











# Mask, Small Business and Vaccine Behavior

FINAL REPORT

Dr. Sandra Archibald, Dr. Akhtar Badshah, Lisa Goodman

Alex Stonehill, Genevieve Tremblay

July 2021

Project Funded by Department of Commerce, Washington State and Facebook (In-Kind)

**Restart Partners** 

Seattle, WA

www.restart.us

@restartpartners

# Introduction

In May of 2020, Restart Partners began working with community leaders to create a data-driven model to help Washington state decision makers forecast demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other essential supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restart's initial theory of change suggested that if everyone had access to the correct PPE, and people were protected, this would minimize the impact of the COVID-19 virus on individual health and the economy. In practice, it became clear that access to PPE was not the only barrier to a full adoption of safety measures. Restart quickly realized that personal bias and other forms of hesitancy were keeping consumers from utilizing PPE even once it had become widely available. This led to a revised theory of change in which Restart began to focus on how communities could be motivated to engage in behavioral shifts, specifically when faced with a public health emergency. As a result, the Restart team designed and implemented multiple campaigns from September 2020 to June 2021 in partnership with Department of Communications Leadership program at University of Washington, Facebook (which provided in kind support by providing Facebook ads, and Upswell in terms of pro-bono expertise on effective utilization of Facebook ads and running measurement efforts to study impact. The approach was to develop quick creatives based on an initial survey, test quickly, and adapt and repeat. The goal was to understand if social media could be an effective tool to influence behavioral change and overcome significant anti-mask and anti-vaccine efforts. For the first campaign, Restart built on original PPE efforts and identified a need for increased mask adoption. Shortly after, it became clear that local businesses, especially small minority-owned businesses, were struggling to sustain through closures and consumer apprehension. This drove Restart to initiate a second campaign and expand the current mask adoption messaging to include posts that directly encouraged support of small businesses. Finally, as COVID-19 vaccines started to become more widely available, hesitancy once again threatened adoption and a full reopening. The third campaign therefore began to focus on identifying hesitancy and changing behaviors surrounding vaccination. The following report looks in-depth at each of these efforts and provides key findings and results from lift studies and other analyses.

# **Overview**

Mask Adoption Campaign: Restart Partners in partnership with Kantar Research conducted a national mask survey in September which helped identify common themes surrounding mask adoption and allowed individuals to be sorted into three groups based on their sentiments surrounding wearing masks. From here Restart over a 9-week period from Sept 30-Nov 30 ran several social media message testing campaigns on Facebook and Instagram to change masking behaviors through rapid development of digital ads, and continuous analysis of the campaign allowed the Restart team to determine which message types received the most pushback and which were most effective in delivering the nudge and ultimately changing behaviors. 154 different ads were run reaching an estimated 1.489 million residents in Washington state. A separate 'lift study' focused on the importance of wearing masks in small gatherings with people outside your household resulted in a 4.3 % lift, moving people to likely or very likely on wearing a mask when getting together with friends and family members they do not live with.

The study estimated that 55,000 people in Washington state changed their behavior in response to the campaign.

<u>Small Business Campaign:</u> In an effort to support small businesses during the pandemic, 88 different ads were run on Facebook and Instagram during the months of April and May. These ads used various types of messaging such as direct, humorous/cute, instructive/information, solidarity/mutual, etc. to test which technique received the most engagement. The campaign reached 900,000 people with 5.1 million impressions.

Vaccine Campaign: In order to encourage vaccine adoption behavior, an additional 88 ads were run on Facebook and Instagram between April and May of 2021. After the initial vaccine campaign, a vaccine hesitancy campaign was run to target those groups who were identified as most hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine based on additional data-driven research. The 5-week campaign had a reach of 1.4 million people with a brand awareness lift of 3.8% where around 53,000 people recalled seeing the post about Covid vaccines from Restart partners and a 3% lift for knowledge where 43,6000 people had a better knowledge of where to access the Covid vaccine. Finally, an additional ad series was used to assist the Association of Washington Business and 11 Chambers of Commerce with their incentive program to increase vaccination.

