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TRB Webinar: Next Step— Inclusive Virtual Public Involvement

December 12, 2023

Noon Eastern

TCRP Research Report 241: Inclusive Virtual Public Involvement for Public Transit

Transit Agency Findings

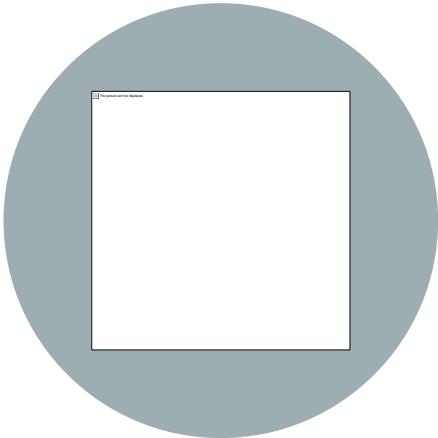
Ryan Walsh, AICP/PP
FHI Studio



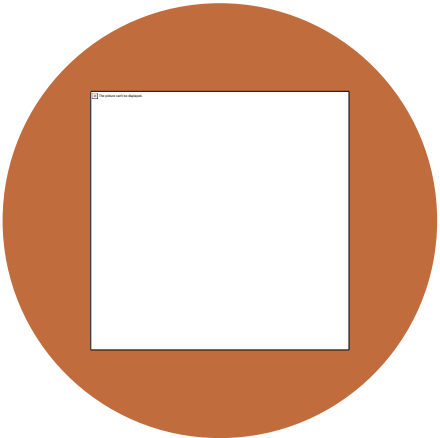
Agenda

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Overview of Findings
- Key Themes
- Measures of Success
- Areas for Future Research
- Lessons Learned

