

Pfizer Quality Improvement Request for Proposals

Promoting Understanding of COVID-19 and Vaccination and Improving Communication Skills for Healthcare Professionals

Competitive Grant Program – using Expert Review Panel



Overview

Through the implementation of this project, we will promote the understanding of COVID-19 and vaccination among healthcare professionals involved in immunization services, and support efforts to promote vaccination by improving communication skills and changing behavior during explanations.



Geographic Scope

Japan



Project Types and Area of Interest

Projects aimed at promoting understanding of COVID-19 and vaccination and improving communication skills for health care providers are eligible for support, including but not limited to the following projects

- Projects aimed at improving communication skills and behavior change in order to make appropriate immunization recommendations.
- Projects to promote understanding of COVID-19 and immunization among healthcare Professionals involved in immunization.
- Projects to increase the willingness to receive vaccinations by promoting a correct understanding of vaccinations and eliminating vaccine hesitancy.



Key Milestones

- Application submission deadline: **July 30, 2024**
- Anticipated decision notification date: **October 31, 2024**
- Anticipated project start date: **January 1, 2025**



Funding Range and Project Length

- Individual projects requesting up to 5,000,000 JPY will be considered.
- Project Execution Period: Jauray 1, 2025 – December 31, 2026 (2years)

I. Eligibility

Geographic Scope:

- Japan

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- Only organizations are eligible to receive grants, not individuals or medical practice groups. [The following is basic criteria. Please review and change if your specific RFP has narrower criteria]
- The following may apply: medical, dental, nursing, allied health, and/or pharmacy professional schools; healthcare institutions (both large and small); professional associations; government agencies; and other entities with a mission related to healthcare improvement.
- Collaborations within institutions (e.g., between departments and/or inter-professional), as well as between different institutions / organizations / associations, are encouraged. Please note all partners must have a relevant role and the requesting organization must have a key role in the project.
- For projects offering continuing education credit, the requesting organization must be accredited.

II. Requirements

Date RFP Issued

- May 22, 2024

Clinical Area

- COVID-19

Specific Area of Interest for this RFP:

- It is our intent to support projects that focus on projects aimed at healthcare professionals to promote correct understanding of COVID-19 and prevention through COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Through the implementation of this project, healthcare professionals will have the latest and most accurate information about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccinations, improve communication skills during its explanations, and to establish a framework to appropriately promote COVID-19 prevention by encouraging behavioral change among vaccinated recipients.
- Multi-disciplinary collaborations are encouraged when appropriate, but all partners must have a relevant role.
- It is expected that projects will be evidence-based (education and/or quality improvement) and the proposed research/evaluation will follow generally accepted scientific principles. During review the intended outcome of the project is given careful consideration and, if appropriate based on the project goal, projects with the maximum likelihood to directly impact patient care will be given high priority. Projects including an educational element can find more information on principals of learning and behavior change for health professionals [here](#).
- There is a considerable amount of interest in receiving responses from projects that utilize system-based changes. Although educational efforts for grantees and patients may be entirely appropriate components in responses to this RFP, projects that include an overt description of system changes will be given high priority.

It is not our intent to support clinical research projects. Projects evaluating the efficacy of therapeutic or diagnostic agents will not be considered.

Target Audience

- Physicians (regardless of specialty), pharmacists, nurses, and other healthcare professionals

Disease Burden Overview

- COVID-19, which has had a huge impact on public health in Japan and around the world, is one of the VPDs, and prevention by COVID-19 vaccination is recommended by the WHO and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. In Japan, COVID-19 has been positioned as a Class B disease under the Immunization Law since FY2024, and vaccination is being carried out as a "Immunizations" for the purpose of preventing individuals from becoming seriously ill. While the role of healthcare professionals as vaccinators is increasing, various factors that hinder the promotion of vaccination are increasing, in addition, the complexity and drastic change of information specific to COVID-19 requires more sophisticated communication skills for recipients.
- In order to solve these problems, it is necessary for healthcare professionals to have the latest and accurate information on COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccinations, improve their communication skills during its explanations through simulations and workshops, and encourage behavioral changes in recipients.