# **Mask Adoption Campaign**

(Sept 28th - November 30th, 2020)

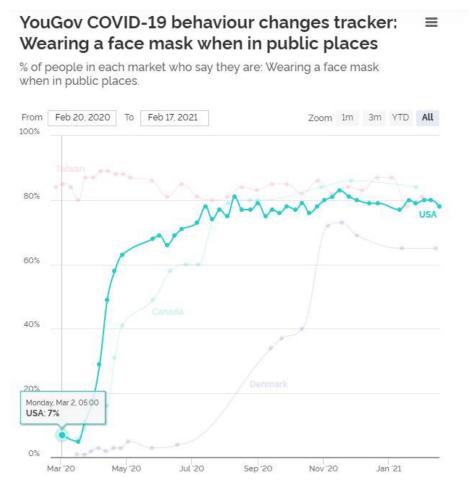
Restart Partners has been working to increase mask use and other COVID-19 prevention behaviors since May 2020. We started with an effort to help Washington state leaders plan for and procure personal protective equipment (PPE), developing an open-source data-driven PPE model and donating masks and other supplies. It became clear to us early on that PPE and other mitigation strategies would not be effective unless they were broadly embraced, so we shifted our focus to increasing adoption of masks and face coverings. We have taken what we have learned and extended our modeling and behavioral change work to other COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategies to help communities and businesses stay safe and build resilience over the course of the pandemic. We are committed to serving vulnerable communities and to evening the playing field for small and medium-sized minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

Our multi-pronged approach relies on evidence drawn from hard science and the social sciences - and on moving swiftly to put theory into practice. We collaborate with our diverse government, business, academic and community partners - listening closely, responding with innovative solutions, sharing best practices and resources, and embracing continuous refinement. We frequently collaborate with and utilized timely data from key partners, including the Washington State Department of Commerce, The Washington State Department of Health, Governor Jay Inslee, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, and the University of Washington Institute for Health Metrics & Evaluation (IHME).

We have also been gathering our own data, partnering with Kantar Research to conduct a National Mask Survey and running several social media message testing campaigns.

### Trends in Mask Use Over Time

Mask use in public places across the United have increased dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the US, and mask use rates have stayed fairly high since last summer.<sup>1</sup>



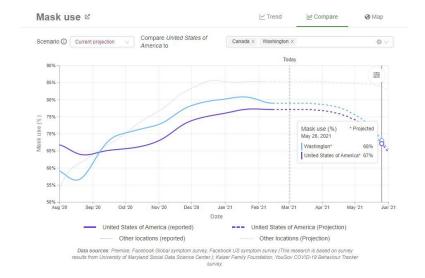
Graph Credit: YouGov

https://today.yougov.com/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/17/personal-measures-taken-avoid-covid-19

Mask use is Washington state surpassed the US average in September and has remained higher than average since then. IHME's models predict that mask use in Washington and across the United States will decrease dramatically starting in April 2021.<sup>2</sup> The predicted decrease in mask use is likely due to fatigue, more people getting vaccinated, and fewer case counts.

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  https://today.yougov.com/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/17/personal-measures-taken-avoid-covid-19

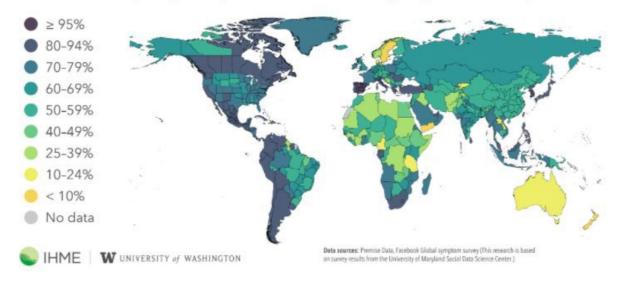
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america?view=mask-use&amp;tab=trend



Graph Credit: University of Washington Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america?view=mask-use&tab=compare

As of February 2021, US mask use (when going out) is mostly in the 70 - 79% range, depending on the state.<sup>3</sup> With recent collective memory of the 2002 - 2004 SARS epidemic, and with many people already regularly wearing masks in public, East Asian countries quickly adapted to mask-wearing at the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic.<sup>4</sup> The US was slower to embrace mask use, but eventually reached masking rates close to those of East Asian countries by August 2020.<sup>5</sup>

### Percent who say they always wear a mask when going out, February 17



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.healthdata.org/acting-data/maps-mask-use

<sup>4</sup> https://www.huffpost.com/entry/east-asian-countries-face-masks-before-covid\_I\_5f63a43fc5b61845586837f4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://today.yougov.com/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/17/personal-measures-taken-avoid-covid-19

# Mask Guidance and Policy

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the US federal government did not recommend face masks to the general public, urging people to save masks for healthcare workers. In March 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a recommendation discouraging the general public from wearing face masks, recommending masks only for people who were sick or caring for a sick person. By April, CDC reversed course, recommending that people wear non-medical grade face coverings in public places.