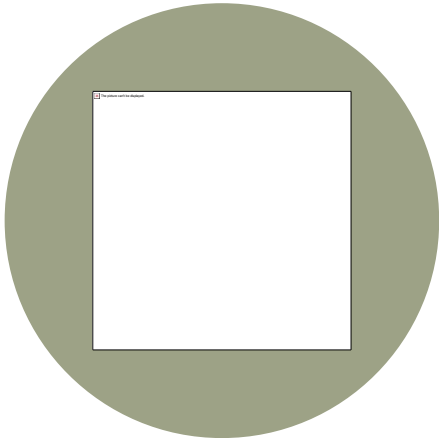
Introduction



VPI tools have have
great potential

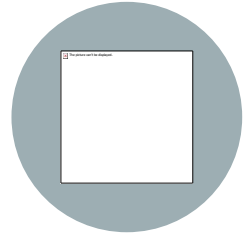


They can lead to
more inclusive
public input

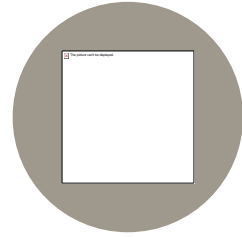


Gap in
understanding the
current state of
practice

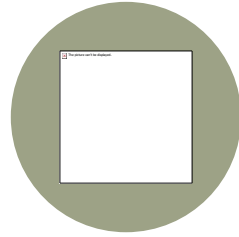
Methodology



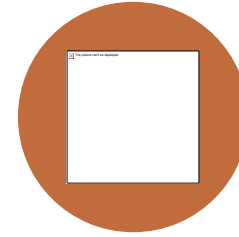
NATIONAL SURVEY
OF TRANSIT AGENCY
REPRESENTATIVES



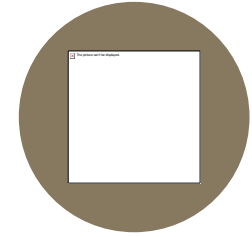
SELECTION CRITERIA
FOR PARTICIPANTS



KEY QUESTIONS ON
EXPERIENCES WITH
VPI, ESPECIALLY
BEFORE AND
DURING THE COVID-
19 PANDEMIC



FOCUS GROUPS
WITH TRANSIT
AGENCIES



RECORDING AND
SUMMARIZATION OF
DISCUSSIONS

Overview of Findings

Increased use of VPI during the pandemic

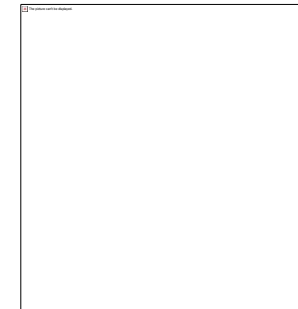
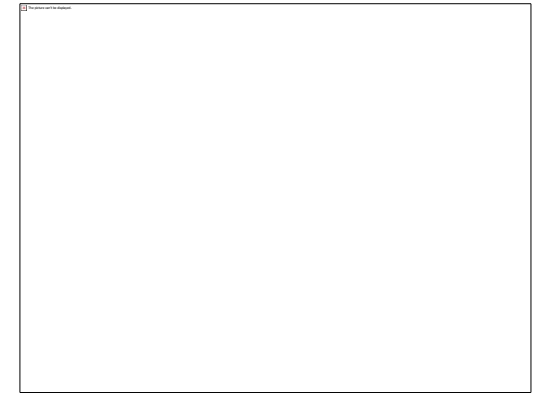
Expectation of continued use post-pandemic

Substantial increase in public participation levels

Overview of Findings

Popular VPI Tools

- Virtual meeting platforms (Zoom, Webex, Teams)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, NextDoor)
- YouTube and Facebook Live
- VPI platforms (PublicInput.com, Remix, Citizen Lab, MetroQuest)
- Collaboration tools (MURAL, Jam Board)
- Project websites



Overview of Findings

Technology Limitations



Challenges in hybrid virtual/in-person meetings



Internal technology departments as limiting factors



Varied experiences for large vs. small transit agencies

Key Themes in VPI Use

Challenges

**Achieving
Equity and
Inclusion**

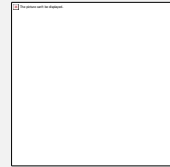
**Language,
Accessibility,
and Privacy
Considerations**

