State Government COVID-Related Community Engagement

A Best-Practices Perspective from Zoom

Building Trust. Improving Health Outcomes.

Summary

Zoom is honored to serve governors and other state and local government leaders - across the country - in communicating with citizens and constituents, during this unprecedented time.

Through our role in serving state governments, we have been a part of countless stories of effective COVID-related engagement. We have supported dedicated public servants across the country, of all backgrounds, in building trust and inspiring the people they serve.

Considerations for Government Leaders:

COVID-related government communication provides your constituents broadly needed, life-saving information. Given this high-impact, building trust is foundational to the success of this effort.

+ Perception drives behavior: Government outreach must project the high aptitude, transparency, and equity that public servants bring to their roles every day. This is all the more imperative given the need to maximize cooperation among a divided public.

+ Reaching the broadest audience: With an age distribution exceeding 100 years; wide differences in socio-economic characteristics; and gaps in technology access (particularly in rural and low-income areas); it is imperative to utilize a wide-range of participation options. Ensure that you communicate through platforms with the highest level of user-familiarity and preference. We see engagement across the full spectrum of web-based, app-based, and phone-only interfaces depending on various demographic factors.

Zoom-in: The CDC's COCA Webinar Briefing Series

The US Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have conducted frequent webinar briefings with 20,000 participants through the Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) program.

During COCA's Zoom Webinars, subject matter experts "present key emergency preparedness and response topics, followed by meaningful Q&A with participants. Each COCA Call/Webinar will offer the most up to date information and guidance for clinicians." *(Source: CDC website)*

Quick Facts:

- COCA website: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls
- Disseminate time-critical information for wide reach
- High video quality & consistent uptime drives trust
- Ensure conformity for Accessibility and public access directives (web, mobile app, phone-only)

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Congressional Funding for COVID Vaccine Response

The U.S. is in a race against time as thousands continue to be impacted daily by the COVID-19 virus that has impacted communities both home and abroad. While help is on the horizon in the form an approved vaccine, CDC advisors are concerned that there's not enough federal funding available to ensure the success of the vaccination campaign.

Therefore, Congress is in the process of negotiating a new stimulus package that will likely include funding for state and local entities for activities related to the vaccine. We anticipate funding across the following seven functional areas.

1. Vaccine Distribution:

Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine represents a public health logistics effort on a scale not seen in the U.S. before. Logistical issues include:

- Identifying and vetting a broad network of sites for vaccine administration
- Ensuring distribution requirements are met
- Monitoring delivery of multiple doses
- Tracking vaccine safety & patient follow-up

2. Communication Requirements:

A complicated patchwork of rules and regulations across jurisdictions could result in differential access to vaccines and varying levels of success in controlling COVID-19. Ongoing coordination, communication, and reporting will be key to a successful national response.

3. Training:

Healthcare professionals will require training on evidence-based immunization strategies and best practices. This ensures that the roll-out is as safe and effective as possible. Additionally, thorough staff training in vaccine storage and handling principles, and standard operating procedures for vaccine management, are critical to ensuring vaccine supply potency and patient safety.

4. Reporting:

Due to the rapid development and approval of the vaccine, the timeline normally associated with documenting vaccine side-effects was dramatically shortened. Therefore, health providers administering the vaccine need to report outcomes and receive reporting on adverse side effects, in coordination with Departments of Health, and the CDC.

5. Public Communication and Trust:

There are indications that distrust of COVID-19 vaccines may be greater than with other vaccines. Further, there are concerns over politicization issues regarding vaccine approval and distribution. Overcoming this trust-deficit will likely require robust communication and trust-building efforts. Public health information and education is critical to achieving the goal of vaccinating a large enough percentage of the population needed to achieve community or "herd" immunity.

The process of vaccinating the public will occur over a period of many months. During that time, state and local organizations must remain vigilant in their mission to protect the public against the spread of COVID-19.

6. Testing and Contract Tracing:

Testing and contract tracing are two critical elements in limiting the spread of COVID-19. Case investigation and contact tracing is a specialized skill. To be done effectively, it requires a coordinated and supervised effort - over a vast geographic area. Additionally, government agencies must offer social and medical support for patients and contacts.