Recommendations and Target Metrics

- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: Basic plan for vaccination
https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou_iryuu/kenkou/kekkaku-kansenshou/kihonteki_keikaku/
- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: Communication in vaccination
The 36th Health and Welfare Science Council gave the Basic Policy Committee for the Prevention of Vaccination on December 23, 2019.
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10906000/000588378.pdf>
- Japanese Society for Infection Prevention and Control : Vaccine Guidelines for Healthcare Workers 3rd Edition / Supplementary Edition "New Corona Vaccine"
http://www.kankyokansen.org/uploads/uploads/files/jsipc/vaccine-guideline_03-5.pdf
http://www.kankyokansen.org/uploads/uploads/files/jsipc/vaccine-guideline_03-tsuiho.pdf
- The Japanese Association for Infectious Diseases : Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccines (7th Edition)
https://www.kansensho.or.jp/uploads/files/guidelines/2306_covid-19_7.pdf
- Health and Global Policy Institute : Recommendations on communication required to promote understanding of immunization and vaccine policies
https://hgpi.org/wp-content/uploads/Reccomendations_WG2_Communication_JPN_20220927_vfinal.pdf
- Related Guidelines and Recommendations

Gaps Between Actual and Target, Possible Reasons for Gaps

- In response to COVID-19, which has had a huge impact on public health around the world, including Japan, COVID-19 vaccines have played an important role as one of the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Until FY2023, the government has been responsible for promoting vaccination as a special temporary vaccination, but COVID-19 vaccination from FY2024 onwards is being implemented as a routine vaccination based on the law, with the aim of reducing the number of seriously ill people by preventing the severity of the disease in individuals, and positioning the new coronavirus infection as a Class B disease under the Immunization Law [1]. In other words, the implementation of the

vaccination project is the basic local government, and the role of medical professionals who are vaccinated is also increasing.

Barriers

- Although the COVID-19 vaccination rate in Japan was at a high level compared to the rest of the world, the vaccination rate has been gradually declining since the spring/summer vaccination of FY2023. In addition to socioepidemiological factors, (1) vaccine hesitancy [2], (2) lack of trust in immunizations and vaccines, and inhibition of appropriate judgment due to misinformation [3], (3) Lack of communication between medical professionals and vaccinated persons [4] is also considered to be a factor.
- In particular, explanations from medical professionals have a great influence on the vaccination intention of the vaccinated [5][6]. However, it is presumed that the speed of change and complexity of information on COVID-19 are making it difficult to communicate [7].
- Therefore, it is important for healthcare professionals to have the most up-to-date and accurate information about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines, and to improve their communication skills to dispel vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccination intentions among recipients.

Current National Efforts to Reduce Gaps

- Japan Pediatric Society: Educational program for vaccine hesitancy among pediatricians
https://and.jpeds.org.jp/modules/basicout/index.pf?file=20230411_yobo_hokoku_.pdf
- EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations): Communication guidance on vaccination
http://www.efpia.jp/link/Vaccination_Communication_Guidance_Second_edition.pdf
- Japan Pediatric Society and AAP Joint 3rd Motivational Interview Training Workshop on Vaccine Hesitancy
https://www.jpeds.or.jp/modules/activity/index.php?content_id=517
- Created by the Japan Pediatric Society: Information you need to know
https://www.jpeds.or.jp/modules/activity/index.php?content_id=263
- Associate Professor Aya Saito (Niigata University): Development of a vaccination education program to improve vaccine literacy among medical students
<https://kaken.nii.ac.jp/ja/grant/KAKENHI-PROJECT-22K10728/>
- Describe the national efforts to reduce gaps

Expected Approximate Monetary Range of Grant Applications:

- Individual projects requesting up to \$XXX will be considered. The estimated total available budget related to this RFP is \$XXX.
- The amount of the grant Pfizer will be prepared to fund for any project will depend upon the expert review panel's evaluation of the proposal and costs involved, and will be stated clearly in the approval notification

Key Dates:

- RFP Release Date 5/22/2024
- Full Proposal Due Date: 7/30/2024
 - Please note the deadline is 23:59 Eastern Standard Time (e.g., New York, GMT -5).
- Anticipated Full Proposal Notification Date: 10/31/2024
- Grants will be distributed following a fully executed agreement and submission of Final Protocol, documentation of IRB/IEC approval, regulatory approval (if applicable), exemption or waiver.

