

# BIG SHOTS TOOLKIT

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR USING STORYTELLING IN A SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED CAMPAIGN

Published November 2022



# BIG SHOTS

**CoVAC**  
Campus COVID-19  
Vaccination and Mitigation Initiative  
AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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# FOREWORD

To help overcome a pandemic like COVID-19, we need ordinary people to do extraordinary things within their own communities to help turn the tide against the disease. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have done just that, and the Big Shots campaign was created to recognize their unique achievements in getting members of their communities to be vaccinated. We will continue to need more "Big Shots" to support vaccination campaigns, health education efforts, and health advocacy in their communities as we respond to outbreaks, chronic diseases, and local health concerns in addition to COVID-19.

***Kenneth Rabin, PhD***  
***Founder, Big Shots Campaign***

In December 2021, leadership at the Made to Save Coalition, a national campaign to increase COVID-19 vaccine access, vaccination rates, and equity within communities of color, introduced the COVAC Initiative team to the Big Shots team. I remember being excited to work with the Big Shots team because their strategy was relentlessly positive. Public health professionals, including college health professionals, deserve to be celebrated for their tireless efforts throughout the pandemic. All too often, the only feedback given, received, or amplified, is negative. This is true across the board—but it creates a particularly dangerous distortion when it comes to public health. When we fail to notice, acknowledge, and celebrate good work we create a vacuum of information that feeds mistrust of public health professionals. We have ample evidence of the importance of trust in public health professionals and institutions in advancing health equity on college campuses and in communities. We can, and must, shine a light on the people and programs who have done the work of advancing vaccine confidence. To build and maintain thriving campuses and communities, we must celebrate them and their efforts.

***Claudia Trevor-Wright, MA, JD, MCHES***  
***Project Director, Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation (CoVAC)***  
***Initiative***  
***American College Health Association***

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# WELCOME

Welcome! We are excited that you are invested in tackling an important community health issue. We're here to help! Social media can amplify and celebrate the stories and efforts of everyday people doing extraordinary things. Peer-nominated “Big Shots” are key to advancing the health and well-being of their communities. Your campaign can both recognize them and inspire future Big Shots.

Big Shots is a student-run, social-media based campaign developed and housed at the City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy (CUNY SPH). It uses storytelling to promote COVID-19 vaccine literacy and build vaccine confidence by recognizing, amplifying, and inspiring important work that confronts vaccine disparities, misinformation, and hesitancy. The “Big Shots Method” has been used to recognize heroes from all walks of life and, in the case of **Big Shots on Campus**, has been applied to specifically acknowledge excellent work by college health professionals and students in building a culture of vaccine confidence.

Although Big Shots and Big Shots on Campus are COVID-19 vaccine-focused campaigns, the Big Shots Method can be used to address other pressing issues—including increasing awareness and acceptance of other important vaccines, tobacco cessation, mental health, and other public health issues important to your community. Inside this toolkit you will find a step-by-step guide for using the Big Shots Method to address your issue of interest.

We are so pleased that you are investing in the power of storytelling to inspire individuals and organizations to make a difference in their community.



## Big Shots on Campus

Product of a partnership between Big Shots and the Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation (CoVAC) Initiative, a project of the American College Health Association funded by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the goal of supporting healthy and thriving campus communities.

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# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

## ***Who is this Toolkit for?***

Anyone with a smartphone or laptop and internet access can use storytelling in a social media-based campaign that honors “Big Shots” in their community. To date, the Big Shots Method has been used in campaigns focused on confronting COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. However, it can be used in various settings, for myriad applications, and by various entities, such as school health programs, nonprofits, public health departments, and community centers. Since the Big Shots Method requires a minimal investment in materials and resources, it is suitable for use by organizations of any size.

## ***How to use this Toolkit***

This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide for developing, implementing, maintaining, and evaluating a Big Shots-style campaign.

- In the margins, you will find definitions of commonly used terms and “Helpful Hints” that provide suggestions for best practices.
- Black-and-white hyperlinks allow you to jump to another section of this toolkit.
- Blue hyperlinks take you to an external website.
- The [Appendix](#) includes templates and examples to help clarify information and guide readers in the development of their own campaign. For example, the templates can be used for inspiration regarding campaign branding and social media post design.

## ***Funding Statement***

This project was supported by the CDC Foundation’s COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund, which included donations from individuals and organizations.

This toolkit was produced by Lauren Swan-Potras and Tanja Schub. For more information, email us at [hello@bigshotsheroes.org](mailto:hello@bigshotsheroes.org).

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# BIG SHOTS: A BRIEF HISTORY

The [Big Shots campaign](#) was founded by graduate students in the Health Communication for Social Change master's degree program at CUNY SPH with faculty and key advisors in the Spring of 2021 to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in communities around the country. Big Shots cumulatively honors everyday people who take action to encourage and help others to get vaccinated.

Since its launch, the campaign has recognized local heroes, or “Big Shots,” including community members, local health care providers, and high school students. These individuals have aided their communities in several ways, including:

- Setting up vaccination sites
- Helping older adults find vaccination appointments
- Driving people to vaccination sites
- Correcting misinformation about vaccine safety and effectiveness

They have done this while also inspiring others to find their own way to contribute to the effort to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.



In the summer of 2022, [Big Shots on Campus](#) was developed to amplify excellent work by college health professionals and students in building a culture of vaccine confidence. It is clear that strong vaccine uptake on college campuses protects students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community from the negative impacts of COVID-19. [1]

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## WHY WAS BIG SHOTS NEEDED?

The Big Shots campaign was developed to address high levels of COVID-19 **vaccine hesitancy** in communities across the country.