7. Transitioning to the Post-COVID-19 "Normal":

As organizations begin to see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, they are focusing on adopting technologies and strategies that are "future proof" – those that are critical in the fight against COVID-19, but that also add value as they transition to a Post-Covid "Next Normal."
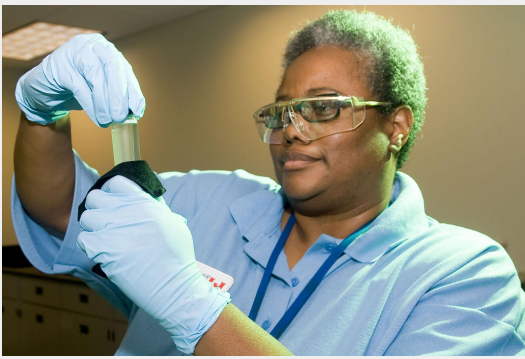
Spotlight on Tracing & Tracking: Integration is Key

The ability to integrate communication tools into the workflow of state government tracing and tracking applications is critical for timely responses, and saving lives.

Through Application Program Interfaces (APIs) and Software Development Kits (SDK), communication tools can be embedded into these programs to provide state health workers the ability to perform their duties within a single, easy-to-use, user-interface and application.

Case investigation, contact tracing, contact follow-up and monitoring - these all need to be linked with timely testing, clinical services, and agile data management systems. For effective public health action, laboratory and case data must be transmitted electronically and in real-time. Technology partners are key in providing user-friendly data interfaces to manage multiple data streams with seamless interoperability, reducing error and delay. Deploying these abilities at-scale requires the adoption of emerging technologies to assist private and public health practitioners with client communication, medical monitoring, and strategy-development.

Integrated Technology Platforms Accelerate Health Outcomes, Reduce Vulnerability, and Build Trust

As mentioned, tracing and tracking processes must be connected to the communication platforms that government utilizes to engage the public.

Application integrations enable health teams to:
- Easily automate the scheduling and management of public engagement.
- Enable developers to embed technology-specific capabilities into existing communication platforms.
- Extend reach of those tools into customer applications across web, desktop, and mobile device types.

We have witnessed explosive growth in these integrations in telemedicine scenarios. As an example, Independent Software Vendor (ISV) *Let's Talk Interactive* leveraged Zoom's SDKs in their health workflow application to embed Zoom into both their web-based application, as well as mobile appliances. In this scenario, they were able to deploy a multitude of telehealth capabilities globally, in a compressed time-scale.

Beyond practitioner/public interactions, there are many other use cases where an integrated application environment can be beneficial in pandemic response, including: providing remote incident response by video, or quickly establishing virtual war rooms when needed.
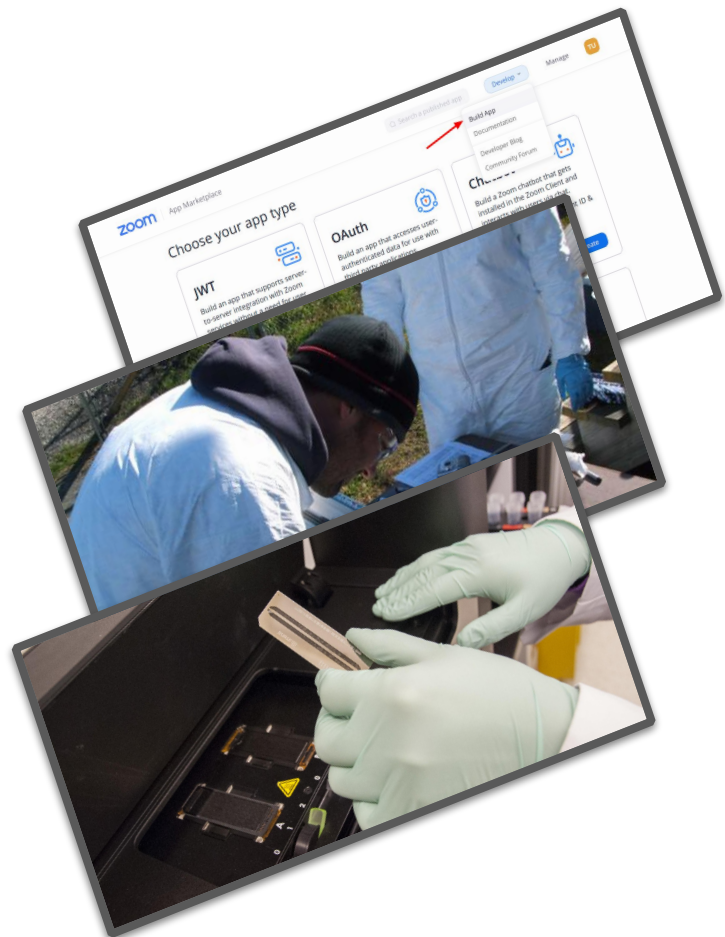
Accessibility Helps Drive Connections - For Everyone