How to Submit:

Note: Please read this section carefully since applications submitted not following these instructions will not be accepted and will be cancelled

- Please go to www.cybergrants.com/pfizer/QI and sign in. First-time users should click “Create your password”.
- Click the "Start a New Quality Improvement Application" button.
- In the application:
 - For the question “Competitive Grant?” select Yes
 - Select the following Competitive Grant Program Name: 2024 VAC Japan Promoting Understanding of COVID-19 and Vaccination and Improving Communication Skills for HCPs QI
 - Select the following Primary Area of Interest: VAV – COVID-19 – (Vaccine) - QI
- Requirements for submission:

Complete all required sections of the online application and upload your project proposal (see Appendix) in the Full Proposal Submission field.
- If you encounter any technical difficulties with the website, please click the “Technical Questions” link at the bottom of the page.

IMPORTANT: Be advised applications submitted after the due date will not be reviewed.

Questions:

- If you have questions regarding this RFP, please direct them in writing to the Grant Officer, Akihiro Kamina (meg.japan@pfizer.com), with the subject line “Promoting Understanding of COVID-19 and Vaccination and Improving Communication Skills for Healthcare Professionals.”

Grant Agreements:

- If your grant is approved, your institution will be required to enter into a written grant agreement with Pfizer International LLC. Please click [here](#) to view the core terms of the agreement.
- Pfizer has drafted the terms of these agreements to be balanced and reasonable and to further the goals of both parties. Negotiating grant agreements requires significant resources, so please ensure that your institution (including your legal department) is able and willing to abide by these terms before proceeding with submission of your application as they will need to be accepted in their entirety.
- This RFP is supported by Pfizer International LLC and, if approved, payment will be sent from the United States.
- Payment will only be made to requesting Institution.

Review and Approval Process

- A specific grant program RFP uses an expert review panel (ERP) to make final grant decisions.
- The panels are comprised of professionals from the medical community with advanced degrees and expertise in particular clinical areas, or specific needs of a geographic region/learner group, or expertise in research, continuing professional development or quality improvement.

Mechanism by which Applicants will be Notified:

- All applicants will be notified via email by the dates noted above.
- Applicants may be asked for additional clarification during the review period.

References

- [1] Ministry of Health and Welfare: The 55th Health and Welfare Science Council was on February 5, 2024.
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10900000/001205549.pdf>
- [2] The WHO lists "Vaccine Hesitancy" as the top 10 "global health threats" (announced in 2019)
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/gpw/mapping-gpw13-outcome-indicators-to-sdg-indicators.pdf?sfvrsn=7bcb77eb_2
- [3] Emily K. Brunson : Pediatrics (2013) 131 (5): e1397–e1404.
<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-2452>
- [4] Betsch C, et al. : Nature Communications volume 13, Article number: 7511 (2022)
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-34995-y>
- [5] The Vaccine Book (Second Edition) 2016, Pages 507-528
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-802174-3.00026-6>
- [6] Yunmi Chung : Matern Child Health J. 2017 Dec; 21(12):2178-2187.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-017-2336-6>
- [7] Paterson P, et al. : Vaccine. 2016 Dec 20; 34(52):6700-6706.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2016.10.042>
- World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. : Behavioural and social drivers of vaccination: tools and practical guidance for achieving high uptake
<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/354459>
- World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. : How to respond to vocal vaccine deniers in public: best practice guidance
<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/343301>
- Verger et al. : EBioMedicine 2 891-897.2015
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ebiom.2015.06.018>
- Let's know about VPD and protect children, a specified non-profit organization: Thinking about "Vaccine hesitancy"
https://www.know-vpd.jp/feature/dl_topics/vpd_nl_27.pdf
- Health and Global Policy Institute, Japan: [Survey Report] Public Opinion Survey on Immunization and Vaccine Policy, Including Novel Coronavirus Vaccines (June 17, 2022)
<https://hgpi.org/research/vaccine-survey-202206.html>
- Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Citizens, Culture and Sports : Awareness Survey on Novel Coronavirus Infection Control (Vaccines)
https://www.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/tosei/hodohappyo/press/2021/08/26/documents/27_01.pdf
- Bibliography of relevant references.

