the Bull initiative. Therefore, we recommend the communications group focus on messaging to the general public, in English and Spanish, with the goal of reaching every resident multiple times to promote awareness.

Recommended Budget

We recommend the City and County direct a total \$150,650 to a communications campaign running from February - May 2021. The campaign can be implemented at higher or lower levels of funding, which will affect the reach and frequency of the campaign proportionally. Since success at stopping virus spread for the community is dependent on everyone following the proscribed protocols and most getting vaccinated, significantly lower levels of funding would jeopardize the campaign's ability to achieve the following objectives and might better be used in other ways.

Communications Objectives

1. Encourage people to get the vaccine as soon as it becomes available to them.
2. Encourage sustained compliance with public health and safety protocols, even while awaiting and after getting the vaccine.
3. Support community-wide economic recovery.

Full Proposal

Following the successful execution of Phases 1-3 through December 2020, the Communications Group has prepared the following proposal to continue the momentum behind the Back on the Bull health and safety campaign into 2021. As positive case counts and hospitalizations stabilize, and vaccinations are now underway, new messaging considerations have emerged as the need to centralize information and guidance remains as critical as it was at the onset of the pandemic.

Per Durham County Public Health's Data Hub, when Communications Group's plan was approved for Phases 1-3 at the end of July 2020, there was a 5,769 running case total and a 7-day moving average of 55. The budget for Phases 1-3 totaled \$278,495 for a 6-month long plan (July-December). In mid-January, when finalizing this proposal for Phases 4-5, the running case count total was 17,878 and we were experiencing a 7-day moving average of 172. The City of Durham's Office of Public Affairs was able to fill the gap since our funding ended through the use of Coronavirus Recovery Act Funds. However, the efforts supported by these funds ended in February. At this time, RRTF's Communications Group is asking for an additional \$150,650 to effectively continue messaging efforts for the next few months (Feb – May).

Phases 1-3 incentivized businesses to participate in a self-certification health and safety process, established brand awareness, and encouraged residents to support local businesses that were taking the necessary steps to reduce COVID-19 transmission. Over 1,000 businesses have completed the health and safety checklist and are participating in the campaign. With Community Health Ambassadors now on

board effectively reaching hundreds of businesses each month, the Communications Group plans to shift the focus of its outreach more strategically to Durham residents, with messaging intended to encourage residents to get vaccinated and remain vigilant in practicing the 3Ws.

The campaign will continue to rely on significant pro bono work from members of the Communications Group and represented teams (e.g., CAH, City, County, Discover Durham, the Chamber, El Centro, tilde Language Justice Cooperative). In light of the ongoing resource requirements to plan, execute, track and report on the campaign, Discover Durham has built in a 15% fee that will partially offset the resources devoted to the effort. Discover Durham has estimated the pro bono time donated for the first three phases of the campaign (July-December) at 2,500-3,000 hours, involving more than 10 staff members in content and creative development, media planning and buying, video production, PR, accounting, and general management, and anticipate that the ongoing efforts required to support phases 4-5 will be similar.

Phasing:	Funds Requested:	Funds Required By:
Phase 4 – February – May (Current request)	\$150,650	Feb 15, 2020
Phase 5 – June – July (Future request)	\$88,550	May 15, 2020
Total:	\$239,200	

The “funds required by” dates will enable Discover Durham and the Communications Group to execute the following marketing activations on schedule. Delays in receiving the funds will require the advertising buys and other executions to be modified. We are currently only seeking funds for Phase 4, and will come back with an additional request in the spring if the Task Force feels further communications efforts are warranted.

Phase 4: Encouraging Vaccination and the Continuation of 3Ws (February - May)

Purpose: Address inequities in vaccination rates in Durham and decrease the likelihood of lower compliance with the 3Ws as more people begin to get vaccinated.

The following plan seeks to advance the above goals through a strategic communications campaign that:

- Provides weighted targeting of messaging to historically marginalized communities who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.
- Recruits and regularly highlights trusted messengers and influencers in Durham who have either gotten the vaccine or pledge to get it when it becomes available and who can educate and inform residents about the safety, efficacy, and critical importance of receiving the vaccine as early as permitted.
- Promotes weekly vaccine townhalls (organized by Greenlight Durham and led by physicians and trusted community members) that can be accessed through the Back on the Bull website.
- Develops and promotes a local vaccine pledge campaign to build support for the vaccine, especially among historically marginalized populations. The benefit of a pledge is that it provides

a vehicle for trusted messengers in later eligibility phases to express their commitment to be vaccinated.