*BART's Link21 Program
contracted with CBO's to
conduct VPI*

Key Themes in VPI Use Opportunities



Meeting Customer Needs and Preferences

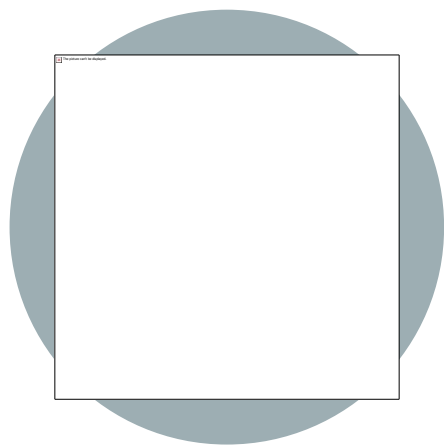


Integrating Virtual and Traditional Methods

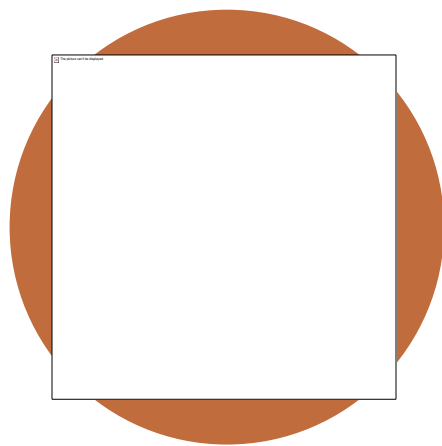


Publicizing and Promoting Virtual Engagement Opportunities

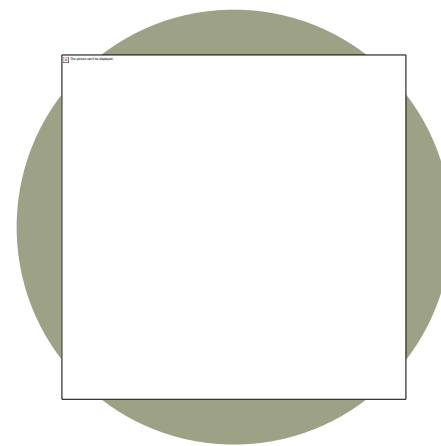
Measures of Success



Gauging effectiveness, equity, and efficiency

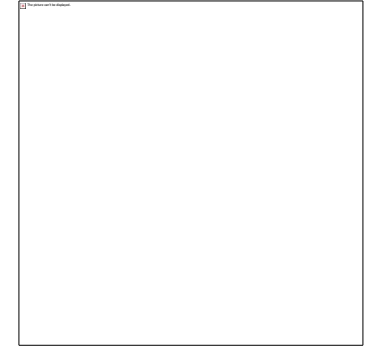
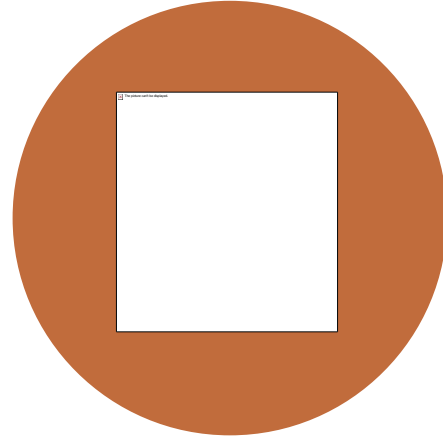
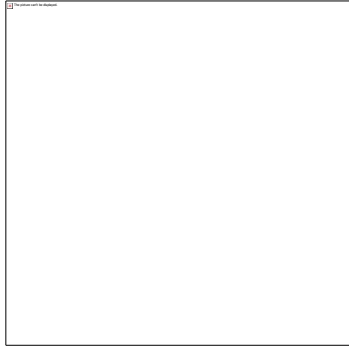


Measurable benefits of VPI, included cost and time savings, expansion of reach, better serving customer needs.



Quantifying these aspects can deliver additional benefits

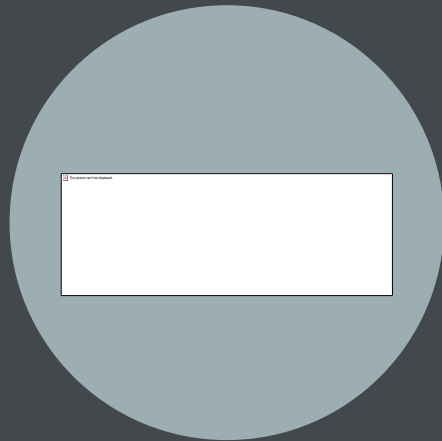
Suggested Area for Further Research



Facilitating virtual meetings
for controversial projects

Lessons Learned

Importance of:



Flexibility



Innovation



Adaptation

Thank You

TCRP Research Report 241: Inclusive Virtual
Public Involvement for Public Transit

Focus Groups with Community Organizations

Cate Heady

Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University



Presentation Agenda

- Objective of Focus Groups
- Methods
 - Represented Organizations
 - Questions
- Key Outcomes
- Discussion Highlights
 - Examples





Objective



To better understand successes and challenges in planning and implementing VPI with underserved communities.



Provide an opportunity to collect recommendations and strategies across agencies, fields of work, and geographies.



Methods

- 3 focus groups between August and September 2022
 - One supplemental interview
- Participants
 - **Individuals from various sectors outside public transportation, including:**
 - **Community-based organizations**
 - **Nonprofits**
 - **Social service organizations**
 - Experts in Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) and public engagement
- 21 organizations were represented
- Variety of geographies
- Work and services targeted different populations