Causes of vaccine hesitancy vary—among both college students and members of the general population. Common reasons for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccine include: [2-4]

- Concerns about how fast the vaccines were developed
- Fear of vaccine side effects
- Mistrust of government and the medical establishment
- The belief that vaccination against COVID-19 is not effective or necessary for people who are young and healthy

Anti-vaccine mis- and disinformation can be blamed for some of these beliefs. However, in some cases, vaccine hesitancy is the result of legitimate reasons for mistrust of the government and health care system. [5]

## WHAT IS THE BIG SHOTS METHOD?

The Big Shots Method harnesses the power of storytelling and the reach of social media to recognize and celebrate individuals and groups who are breaking down barriers to COVID-19 vaccination, with the hope of also inspiring others to act. By using a celebratory and nonjudgmental tone and relying on peer nominations, the Big Shots Method builds the trust and authenticity needed to reach vaccine-hesitant or hard-to-reach communities.



### Vaccine hesitancy

Delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services.

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## Importance of Trust

Trust is a central issue in public health communication. Individuals are more likely to act on health-related advice when they receive information from trusted messengers using trusted channels. [5-7]

The Big Shots Method:

- Centers the priorities, values, and dynamics of individual communities, thereby increasing trust and authenticity, particularly for hesitant, hard-to-reach, or undecided communities
- Relies on peer-nomination of potential award recipients, allowing a neighbor, coworker, friend, or customer to recognize an individual's or organization's contribution to the community by nominating them as a "Big Shot"

The fact that Big Shots are recognized by members of their community increases trustworthiness and authenticity. Trusted messengers and messages are essential—especially at a time of rampant mis- and disinformation. Indeed, it is necessary to create, cultivate, and center trust and trustworthy messengers when trust in the authority of traditional bodies, such as governments, is declining. [8,9]





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## Power of Storytelling

Big Shots uses storytelling and first-person narration to increase **vaccine confidence** and acceptance. Narrative messages and storytelling: [5,10-13]

- Are more engaging and easier to understand than traditional scientific communication
- May be particularly powerful when the stories are being told by trusted messengers
- Have been shown to increase engagement with harder-to-reach audiences
- Can be especially powerful at early stages of behavior adoption
- Help inspire and model positive behaviors by sharing relatable experiences

## Reach of Social Media

An estimated 70% of Americans, including 84% of young adults, use social media, making it the ideal way for Big Shots to spread its message. [14,15]

As a social media-based approach, the Big Shots Method:

- Requires minimal equipment (a smartphone or laptop computer) and minimal technological expertise
- Allows content to be viewed, amplified, and engaged with, both nationally and internationally



### Vaccine confidence

Belief that vaccines work, are safe, and are part of a trustworthy medical system



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## Equity and Storytelling in Public Health Messaging

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed and exacerbated disparities in health care access and health outcomes. Because of past and current racist practices in health care, BIPOC folks have expressed serious mistrust. This is why it's so important to affirm stories of people who have received the vaccine as a part of a successful, productive life.

Storytelling can be an effective tool in increasing health equity by: [16]

- Illuminating health behaviors and outcomes and facilitating discussions within and among communities
- Building bridges between institutions, governments, or organizations and marginalized communities

The Big Shots Method centers equity and access through its use of social media, which allows various and diverse perspectives, stories, and voices to be shared, thus illuminating and highlighting traditionally silenced or underrepresented communities.

## Potential Applications

The simple and adaptable nature of the Big Shots Method mean that it can easily be used to address other health, environmental, and social issues in your community, on your college/university campus, and beyond.

Possible applications on college/university campuses include but are certainly not limited to:

- Other age-appropriate vaccines, such as the annual flu shot and the meningitis B and HPV vaccines
- Reproductive/sexual health
- Safe drinking practices
- Smoking and vaping
- Academic pressure and mental health
- Environmental issues



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# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

## Campaign Preparation/Development

### Step 1: Identify your issue

The Big Shots Method can be applied to vaccination campaigns, public health issues, and environmental and social issues.

For example, if you are a college student:

- Have there been outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases on your campus?
- Are you concerned about how many of your peers are smoking cigarettes or vaping?
- Could recycling efforts be improved on your campus?

Finding the need within your community is essential to implementing a successful campaign.

### Step 2: Define a “Big Shot”

The criteria used to define what makes someone a “Big Shot” deserving of recognition:

- Is entirely up to you
- May depend on the issue your campaign hopes to address and the needs of the community you hope to reach

Since the Big Shots Method relies on peer nominations, the work of each Big Shot may differ based on community values and dynamics. It is a good rule of thumb, however, to include individuals/organizations who have made an observable impact in the community.



#### Helpful Hint

Big Shots don't need to do "big" things. Simple, everyday acts can also be recognized.

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For example, COVID-19 vaccine acceptance relied heavily upon trustworthy messengers and messages, access to vaccination sites, and computer/digital literacy, as most appointments were booked online. As a result, among the Big Shots that have been recognized thus far are individuals and organizations who have:

- Organized vaccination sites
- Assisted with online booking
- Gone door to door to discuss the vaccine's safety and effectiveness



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### Step 3: Assemble your team

Putting together a dedicated team with clear outlines of responsibilities will prove helpful for launching and maintaining your campaign.