- Co-designs some materials through 2 – 3 community design workshops with residents from historically marginalized communities who reside in census tracts with higher rates of COVID-19 cases.
- Drives home the connection to getting vaccinated and returning a new normal that includes our children returning to in-person instruction.
- Further empowers trusted messengers (like, for example, faith leaders) to champion vaccination by providing them with a communications toolkit and specific ways to use it. RRTF's Places of Worship Roundtable has already requested assistance in developing strategies to champion the vaccine among their faith communities.
- Encourages residents to stay home, but when they need to venture out, to stay safe by practicing the 3Ws – even after getting vaccinated -- and using resources like Back on the Bull to find businesses practicing health and safety guidelines.
- Provides "I got vaccinated" buttons to everyone getting vaccinated at Duke Health or Public Health that create greater awareness in the community of others getting the vaccine and give people a quick, easy way to help champion the vaccine to the friends and neighbors (this is similar to why we provide "I voted" stickers, but we need something more durable than a sticker given how long it will take us to widely distribute the vaccine).
- Provides clear, user-friendly guidance to residents on how to register for the vaccine, when to register (what phase we are in), and what to expect.
- Promotes the new vaccine portal and its vaccine navigators (if Greenlight Durham's vaccine navigation portal is approved), with special focus on raising awareness and use of the portal among historically marginalized populations.

Strategic paid marketing support requested:

Medium	Funds Requested	Projected Outlets
Digital	\$20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook & Instagram – English & Spanish ○ Google Display Network – English & Spanish ○ Google Search Network – English & Spanish
TV	\$50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WRAL-TV ○ WTVD-TV ○ Univision ○ Spectrum cable rotator
Radio	\$17,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WUNC-FM ○ WCHL-FM ○ La Ke Buena ○ Curtis Media Group

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ iHeart Radio ○ Radio One
Print materials	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-lingual educational print collateral piece delivered to Durham households in census tracts where we have seen higher rates of COVID-19 cases, and to locations frequented by residents, like grocery stores.
Billboard	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally in more prominent location(s) along NC-147
"I got vaccinated" Buttons	\$24,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100,000 "I got vaccinated" buttons for distribution at Duke Health and Public Health clinics (including Spanish versions)
Management	\$19,650	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of budget to offset staffing costs for Discover Durham, which will oversee the campaign and all media placements.
Total:	\$150,650	

Media Placement Notes

- Advertising and collateral should supplement an influencer outreach campaign, recruiting community leaders to get on board with getting vaccinated and sharing messaging with their constituents
- Facebook, Instagram, and the Google Display Network performed well in Phases 1-3
- Digital will enable us to target users by interests, directing them to content pieces specific to what they're interested in
- TV offers the most widespread reach, and we can align our messaging with local news programming. It's likely that we'll need a new spot created to be more in tune with the health and safety messaging of Phase 4 as opposed to encouraging people to support local business. Each of the TV outlets should be able to create spots as added value.
- It will be the first time we place a cable rotator with Spectrum News to reach a broader audience across cable channels.
- Billboards will help maintain campaign awareness, with a bigger budget for better placements along NC-147. Previous budget was only big enough for us to buy along I-85 in Northern Durham and 70.
- Radio also has a broad reach with messaging that can be more tailored to audiences. Radio stations recommended were great partners during Phases 1-3. Added iHeart Radio into the mix for broader audiences and reach.
- Grassroots efforts rely on durable, physical products and toolkits to empower others to be champions for the vaccine and the 3Ws.

Estimated advertising reach:

- Digital: 2.5 million impressions
- TV broadcast: 1.5 million impressions
- Radio: 270,000 impressions

- Billboard: 300,000 impressions
- Direct Mail: 120,000 households
- **Total estimated reach: 4.32 million impressions**

APPENDIX A: Future Phase in Development

IN PLANNING: Phase 5: A New Normal (June - July)

The group does not seek funds for this phase at this time but has included the information below to outline our initial thoughts on communications priorities as we head into the summer. We plan to bring this phase back for consideration in the spring.

Purpose: Continue promoting the need for vaccination as warranted; shift back to empowering residents to make informed decisions, while incorporating more ideas and ways to safely support local businesses and events as the possibility for greater in-person interaction may increase.