Represented Organizations

- National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Washington, DC
- Blooming Health, New York, NY
- Stonewall Community Development Center, New York, NY
- National Hispanic Council on Aging, Washington, DC
- Age Friendly Englewood, Englewood, NJ
- Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, Cullman, AL
- Arts for the Aging, Rockville, MD
- Louisville Free Public Library, Louisville, KY
- OutstandingLife, Boston, MA
- Avenida Guadalupe Association, San Antonio, TX
- Support Center Online, New York, NY
- Job Path, New York, NY
- League of Women Voters, Washington, DC
- DOROT, Westchester, NY
- Poder English Works, Chicago, IL
- Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- El Sol Science and Arts Academy, Santa Ana, CA
- LGBTQIA+ Aging Project, Fenway Health, Boston, MA
- Erie Neighborhood House, Chicago, IL
- Metropolitan Family Service/AARP Experience Corps, Portland, OR
- Metropolitan Family Service, Portland, OR



Focus Group Questions

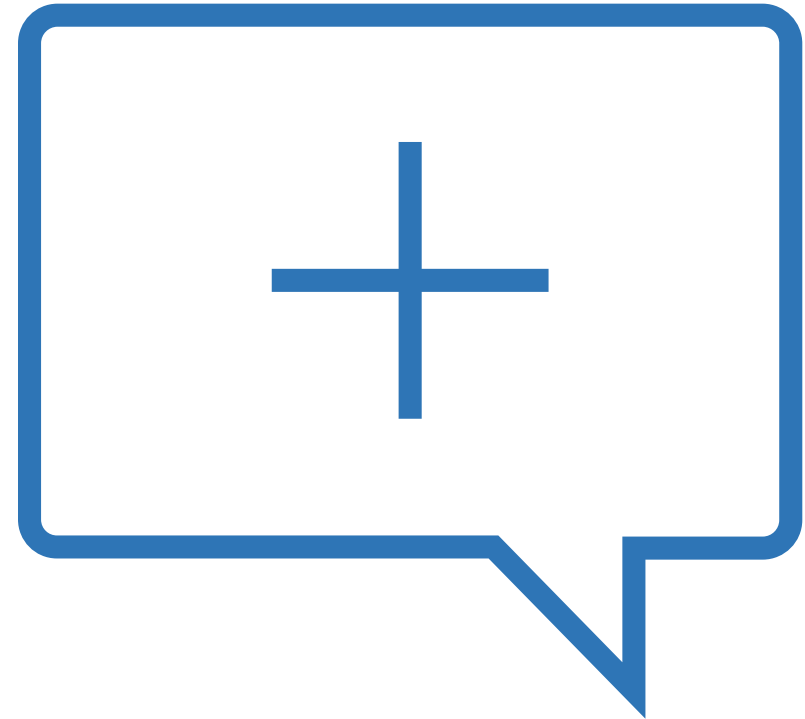
- Part I: Introductions
 - Roles, missions, geographic reach, and communities served.
- Part II: Engagement During-COVID-19
 - Impact and adjustments due to COVID-19.
 - Effectiveness and challenges of virtual strategies.
 - Addressing the digital divide.
- Part III: Looking Ahead & Conclusion
 - Future outreach plans.
 - Technology's impact on communication.
 - Ideas for better-designed virtual engagement.
 - Lessons learned from COVID-19.





Key Outcomes

- Valuable insights into successes and challenges in planning and implementing VPI
- Recommendations and strategies from a diverse range of experts