The size of your team will depend on the intended size and reach of your campaign, but key roles and responsibilities include:

- **Team leader.** This should be someone with whom recipients will feel comfortable sharing their stories. This person can also use their previously established relationships to identify initial award recipients. The appropriate choice for this role depends on the makeup and priorities of your community. They could be a:
  - Well-respected government figure (such as a city council member or mayor)
  - Local business owner or media personality
  - Religious leader
  - Beloved teacher
  - City employee that has both the trust and support of the community
  - Member of student government, a resident life staff member, an athletic coach, a campus chaplain, or an esteemed faculty member (on a college campus)
- **Social media content creator.** At least one person on your team should have experience with creating social media content. This individual's responsibilities include designing and maintaining visually engaging templates that can help establish and build your campaign's brand. They can use an online graphic design platform (such as [Canva](#), [Snappa](#), or [Visme](#)) to create the templates that you will use to post your recipients' stories.



#### Helpful Hint

If you are on a college campus, see if your campus communications department can help with this aspect of your campaign development. If that is not an option, students with graphic design experience may be able to assist.

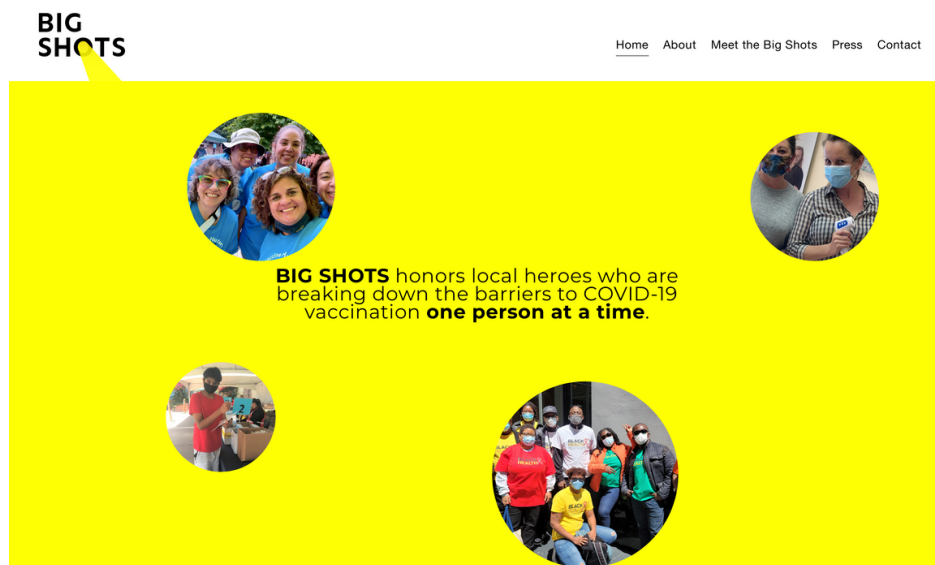
- **Website designer and administrator.** Although optional, Big Shots recommends having a website to share the stories and good works of your award recipients. This site can be:
  - A standalone website or a microsite or other branded subsection of an existing website
  - A good place to house nomination forms for future award recipients
  - Used by those who do not have access to social media platforms
  - Created using a free or low-cost website platform (such as [Squarespace](#), [Weebly](#), or [Wix](#))
- **Social media coordinator.** Having a person or team dedicated to launching and maintaining your campaign will help ensure long-term success. It is important to develop a posting schedule that reflects the use and activity of the population you are trying to reach.

It is important to note that, if you are working with a small team, some team members may need to take on more than one of these roles/responsibilities.



### Helpful Hint

On a college campus, be sure to consult with your communications department to see if there are guidelines for building out your webpage.



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#### **Step 4: Choose social media platforms, handles, and hashtags**

One of the strengths of the Big Shots Method is that it is primarily a social media campaign. Anyone with a smart phone and access to free content-creating apps or software can create, launch, and maintain this social media-based, storytelling campaign. As simple as this sounds, there are many complexities that go on “behind the scenes” that require a few extra steps of planning and maintenance.

First, you will need to identify your audience’s preferred social media platform. Since Big Shots on Campus is focused on students on colleges and university campuses, the campaign focuses messaging on Instagram, [a favorite social media platform](#) among the priority population. If, for example, the priority population was parents of young children eligible for the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, a social media platform favored by parents would be suggested. The Pew Research Center has a helpful [Social Media Fact Sheet](#), which includes information on who uses which social media platform. Useful information can also be found on social media marketing sites, such as [Khoros](#) and [Sprout Social](#).



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After choosing the right social media platform, the next step is to choose an appropriate **handle**. Your social media handle is how people will remember and search for your campaign in various social media platforms—it should reflect both who you are and what you do. Tips for a strong handle can be found online (for example, see [here](#) for helpful tips on choosing a handle and developing a “brand identity”).

In general, handles should:

- Be easy to remember
- Give a good idea of what your campaign “does”
- Be short and easy to type
- Not be already in use or associated with a campaign, brand, or user that would reflect poorly on your campaign

Similar to handles, **hashtags** are helpful in getting your campaign noticed by non-followers, by defining your position and work. Hashtags make your account (and campaign) easily searchable. Using multiple hashtags will increase the likelihood that people can easily find you and remember your campaign. It is also important to make sure the hashtags you choose align with your vision, will not be easily confused, and will not reflect poorly on your campaign. Although hashtags are not used on all social media platforms, they are used on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, three of the most used social media platforms.



### Handle

Public username used on social media accounts.