Strategic paid marketing support might include the following:

Medium	Funds Requested	Projected Outlets
Digital	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook & Instagram – English & Spanish
TV	\$45,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WRAL-TV ○ WTVD-TV ○ Spectrum cable rotator ○ Univision
Radio	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curtis Media Group ○ Radio One
Print	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected outlets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indy Week ○ Que Pasa ○ La Conexion
Grassroots efforts	\$2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage in public gathering places • TBD based on vaccination process
Management	\$11,550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of budget, to offset staffing costs
Total:	\$88,550	

High-level notes and explanation of Phase 6 placement and messaging:

- Assuming people will be interested in events and things to do, we have added back entertainment cable rotators, a print section and will focus on social advertising to target people interested in events and things to do.
- Grassroots efforts should shift to adding signage and other signals in common meeting places during the warmer months, though there will potentially still be a need for durable “PPE” materials, vaccination rewards, etc.
- From roundtable discussions with festivals and event owners, we expect more hybrid events to take place starting in the late spring – marketing efforts could help raise awareness of festivals that are safely being organized.
- There may be a need for continued messaging on steps we all need to take to support the resumption of more regular, in-person instruction for Durham children over the summer and into the fall.
- Summer campaign messaging could include celebratory messages that recognize everyday COVID heroes who helped Durham’s recovery – uplifting messages as we come out of a long winter and spring.
- Messages helping people understand and orient to the “new normal”

Estimated advertising reach:

- Digital: 2 million impressions
- TV broadcast: 2 million impressions
- Radio: 100,000 impressions
- Print: 60,000 impressions
- **Total estimated reach: 4.16 million impressions**

Memo to the RRTF Finance Subcommittee

The original memo was sent to the RRTF Finance Subcommittee in January and has been updated prior to the BOCC meeting on March 8.

The finance subcommittee of RRTF has asked for the Communications Group to refine the 2021 campaign proposal and reinforce the Back on the Bull campaign’s impact compared other planned communications efforts. This memo reports on conversations with contacts responsible for vaccine messaging at Durham County Department of Public Health (DCoPH), Duke Health, the City of Durham, and Greenlight Durham, and Alliance Health earlier this year. Additional information from Durham Public Schools and other agencies has been considered and incorporated into this updated summary. With this added insight in mind, the Communications Group presents options for the finance subcommittee to consider prior to presenting the proposal to City Council and the Board of County Commissioners.

Key learning: The Back on the Bull campaign’s most critical value proposition is to maintain its complementary role to official public health messaging.

- Background from DCoPH: As of the last conversation with communication professionals at Durham County Public Health Department, it is unclear if or when they will receive marketing funds from the state and federal government. Communications contacts were also waiting to find out how much money will be allocated to support messaging efforts before finalizing an outreach plan. What was made clear in conversation was DCoPH's priority, once budget becomes available, will be to target messaging to underserved and minority communities in Durham via media partnerships with relevant outlets – specifically, Hispanic and Black media outlets.
- Back on the Bull's complementary role to DCoPH: RRTF can make a difference by ensuring a baseline level of communication to all Durham residents, as opposed to relying or assuming the funds received by DCoPH will be enough to achieve an impactful reach or frequency. As outlined in the original proposal, the Back on the Bull efforts in 2021 will be developed to support health and safety communications outreach both to broad audiences, and with focused attention on marginalized communities, all of which will regularly point back to DCoPH's website and resources for official guidance. With complete approval of the budget by the City and County put forth in this proposal, RRTF can reach both broad and niche audiences with health and safety messaging. Dedicated budget within this 2021 proposal will place advertising with minority media outlets targeting Black and Hispanic/Latinx populations. If the City or County do not fund this proposal in full, then the RRTF Communications Committee will work closely in tandem with public health to ensure advertising is coordinated to most efficiently reach the audiences with appropriate weighting toward communities most affected by the pandemic. Funds to support the visibility and awareness of the Back on the Bull vaccine pledge (Phase 4), therefore directly and indirectly support DCoPH in their communications efforts.
- Background from Duke Health: As Duke Health begins to administer vaccines, communications representatives plan to position the act of getting vaccinated as “one more step” towards being healthy and protecting the community. Messaging will be balanced with additional messaging about maintaining healthy behaviors, even after individuals are vaccinated. The “one more step,” Duke-branded campaign rolled out in-market after the holidays, targeted to the groups that are first in line for receiving the vaccine as outlined by the state's plan. Ad placements had not been finalized yet, as, at the time of our outreach, as Duke Health was waiting to learn more about supply and to gauge how quickly Durham County and the Triangle will move through the various phases of population groups before contracting with various media outlets or securing media partnerships.
- Back on the Bull's complementary role to Duke Health: Duke Health communications professionals are pleased, to date, to have Back on the Bull as a complementary campaign adding context and other helpful resources to maintaining healthy behaviors. Duke Health acknowledged that the buy-in and educational components of the Back on the Bull campaign for local business owners is very important to larger community wellbeing – and is outside of their campaign scope. Phase 5 of the proposal will effectively allow for Back on the Bull's safe and responsible messaging about economic recovery to complement both DCoPH and Duke Health's campaign, in accordance with the overarching, strategic imperatives of RRTF.