COVID & vaccine response strategies must ensure that people of all abilities can participate. Program organizers should take into consideration the wide range of hearing, vision, mobility, and cognitive abilities.

- Accessibility-connected audiences can have elevated barriers to information and care options. Along with socio-economically disadvantaged people, this audience can be both harder to reach and more critical to reach to ensure effective societal outcomes.

- Outreach must leverage technological tools to support users with visual and auditory impairments. Government online communication to the public must support keyboard accessibility, screen reader capabilities, auto transcription, section 508 characteristics, and be compliant with WCAG 2.1 AA Standards and EN 301 549 accessibility requirements.

Leverage a Wide-Range of Communication Channels Depending on the Message and Audience

From one-to-many communications to secure individual meetings - both video and audio-only options are needed.

- Use webinars for public sessions, town halls, or internal employee forums - even for relatively small groups of people. This is especially the case if most information is one-way. Webinars are designed for a single presenter or a small group to engage audiences. Using chat, Q&A, and polling tools drives engagement. Ensuring that participants can join from a computer, mobile phone, tablet, or landline, increases participation demographic coverage, and ensures that everyone's voice is heard.
- Video meetings are critical when we can't be in-person. For team meetings or small groups - nurturing a "video-on" culture increases engagement and ownership. States can mitigate barriers to communities with reduced access and bandwidth by ensuring their providers optimize video engagement in low-bandwidth environments.
- Modern cloud telephony, room connectivity, and room signage solutions are critical tools to maximizing employee productivity, comfort, safety, and privacy - in the office or at home.

Rebuilding: a new era of American prosperity

The same tools, platforms, and approaches that states will use to facilitate secure and meaningful communications regarding COVID-19 can continue to add benefits well beyond the pandemic. In fact, we see clear examples of state, local, and federal government agencies making purposeful investments for the future they are building. This allows them to make dramatic technological shifts and will help them build a more equitable tomorrow with elevated public engagement.

The pandemic created an abrupt shift in the way we work. It sent most office workers home to limit viral spread. This dramatic change in the workplace has been eye-opening for employees and employers alike. Anecdotal evidence and recent scholarship show that many workers do not want to go back to the old way of working. A recent study showed that only 12% want to return to full-time office work, and 72% want a hybrid remote-office model moving forward.

Changing to a more permanent remote-office model will require new tools and technologies, promoting engagement, organizational agility, and collaboration. This shift comes with challenges and key considerations. These are top of mind issues for many CIOs. We have a unique opportunity to make lasting improvements to the modern workplace. Deploying technologies that expand participation, increase accessibility, and nurture team culture are today's IT imperatives. These technologies additionally will allow more people to continue working from their location of choice. The new milieu we are building together will help to reduce workplace inequality, create a more positive work experience, and improve other areas such as staff recruitment, retention and productivity.

Zoom is a Trusted Partner for Governors and State Government Agencies Across Our Country

Our easy-to-use, scalable, dependable, and secure platform has allowed governors, mayors, and other government leaders to communicate effectively with the public and the media - building trust with the highest stakes imaginable.