Discussion Highlights: Benefits

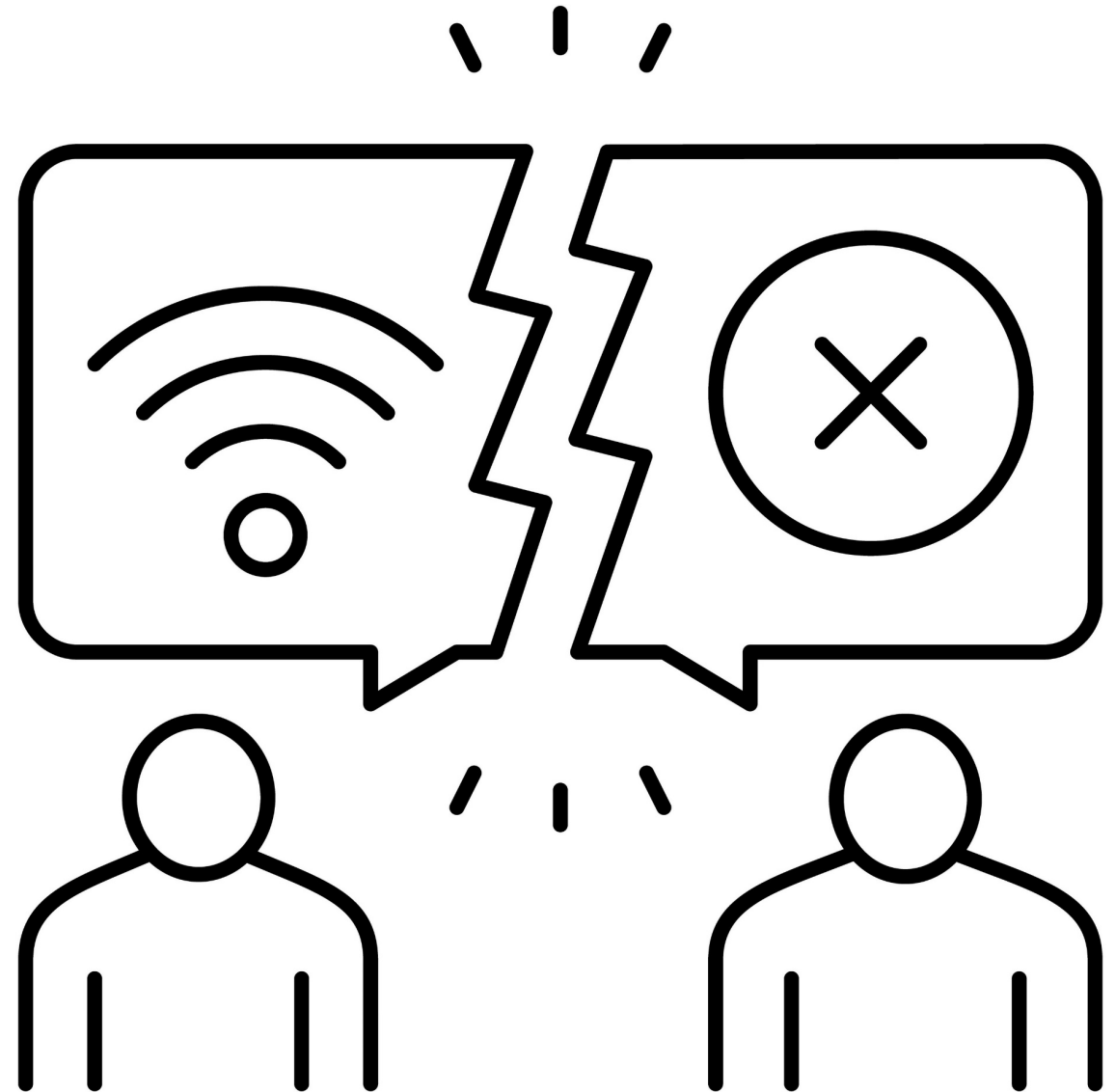
- The removal of geographic barriers and physical constraints
 - Increased participation
 - Easier for some people to “show up”
- Equalizing effect of some platforms





Discussion Highlights: Challenges

- The Digital Divide
- Rapid changes in technology





Discussion Highlights: Tools and Methods



- Using multiple or different platforms for different types of engagement
- Make engagement inclusive



Discussion Highlights: Tools and Methods (cont.)

- Train staff to succeed in virtual environments





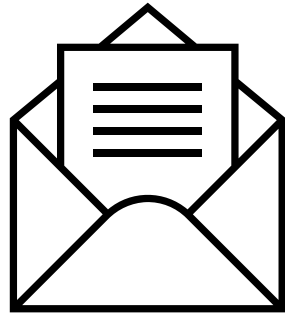
Discussion Highlights: Tools and Methods (cont.)