• **Key learning:** We all have a role to play in helping Durham Public Schools resume in-person instruction.

- Background shared from DPS: Getting DPS staff vaccinated this spring is crucial to resuming in-person instruction. During initial conversations, DPS leadership anticipated significant vaccine

hesitancy among staff. Further, all Durhamites have a role to play in helping DPS resume in person instruction by reaffirming our commitment to practice the 3Ws. Elected leaders have expressed interest in seeing Back on the Bull focus some of its communications on driving home the steps we all need to take if we want to see our children resume in person instruction safely.

- Back on the Bull's complementary role to supporting DPS: Phase 4 of the proposal aims to decrease vaccine hesitancy through a variety of strategies outlined in this proposal. BotB can also include in some campaign materials specific references to the steps we all can take to get our kids back in school safely. Our communications team is also open to holding a focus group with DPS staff to co-design some messaging.

Key learning: Back on the Bull can play a crucial role in raising awareness of a suite of new offerings from Greenlight Durham that are designed to make it easier to navigate vaccination, to connect to trusted peer vaccine navigators, and to get answers to questions and concerns that contribute to hesitancy.

- Background from Greenlight Durham: Greenlight is submitting a new proposal to RRTF that outlines a number of innovative approaches designed to improve residents' experiences around vaccination in Durham (see Greenlight's new proposal for details).
- Back on the Bull's complementary role in supporting Greenlight: We have discussed embedding these new resources in the Back on the Bull website and using our communications plan to raise awareness of these new resources and ensure Durham residents know how to access them. A partnership between Back on the Bull and Greenlight can ensure we leverage both resources and get the most from public investments. Greenlight has partnered with DCoPH, Duke Department of Community Health, La Semilla, and Project Access to ensure more equitable access to vaccines. The opportunity has been extended to historically marginalized communities and to those who have difficulty accessing appointments (due to language and transportation barriers). BotB's support and messaging about these services as well as Greenlight's Spanish-language town hall meetings and other services for minority groups in Durham supports RRTF's commitment to supporting all communities and demographics in Durham.

Key learning: Back on the Bull can play a supportive role in ensuring residents are aware of mental health resources available to them.

- Background from conversation with Ann Oshel at Alliance Health: Ms. Oshel shared that Alliance would like to partner with RRTF and Back on the Bull to help get the word out about mental health resources available to Durham residents. She said Alliance needs additional partners to help them reach more Durham residents and that she thinks the Back on the Bull campaign has been an effective vehicle for reaching broad audiences.
- Back on the Bull can begin including information from Alliance on our marketing resources to increase awareness about signs that people may need assistance and how to access these supports. RRTF will also begin working through our roundtables to create greater awareness among community leaders and to arm them with the resources they can share more widely.

After conferring with our peers, it's clear that the 2021 Back on the Bull campaign proposal plays an important, complementary role in the recovery and renewal of Durham. Based on these conversations we have refined the original proposal submitted to RRTF in the following ways:

- We have consolidated phases 4 and 5 to place more focus on vaccination messaging. Our previous proposal included separate phases for continued compliance with public health protocols (the 3Ws) and vaccination. We now believe these two messages should be integrated into one phase that drives the importance of continuing to practice the 3Ws while we await and after we get the vaccine.
- We have incorporated more specific strategies into phase 4, including “I got vaccinated” buttons – supported by Duke Health and Public Health – and some of the work Greenlight plans to advance.
- We have incorporated more grassroots outreach strategies that leverage our roundtables and help support more people in amplifying our messages and championing the vaccine.
- We plan to incorporate messages that help educate residents of the mental health resources available and of the steps we all need to take to support a return to in-person learning for Durham children.

The process of “sharpening of pencils” and reinforcing the original proposal has led the Communications Group to lower the initial amount requested from \$277K to approximately \$150K and offer two options to the RRTF subcommittee:

1. Endorse the full amount requested for phase 4. Please note, in this revised version, we are not seeking funding at this time for phase 5 which would begin this summer. We recommend seeing how things develop and coming back to RRTF in late April with plans for phase 5.
2. If the finance committee does not feel comfortable endorsing the budget in full for Phase 4, we suggest removing or lowering the amount allocated to specific line items (for example, removing funding for buttons or billboards). This would reduce reach and frequency of communications.