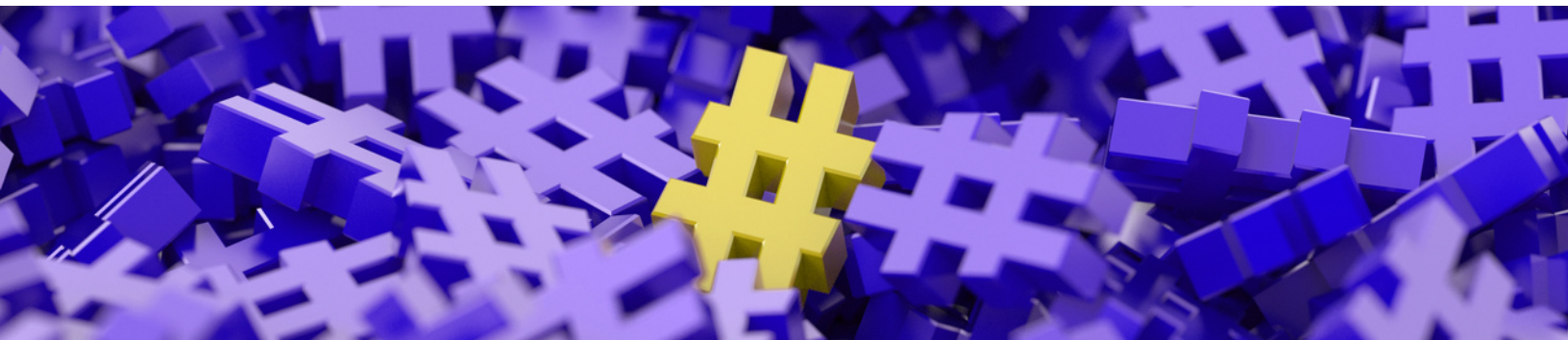
### Hashtags

Words or phrases preceded by a hash symbol (#) that makes content easier to find and follow on social media.



### Helpful Hint

Do a search for each of your potential hashtags before finalizing your list to make sure they are appropriate and used in a way that aligns with your ideals and intentions.





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## Step 5: Create/secure an award

Although this step is not necessary and may not be within the campaign’s budget, it can be helpful to designate a “gift” or “award” for your recipients to create interest and build brand recognition.

Possibilities include:

- A certificate
- A gift card
- Public recognition beyond a social media post (such as an appearance on a local news or radio program, or awards show where all recipients are celebrated and honored)

See the [Big Shots National Awards Show](#), which launched the Big Shots campaign, for an example.



## Step 6: Establish a system for collecting peer nominations

As mentioned above, a strength of the Big Shots Method is that recipients are nominated by members of their community. Your team will need an organized way of collecting nominations.

If you have a website, you can easily set up an email account connected to that site. If a campaign website is not an option, a free Gmail, Yahoo, or Outlook account can be used. Platforms such as [Google Forms](#) and [Microsoft Forms](#) can also be used to facilitate collection of necessary information from nominators.

## Step 7: Collect and store nomination information

The way you and your team choose to organize your nomination information is up to you. However, it is important that all of your information is organized in a way that is accessible, easily maintained, and user friendly.

**It is also crucial that you check with your school or organization regarding any applicable rules or best practices for storing private information.**

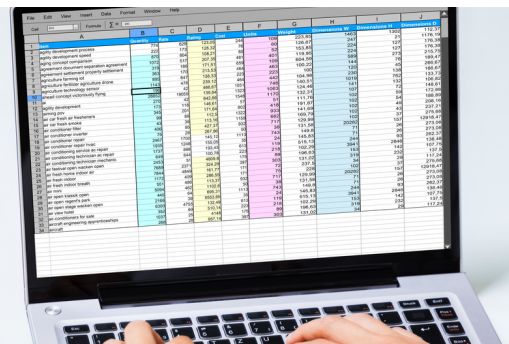
Big Shots gathered information on a [shared Google sheet](#) that contained all of the information from nomination forms. This information included:

- Nominee's name and contact information
- Nominator's name and contact information
- Brief description of the impact of the nominee's work, such as the number of vaccination drives or tabling events
- Quotes from the nominator
- Date nominee was contacted
- Date of follow up email (if necessary)
- Whether nominee accepted award
- Links to nominee's organization and/or social media accounts
- Social media handles to tag
- OPTIONAL: Contact information for news outlets (TV, radio, print, blogs, etc.) that have already covered your Big Shot or may be interested in hearing about their award. This is a great way to increase your reach and generate more content.



### Helpful Hint

When contacting the Big Shot nominee, it is nice to include who nominated them and a quote or two from the nominator about the Big Shot nominee's impact. This can help the nominee feel appreciated!



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## Step 8: Create social media templates

Likely the most time-consuming element of the campaign preparation process, your team will need to create a “brand” to identify your campaign. If you are part of an organization or group, you can use your logo and brand colors when creating your templates. We suggest creating a master set of templates specific to your chosen social media platform(s).

For Big Shots on Campus, our set consisted of several templates into which we can easily add pictures, video, and text. This helped give a seamless brand identity, complete with logos, color schemes, and order of pictures and video. As mentioned above, an online graphic design platform such as [Canva](#), [Snappa](#), or [Visme](#) can be used to create these templates.



**ANA HINOJOSA**



Ana Hinojosa is a second year graduate student at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, TX. As a peer educator, Ana led the peer-to-peer education efforts, coordinating a 13-week, weekly myth-busting question and answer survey and corresponding tabling events.

Using her background in Psychology and Counseling, Ana was able to connect with her community and truly make a difference.


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**DIYA JOSHI**



Diya Joshi saw a need for confronting misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine on her campus and decided to get involved with vaccine outreach. By creating a simple three question discussion, she helped share and spread reliable and accurate information.

"We saw students and even professors stop by and answer some common misconceptions."

**BIG SHOTS**



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**AGGIE PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADORS**



Aggie Public Health Ambassadors (APHAs) are a team of #UCDavis undergraduates who encourage safe behaviors to reduce the transmission of #COVID-19. Since September 2020, they have been working to build community, educate, and encourage healthy practices, including masking, routine testing and #vaccinationawareness.