- Identify people in the community who can be ambassadors and provide peer support for clients
 - Peer ambassadors
 - Intergenerational teaching



Discussion Highlights: Tools and Methods (cont.)

- Consider non-digital methods to reach people



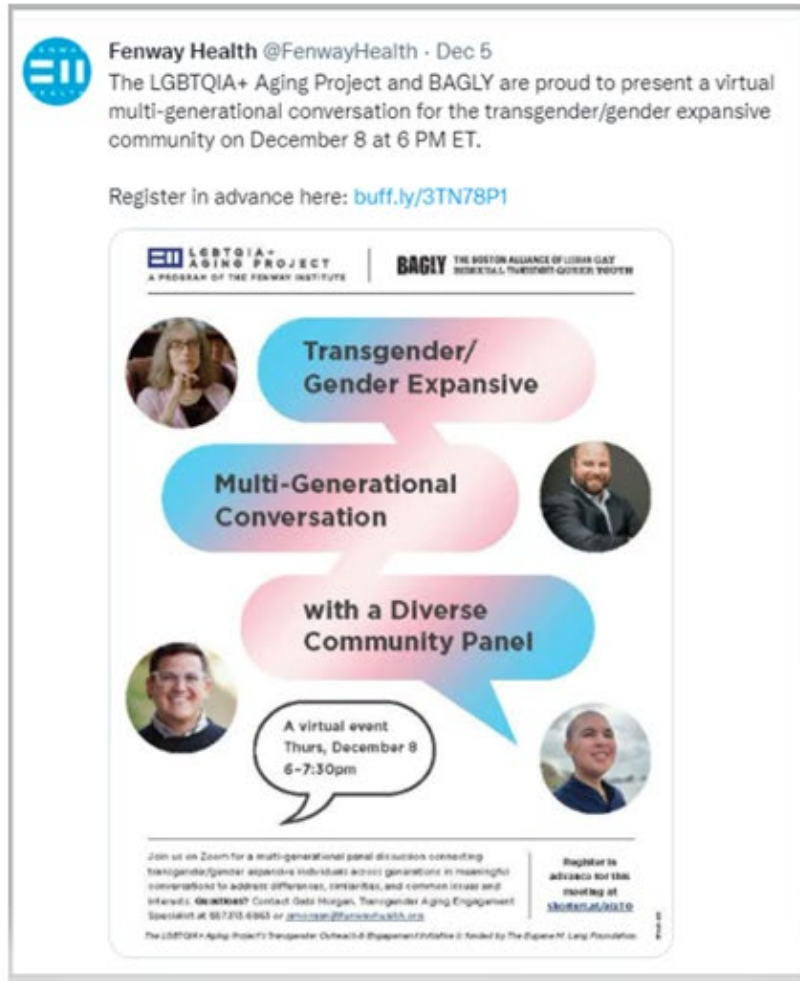
Discussion Highlights: Tools and Methods (cont.)

- Other engagement methods
 - Specific times and dates
 - Invite a person of interest to join
 - Use hybrid approach
 - Partner with other orgs to get people the tech they need



Examples

Fenway Health and the LGBTQIA+ Aging Project



Fenway Health @FenwayHealth · Dec 5
The LGBTQIA+ Aging Project and BAGLY are proud to present a virtual multi-generational conversation for the transgender/gender expansive community on December 8 at 6 PM ET.

Register in advance here: buff.ly/3TN78P1

LGBTQIA+ AGING PROJECT
A PROGRAM OF THE FENWAY INSTITUTE

BAGLY THE BOSTON ALLIANCE OF LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER QUEER YOUTH

**Transgender/
Gender Expansive**

**Multi-Generational
Conversation**

**with a Diverse
Community Panel**

A virtual event
Thurs, December 8
6-7:30pm

Join us on Zoom for a multi-generational panel discussion connecting transgender/gender expansive individuals across generations in meaningful conversations to address differences, similarities, and common issues and interests. **CONTACT** Contact Gabe Morgan, Transgender Aging Engagement Specialist at 617.615.4943 or gabemorgan@fenwayinstitute.org

Register in advance for this meeting at <https://www.zoom.us/j/98081640420>

The LGBTQIA+ Aging Project's Transgender Outreach Engagement Initiative is funded by The Espen M. Long Foundation.