About Pfizer Global Medical Grants

Pfizer Global Medical Grants (GMG) supports the global healthcare community's independent initiatives (e.g., research, quality improvement or education) to improve patient outcomes in areas of unmet medical need that are aligned with Pfizer's medical and/or scientific strategies.

Pfizer's GMG competitive grant program involves a publicly posted Request for Proposal (RFP) that provides detail regarding a specific area of interest, sets timelines for review and approval, and uses an expert review panel (ERP) to make final grant decisions. Organizations are invited to submit an application addressing the specific gaps in practice as outlined in the specific RFP.

For all quality improvement grants, the grant requester (and ultimately the grantee) is responsible for the design, implementation, and conduct of the independent initiative supported by the grant. Pfizer must not be involved in any aspect of project development, nor the conduct or monitoring of the quality improvement program.

Appendix

Specific RFP Submission Requirements

[Use the following text for RFPs that only accept FPs] Applications will be accepted via the online portal listed in the [How to Submit](#) section. Project Proposals/Protocols should be single-spaced using Calibri 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Note there is a 15-page limit [adjust as necessary] exclusive of references. When uploading your Full Proposal please ensure it addresses the following sections:

Goals and Objectives

- Briefly state the overall goal of the project. Also describe how this goal aligns with the focus of the RFP and the goals of the applicant organization(s).
- List the overall objectives you plan to meet with your project both in terms of learning and expected outcomes. Objectives should describe the target population as well as the outcomes you expect to achieve as a result of conducting the project.

Assessment of Need for the Project

- Please include a quantitative baseline data summary, initial metrics (e.g., quality measures), or a project starting point (please cite data on gap analyses or relevant patient-level data that informs the stated objectives) in your target area. Describe the source and method used to collect the data. Describe how the data was analyzed to determine that a gap existed. If a full analysis has not yet been conducted, please include a description of your plan to obtain this information.

Target Audience

- Describe the primary audience(s) targeted for this project. Also indicate whom you believe will directly benefit from the project outcomes. Describe the overall population size as well as the size of your sample population

Project Design and Methods

- Describe the planned project and the way it addresses the established need.
- If your methods include educational activities, please describe succinctly the topic(s) and format of those activities

Innovation

- Explain what measures you have taken to assure that this project idea is original and does not duplicate other projects or materials already developed.
- Describe how this project builds upon existing work, pilot projects, or ongoing projects developed either by your institution or other institutions related to this project.

Evaluation and Outcomes

- In terms of the metrics used for the needs assessment, describe how you will determine if the practice gap was addressed for the target group. Describe how you expect to collect and analyze the data.
- Quantify the amount of change expected from this project in terms of your target audience.
- Describe how the project outcomes will be broadly disseminated.

Anticipated Project Timeline

- Provide an anticipated timeline for your project including project start/end dates.

Additional Information

- If there is any additional information you feel Pfizer should be aware of concerning the importance of this project, please summarize here

Organization Detail

- Describe the attributes of the institutions / organizations / associations that will support and facilitate the execution of the project and the leadership of the proposed project. Articulate the specific role of each partner in the proposed project.

Budget Detail

- [Include only if RFP begins with an LOI stage] A total amount requested is the only information needed for the LOI stage. Full Budget is not required. This amount can be adjusted at the Full Proposal stage as applicable.
- The budget amount requested must be in U.S. dollars (USD). [Revise accordingly if local currency will be used.]
- While estimating your budget please keep the following items in mind:
 - General organizational running costs such as insurances, heating, lighting, rent, building maintenance may be included. Pfizer does not provide funding for capital purchases (infrastructure expenses such as equipment, purchases of software or software licenses, technology or bricks and mortar). Equipment hire/leasing is acceptable and may be included in project budget.
 - The inclusion of these costs cannot cause the amount requested to exceed the budget limit set forth in the RFP.
 - It should be noted that grants awarded through GMG cannot be used to purchase Pfizer therapeutic agents (prescription or non-prescription).
- Pfizer maintains a company-wide, maximum allowed overhead rate of 28% for independent studies and projects. Please [click here](#) for details.