**BIG SHOTS**



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## Campaign Initiation and Maintenance

### Step 1: Identify a Big Shot

Ideally, the Big Shots Method relies on peer nominations to recognize awardees. However, the first Big Shot (or first few Big Shots) will likely need to be identified by you and your team. To get started, we recommend identifying several potential Big Shots, whose stories you can highlight until you receive enough peer nominations. Additionally, there may be times when you do not have a peer-recognized awardee and will need to identify a Big Shot yourself. This is fine! You can use a Big Shot identified by your team any time a peer-nominated awardee is not available.

Methods of finding potential awardees can vary and should be chosen based on your issue and community characteristics. They might include:

- Reaching out to organizations that share your campaign goals, such as local businesses, faith-based organizations, the local health department, and school administrators
- Asking past awardees for recommendations
- Following local media sources for stories of good work being done to address your issue of interest
- Sending out mass emails or surveys
- Posting flyers soliciting nominations



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## Step 2: Contact Big Shot nominee

Regardless of the source of the nomination (peer nomination or recognized by your campaign), contacting the Big Shot nominee is your next step. To ensure that all information is clearly communicated, it is a good idea to design several email templates to facilitate easier communication.

- [Initial contact letter](#). This should include:
  - Salutation
  - Brief description of your campaign
  - Brief description of the materials you will need
  - Link to your social media pages/website
  - Who nominated them and why
  - Request for a response confirming or declining their acceptance
- [Follow-up letter](#) (for those who have yet to respond). This should include:
  - Salutation
  - Brief description of your campaign
  - Request for a response confirming or declining their award acceptance
- [Request for materials](#) (for nominees who accept the award). This should include:
  - Salutation
  - Detailed list of materials needed such as:
    - Several photos that show the Big Shot at work and the work they did
    - Short videos (such as selfie videos)
    - Any press the Big Shot has received
    - Text and quotes about the nominee and their work
  - Instructions for submitting request material
  - Deadline for materials



### Helpful Hint

Add a quote from the nominator about the Big Shot nominee and their work. It makes it more personal!



### Helpful Hint

Consider saving the confirmation that the awardee agrees to be featured as described in the letter as a way of documenting consent.



### Helpful Hint

Include quotes in your social media post. Quotes can come from the Big Shot, their nominator, or members of the community.

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### Step 3: Gather materials

Gathering the materials (photos, videos, etc.) can be a relatively easy step in the process as long as your request for materials letter is clear about the number, size, and style of the photographs and videos that the nominee should submit.

### Step 4: Assemble your post

Assembling your post is as easy as adding text, photos, and videos to your pre-designed template, according to your chosen design program.

Depending on which graphic design program you use and which social media platform(s) you are posting to, there will be different steps involved in assembling the post.

### Step 5: Post

The day(s) and time(s) that you decide to post will be up to you. Typically, the best time to post is Tuesday through Thursday in the mid-morning, [17] but you can find the best time for your campaign by testing out different days and times and tracking engagement.

When you post to your platform(s), be sure to **tag** your recipient and their organization (if applicable).

There are some great social media calendar programs, such [Hootsuite](#), [Sprout Social](#), and [TweetDeck](#) (for Twitter). However, many of these services come with membership fees. If you are part of an organization, you may already have access to similar scheduling programs.



#### Helpful Hint

Always be sure to save your post using a unique file name to preserve the integrity of the original template!



#### Helpful Hint

Contact your Big Shot before you post to let them know when they can share and promote their story on their platforms. You may want to keep track of all or your posts and their engagement levels if you need to share impact reports. Most social media platforms provide basic engagement analytics that you can easily export or create your own spreadsheets.



#### Tag

Use of a social media handle or username in a social media post so that the individual or organization is linked to the post.

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## Step 6: Perform account maintenance

Sometimes you will not have a new Big Shot to share, but there will be news or updates that are relevant to your campaign and community needs. That's fine! Posting relevant content is key to keeping up engagement!

Social media account maintenance requires regular posting and interacting with followers and other accounts. As such, it is helpful to create supplemental content to post. Topics might include:

- Public events related to your campaign's cause (such as a pop-up flu vaccination site in the area if your issue relates to increasing influenza vaccination)
- Holidays that may be relevant or important to your demographic (such as back to school for a school-based campaign or Memorial Day for a campaign that targets veterans' groups)
- Big Shot follow-up posts
- Re-posting popular past posts



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## Step 7: Conduct campaign evaluation

Evaluation of the reach and impact of your campaign is an optional step, but one that can be helpful to you and the campaign, as well as stakeholders, funders, and other outside interested parties.

Knowing your campaign's **social media analytics** can help you better understand:

- Who you are reaching
- How they are engaging with your posts
- What content is and is not successful.

Most of the popular social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, and Facebook) offer analytics, but some require upgraded or paid subscriptions. However, your evaluation can be simple and gathered from the information already available on your profile, regardless of subscription type. You can create your own spreadsheet or documents that track various data points, such as likes and followers (see [this template](#) for more details). This information can tell you what posts people like the most and which they like the least, which can inform your future content. Additionally, this information may be useful or required by your organization funders, stakeholders, or other community members.

If you do choose to track your campaign's reach and impact, the process you use can be as simple or extensive as you wish.



### Social media analytics

Collection of data points that help measure the performance of your posts. These vary across platforms, but usually include likes, shares, and impressions.



### Helpful Hint

Confirm whether stakeholders or funders expect evaluation data, which points, and how often. Have whatever tracking form (a spreadsheet, shared doc, or PowerPoint slide deck, for example) ready at the beginning of your campaign so that you can easily track and record engagement/analytics. It will be difficult to go back and record this information retroactively!