Fenway Health Retweeted
US Embassy Ljubljana @USEmbassySLO · Dec 1
Today we mark #WorldAIDSDay

American expert Alex Keuroghlian shared his views on how we can all contribute to reducing the stigma of HIV patients and better understand the disease.

Check it out



The video thumbnail shows Alex Keuroghlian, an American expert, speaking at a conference. He is wearing a dark suit and glasses. Behind him is a rainbow flag and a chalkboard with handwritten text. A sign in front of him reads "LEGITRA ŽIVETI BOLJE S HIVOM KONFERENCA O ŽIVOTNIH IZKUSNOSTI 2022". The chalkboard text includes "PRESENTING EMPATHY COMPAS", "FEEL THOUGHTS PAT", and "BALAN".



Avenida Guadalupe

EL DIECISÉIS DE SEPTIEMBRE: PARADE & PODCAST

10:00 AM • EL DIECISÉIS DE SEPTIEMBRE: PARADE & PODCAST





🌷 Virtual fun with participants from Rockville Senior Center and teaching artist Paula Cleggett at her workshop, "Today, It's Spring!". Arts for the Aging heART Kits were produced and delivered to bring engaging art materials straight to participants' homes and support the workshop. "Today, It's Spring" is a collage workshop that explores and reimagines artwork by Alma Thomas, on view at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and The Phillips Collection. You can learn more about our programs at the link in our bio. 🌻



Why should **Latinos** get their **flu shot**?



Latinos are **reluctant** to get the flu vaccine which has led them have to have the **third highest flu hospitalization rates** of any group.

① *This makes flu shots especially important for the community.*

Getting vaccinated is the **best way to protect yourself** from the flu and its potentially serious *complications* such as **hospitalizations** and **death**.

Flu vaccines are also helpful because they...



Are a preventive tool for people with chronic health conditions.



Reduce severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.



Protect people around you, including the most vulnerable ones.

Get your flu shot!

The CDC recommends **everyone 6 months and older** get a seasonal flu vaccine each year, ideally by the end of October.

Find flu vaccines on your area by visiting [vaccines.gov/find-vaccines](https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines) or you can contact NHCOA's Resource Center at **+1 (866) 488-7379**.



¿Por qué lo **Latinos** deben vacunarse contra la **influenza**?



Los latinos son **reacios** a vacunarse contra la influenza y los ha llevado a tener **tasas de hospitalización más altas** que otros grupos.

① *Lo anterior hace que las vacunas contra la Influenza sean muy importantes para la comunidad.*

La vacunación contra la influenza es la **mejor manera de prevenir la influenza** y complicaciones graves como la **hospitalización** y **muerte**.

Las vacunas también son útiles porque...



Son preventivas para las personas con condiciones de salud crónicas.



Reducen el riesgo en las personas que enferman a pesar de estar vacunados.



Protegen a los demás, incluyendo a las personas más vulnerables.

¡Obtén tu vacuna!

Los CDC recomiendan que **todos los mayores a 6 meses** se vacunen contra la influenza cada año, idealmente en Octubre.

Encuentre vacunas contra la influenza en su área, visitando [vaccines.gov/find-vaccines](https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines) o contacte el Centro de Recursos de NHCOA al **+1 (866) 488-7379**.



DOROT and University Without Walls

December 2021 - March 2022



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Discussion Highlights: Going Forward

- More inclusive engagement is necessary
 - Accessibility
 - Relevant platforms
- Offer hybrid options
- Use existing social networks and communication networks to share information
- People need teachers





Conclusion

- The focus groups provided a rich understanding of challenges and successes in implementing VPI.
- Lessons learned emphasize the need for a community-centric approach to virtual engagement in public transit.