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## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The logo for 'BIG SHOTS' features the words 'BIG' and 'SHOTS' stacked vertically in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A yellow spotlight beam originates from the right side of the 'O' in 'SHOTS' and points towards the left.

[Big Shots](#) is a student-run campaign at the City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy (CUNY-SPH). Launched in July 2021, Big Shots was created to celebrate the work of everyday people who were doing extraordinary things to confront barriers to COVID-19 vaccination in their community. By using storytelling and relying on peer nominations, Big Shots is committed to building and supporting trustworthiness within communities across the nation. Big Shots receives funding from the CDC Foundation, with support from CUNY SPH Convince, McCann Health, and the Vaccine Confidence Project, and was a Made to Save partner. In 2022, low vaccination rates and increasing vaccine hesitancy and misinformation among college-aged individuals, led Big Shots to partner with the American College Health Association to celebrate vaccination efforts on college and universities across the country. For more information about Big Shots, see <https://www.bigshotsheroes.org>.



The [Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation \(CoVAC\) Initiative](#) is a project of the American College Health Association, funded by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of the CoVAC Initiative is to support healthy and thriving campus communities. You can find more information about the CoVAC Initiative at <https://www.acha.org/>.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With a grant from the CDC Foundation to the Institute for the Advancement for Health & Well-being, LLC, we have been able to develop this toolkit with the American College Health Association and their CoVac Initiative to celebrate vaccination efforts on college and universities across the country. Other parties who wish to use Big Shots should contact [Info@bigshotheroes.com](mailto:Info@bigshotheroes.com) for permission and the rights to use the name, campaign, and related materials.

The Big Shots campaign and this toolkit are products of the hard work of graduate students and many health communication professionals. A special thanks to Ken Rabin, PhD, CUNY SPH Senior Scholar and Scott C. Ratzan, MD, MPA and P. Christopher Palmedo, PhD, MBA, Program Directors of the MS Health Communication for Social Change at CUNY SPH. Big Shots also recognizes and expresses thanks for the in-kind support from McCann Global Health. A special thanks to Nancy Glick for her support and invaluable insights, Hannah Lathan, Faith Forde, and Madeline Singer for their hard work bringing the campaign to life. A very special thanks to Tanja Schub for her dedication, hard work, and invaluable input in developing this toolkit. Big Shots is proud and grateful for its work with the NY Vaccine Literacy Campaign, also housed at CUNY SPH.

The Big Shots on Campus campaign is grateful for the invaluable work and support from CoVAC. In that spirit, special thanks for this collaboration goes to Sara Couppas, Campus Engagement Program Manager, CoVAC Initiative, for her continuous efforts in facilitating and uplifting the good work of college health professionals managing the COVID-19 pandemic on campus and in their communities. Special thanks also to Ari Villanueva, Digital Media and Health Communications Consultant, who designed the beautiful visuals used in the #BigShotOnCampus campaign. And of course, tremendous thanks to the Big Shots team for their partnership.

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# PHOTO CREDITS

## Cover page

Top row (left to right):

- University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)
- UC Davis Aggie Public Health Ambassadors
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas Student Health Center Clinical Team
- UC Davis Aggie Public Health Ambassadors

Bottom row (left to right):

- Elizabeth State University
- Elizabeth State University
- University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas Student Health Center Clinical Team

## Page 2:

- Big Shots National Awards Show, [bigshotsheroes.org](http://bigshotsheroes.org)

## Page 8:

Top row (left to right):

- Elizabeth State University
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas Student Health Center Clinical Team

Bottom row (left to right):

- University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)
- University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)

## Page 16:

Top row (left to right):

- University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)
- UC Davis Aggie Public Health Ambassadors
- University of New Mexico Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)
- Arin Parsa, Teens for Vaccines

Bottom row (left to right):

- UC Davis Aggie Public Health Ambassadors
- Jacqueline Teague and Amelie Beck, VaxConnect KY
- Fabulous Ladies Book Club
- Art dela Cruz, Team Rubicon

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# APPENDIX

## Initial Contact Letter (generic template):

Hello and congratulations \_\_\_\_\_.

You may not know it, but you are a *[local hero\*]* in your community for your efforts related to *[insert the ultimate goal of your campaign issue, such as HPV vaccinations, smoking cessation, or mental health access]* and we would like to honor you! You have been nominated by \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_ organization who, in their nomination form, shared: *[include a good quote from the nomination form]*. We are excited to honor you with this award!

*[Campaign name]* is a campaign designed to call attention to people like you—family members, neighbors, religious leaders, community leaders—who are working to *[insert campaign goal]* one person at a time. In fact, *[insert information about the launch of your campaign, any recent press coverage, or any information to introduce your campaign to the nominee]*.

### Why are we doing this?

Our goal is simple but extremely important: to help *[insert short description of the campaign's goal]*. By telling your story and those of other local heroes, we hope to *[insert applicable goal related to nominee's work]*.

### What do you need to do?

We invite you to join a growing number of local heroes who we celebrate on our site and social media platforms. After accepting this award, we will send you information about what we will need from you: a few photographs, a description of the incredible work you are doing in your community, and a short video “interview.” We will then highlight your story on our platforms. Our campaign believes in the power of storytelling. We hope that by sharing your story and experience, we can inspire more people to *[insert campaign's goal]*.

Thank you so much for your time and we look forward to hearing from you!

Best,

Your Name  
Your Campaign  
Affiliated Organizations, School, Agency, etc (if applicable)

Instagram: \_\_\_\_\_  
Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_  
Twitter: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*The Big Shots campaign calls awardees "Big Shots." Each campaign is encouraged to come up with their own brand-appropriate name for their awardees.*

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## Initial Contact Letter (example from Big Shots campaign):

Hello and congratulations \_\_\_\_\_,

You may not know it, but you are a “Big Shot” in your community for helping your neighbors get vaccinated against COVID-19 and we would like to honor you! You have been nominated by \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_ organization who, in their nomination form, shared: *[include a good quote from the nomination form]*. We are excited to honor you with this award!

[Big Shots](#) is a national campaign designed to call attention to people like you—family members, neighbors, religious leaders, community leaders—who are helping break down the barriers to vaccination, one person at a time. In fact, we recently launched our campaign with the National Big Shots Awards show, which you can watch [here](#), celebrating and honoring Big Shots just like you! Big Shots is a student driven campaign, run by graduate students at the [City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy \(CUNY SPH\)](#).

### Why are we doing this?

Our goal is simple but extremely important: to help the U.S. reach vaccination rates that will offer community protection and help end the COVID-19 pandemic. By telling your story and those of other Big Shots, we hope to accelerate the final push to immunize individuals and communities, bring the pandemic under control, and rebuild people’s lives and livelihoods.

### What do you need to do?

We invite you to join a growing number of Big Shots who we celebrate on our site and social media platforms. After accepting this award, we will send you information about what we will need from you: a few photographs, a description of the incredible work you are doing in your community, and a short video “interview.” We will then highlight your story on our platforms. The Big Shots campaign believes in the power of storytelling. We hope that by sharing your story and experience, we can inspire more people to get vaccinated, help their communities, and, ultimately, end this pandemic.

Thank you so much for your time and we look forward to hearing from you!

Best,

Lauren Swan-Potras  
*Big Shots Social Campaign Coordinator*  
*CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy*

Instagram: [@BigShotsHeroes](#)

Facebook: [@BigShotsHeroes](#)

Twitter: [@BigShotsHeroes](#)

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## Follow-up Letter (generic template):

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

Firstly, congratulations on being nominated for a *[Campaign Name]* Award! We recently reached out to you to let you know that \_\_\_\_\_ nominated you for the great work you have done in your community towards *[insert campaign goal]*.

In case you missed our earlier email, *[insert campaign name]* is a *[insert brief explanation of your campaign, the public health or other community issue it focuses on, and other information you want the nominee to know]*.

We invite you to accept this award and join other heroes like you. We will feature you on our social media platforms and website, sharing your story. *[Insert campaign name]* believes in the power of storytelling and trust building. By celebrating you and your work, we can inspire future efforts, and *[insert ultimate goal of campaign]*.

Please respond to this email if you accept the award!

Thank you so much for your time and we look forward to hearing from you!

Best,

Your Name

Your Campaign

Affiliated Organizations, School, Agency, etc (if applicable)

Instagram: \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

Twitter: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Follow-up Letter (example from Big Shots campaign):

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

Firstly, congratulations on being nominated for a Big Shot Award! We recently reached out to you to let you know that \_\_\_\_\_ nominated you for the great work you have done in your community towards breaking down barriers to COVID-19 vaccination.

In case you missed our earlier email, [Big Shots](#) is a student-driven vaccination awareness and recognition campaign, initiated by students at the [City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy \(CUNY SPH\)](#). We recently launched our campaign with the [National Big Shots Awards Show](#), hosted by Chef and TV personality Carla Hall. Big Shots calls attention to people like you—community leaders, neighbors, family members, religious leaders—who have gone above and beyond, helping increase vaccine acceptance and access in their communities.

We invite you to accept this award and join other Big Shots. We will feature you on our social media platforms and website, sharing your story. Big Shots believes in the power of storytelling and trust building. By celebrating you and your work, we can inspire future Big Shots, bring the pandemic under control, and rebuild people's lives and livelihoods.

Please respond to this email if you accept the award!

Thank you so much for your time and we look forward to hearing from you!

Best,

Lauren Swan-Potras  
*Big Shots Social Campaign Coordinator*  
*CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy*

Instagram: [@BigShotsHeroes](#)

Facebook: [@BigShotsHeroes](#)

Twitter: [@BigShotsHeroes](#)



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## Request for Materials Letter (generic template):

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of the *[insert campaign name]* campaign, congratulations on your award! We are so excited to share your inspiring story of *[insert brief description of nominee's work]*. The *[insert campaign name]* campaign firmly believes that it is the work of everyday heroes like yourself that will truly make the difference in *[insert the issue your campaign is addressing]*.

If you haven't had a chance, check out our social media platforms: *[insert links to your social media platforms and/or campaign website]* to learn more about our campaign and your fellow awardees.

*[Briefly introduce other important information about your campaign, such as press releases, announcements, or anything that could help introduce your campaign to the awardee.]*


*[Insert campaign name]* is foremost a *[insert ultimate goal of campaign]* campaign, and we share and uplift the lives and efforts of our awardees through social media and our site. To do this, we ask that you provide us with photos and a short recording to share your work, your experience, and how you have supported your community. These do not need to be professional photos or footage! (Portrait mode on an iPhone for example works just fine!)

### **Photos**


Four or more would be great!

Please include **at least one portrait or headshot** (from the shoulders up):


- In color
- Only of you (or your group, if applicable)
- With a solid color or simple background. We recommend neutral colors: beige, white, gray, or black
- Of good quality: at least 1,500 pixels wide
- See examples *[insert link to website or social media platform]* and below:



Example of  
your materials  
here



Example of  
your materials  
here



Example of  
your materials  
here

---

Please include action photos of you doing your work! For example, if you volunteer at a vaccination site, include photos taken of you while at the site, administering shots, welcoming appointments, or setting up the area.

If you do have professional headshots, however, please feel free to include those as well!

Tips for good photos:

- Avoid being lit from behind and instead use lighting in front of you
- Natural light is great too
- Avoid using the flash
- Try for angles that are at eye level or slightly above
- Use portrait modes in your smartphone camera settings

### **Video**

We would love to feature a video of you that shares in your own words who you are, the work that you do, and the impact you are seeing in your community. The videos that we feature are short—a minute or less! **Videos are not required**, but we aim to represent you and your work as completely as we can. And it's incredibly impactful for communities to hear heroes like yourself speak about your experience.

Some topics you can cover:

- Why you started the work you are doing
- What you have learned
- The value of your work to your community
- Any advice for other Big Shots

We ask that you send us these materials by *[give a deadline that is about 48-72 hours before you would definitely need it]*. Please reach out if you have any concerns, questions, or would like some tips. Our team is more than happy to assist.

Thank you for the work you have done. We are so excited to share your story!

Best,

Your Name

Your Campaign

Affiliated Organizations, School, Agency, etc (if applicable)

Instagram: \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

Twitter: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Request for Materials Letter (example from Big Shots campaign):

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of the Big Shots campaign, congratulations on your award! We are so excited to share your inspiring story of helping your community to get vaccinated. The Big Shots campaign firmly believes that it is the work of everyday heroes like yourself that will truly make the difference in the fight against COVID-19.

If you haven't had a chance, check out our social media platforms: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) as well as our [website](#), to learn more about our campaign and your fellow awardees.

You can also view our National Big Shots Awards show, hosted by Carla Hall (Top Chef, The Chew), which officially launched this campaign by honoring our first cohort of heroes.

Big Shots is foremost a social awareness campaign, and we share and uplift the lives and efforts of our awardees through social media and our site. To do this, we ask that you provide us with photos and a short recording to share your work, your experience, and how you have supported your community. These do not need to be professional photos or footage! (Portrait mode on an iPhone for example works just fine!)

### **Photos**

Four or more would be great!

Please include **at least one portrait or headshot** (from the shoulders up):

- In color
- Only of you (or your group, if applicable)
- With a solid color or simple background. We recommend neutral colors: beige, white, gray, or black
- Of good quality: at least 1,500 pixels wide
- See examples [here](#) and below:



---

Please include action photos of you doing your work! For example, if you volunteer at a vaccination site, include photos taken of you while at the site, administering shots, welcoming appointments, or setting up the area.

If you do have professional headshots, however, please feel free to include those as well!

Tips for good photos:

- Avoid being lit from behind and instead use lighting in front of you
- Natural light is great too
- Avoid using the flash
- Try for angles that are at eye level or slightly above
- Use portrait modes in your smartphone camera settings

### **Video**

We would love to feature a video of you that shares in your own words who you are, the work that you do, and the impact you are seeing in your community. The videos that we feature are short—a minute or less! **Videos are not required**, but we aim to represent you and your work as completely as we can. And it's incredibly impactful for communities to hear Big Shots like yourself speak about your experience.

Some topics you can cover:

- Why you started the work you are doing
- What you have learned
- How your perception of the pandemic has shifted or been influenced by your experiences.
- The value of your work to your community
- Any advice for other Big Shots

We ask that you send us these materials by [*deadline that is about 48-72 hours before you would definitely need it*]. Please reach out if you have any concerns, questions, or would like some tips. The Big Shots team is more than happy to assist.

Thank you for the work you have done. We are so excited to share your story!

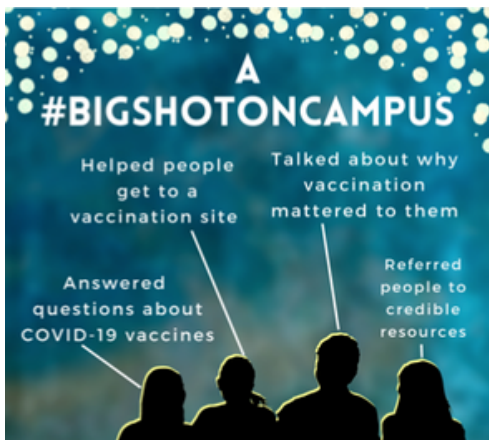
Best,

Lauren Swan-Potras

*Big Shots Campaign Coordinator*

*CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy*

Examples of the Big Shot on Campus Instagram templates. Each template can be edited with the photos, text, and video footage of each Big Shot on Campus.



Big Shots on Campus templates (continued):

**JOHN RODRIGUEZ**

This is a fake description to go here so you can see what the text would look like. then we can fill it with real text. Until then, this fake paragraph with a bunch of words will have to do. Yes indeed. Unsure how this will be filled out. Here is an additional sentence to fill.

A fake quote or anything else can go here. Whatever information you want.

**BIG SHOTS** CoVAC Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation Initiative

**JOHN RODRIGUEZ**

This is a fake description to go here so you can see what the text would look like. then we can fill it with real text. Until then, this fake paragraph with a bunch of words will have to do. Yes indeed. Unsure how this will be filled out. Here is an additional sentence to fill.

A fake quote or anything else can go here. Whatever information you want.

**BIG SHOTS** CoVAC Campus COVID-19 Vaccination and Mitigation Initiative

**JOHN RODRIGUEZ**  
On-campus Doctor  
Example University

**BIG SHOTS** CoVAC

**WE'RE CELEBRATING  
#BIGSHOTSONCAMPUS  
ALL SUMMER!**

**BIG SHOTS** Nominate yours!  
Bit.ly/3yDg6Yw CoVAC