In February 2021, CDC updated their mask recommendations following new lab experiments. Their new guidance recommends ensuring that masks fit snugly and picking a mask with multiple layers or "double masking." This new guidance comes as new and potentially more infectious variants spread throughout the US. 10 CDC still recommends reserving N95 respirators for healthcare workers. They suggest KN95 masks as an alternative to N95 masks for the general public, although they warn that about 60% of KN95 masks in the US are counterfeit and do not meet NIOSH requirements. 11

During the Trump administration, mask guidance from the White House was mixed at best. Former President Trump downplayed CDC guidance and refused to wear face masks at public appearances. President Biden has been much more supportive of mask use. In January he signed an executive order requiring mask use on federal property. 13

In the absence of a federal mask mandate, states were left to respond independently. By mid-July, more than half of states had issued statewide mandates requiring face coverings in public places.<sup>14</sup> Washington state first mandated masks for public-facing employees in early June. By late June, Governor Jay Inslee issued an order requiring that the general public wear masks in public places.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/03/31/824560471/should-we-all-be-wearing-masks-in-public-health-experts-revisit-the-question

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/03/31/824560471/should-we-all-be-wearing-masks-in-public-health-experts-revisit-the-question

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-04-03/cdc-recommends-wearing-face-masks-during-coronavirus-pandemic

 $<sup>^9\</sup> https://www.foxnews.com/health/cdc-updates-coronavirus-face-mask-policy-endorses-double-masking$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> https://www.houstonmethodist.org/blog/articles/2021/feb/double-masking-with-new-covid-19-variants-are-two-masks-better-than-one/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> https://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/01/masks-politics-coronavirus-227765

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> https://www.politico.com/news/2021/01/22/biden-mask-mandate-461533

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> https://www.cnbc.com/2020/07/20/more-than-half-of-us-states-have-statewide-mask-mandates.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/washington-state-mandates-face-coverings-to-slow-spread-of-coronavirus/281-78ab3102-e050-4e2d-964c-2a3a7a610073

### Mask Attitudes

The following chart summarizes some common themes and sentiments around mask use, based on our Restart National Mask Survey, as well Washington State Department Health Qualitative Research on COVID-19 Behaviors. We identified the following themes: protection & science, comfort & convenience, social, mandates, political ideology, and normalcy. These themes came up when people shared their motivations for masking or not masking, and their beliefs and feelings about masking. The sentences in the chart are paraphrased sentiments, not quotes from specific individuals. The colored boxes represent what we observed as the "stronger" sentiments for each theme.

# Common Themes & Sentiments around Masking

	Sentiments For Masking	Sentiments Against Masking
Protection & Science	"I mask to protect myself and others from the virus." "I trust the science behind mask use." "I trust the scientific experts who recommend mask use."	"I don't trust the science behind mask use or the people who recommend mask use."  "Masks don't provide full protection against the virus."  "I don't need to mask because I protect myself in other ways."
Convenience & Comfort	"I mask when it's convenient to do so."  "Masking is less inconvenient and uncomfortable than getting sick."	"Masks are uncomfortable."  "Masks make it difficult to speak and communicate."  "I can't eat or drink with a mask on."  "It's difficult for me to remember to bring my mask."
Social	"I mask to protect my community."  "I mask for the sake of the common good."  "I mask because others around me are masking."  "I wear a mask to show others that I'm caring/smart/virtuous, etc."	"I don't mask because others around me don't mask."  "I don't mask because I don't want to be seen as sick/weak/gullible, etc."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVID19-QualitativeResearch.pdf

Mandates	"I mask because it is required."  "I'm following the rules by masking."	"Mandates infringe on my personal freedoms and make me not want to mask."	
Political Ideology	"I mask because I'm liberal."  "Masking is my patriotic duty."	"I don't mask because I'm conservative."  "I don't mask because I believe in personal freedom."  "Masks are a liberal conspiracy."	
Normalcy	"I mask so that I can do normal things in public."  "I mask so that things will go back to normal more quickly."	"Masking reminds me that things are not normal."	

We categorized people into 3 groups based on their attitudes toward mask use. We believe that mask "fence-sitters" are an especially important group, since this group can be persuaded to wear masks based on policy or messaging. We modeled our chart after a similar chart in the W2O Vaccine Confidence Report.<sup>17</sup>

# 3 Mask Attitudes Groups

	nti		

- Believe in science behind masks
- Trust people telling them to wear masks
- See mask use as part of the current "social contract"
- Use masks for virtue signaling ("I'm doing the right thing")
- Proselytize mask use

### **Fence-Sitters**

- Skeptical of science behind masks
- Skeptical of people telling them to wear masks
- Will generally mask if required
- Quick to justify not masking, even if they believe the science

### **Opposers**

- Do not believe in science behind masks
- Do not trust people telling them to wear masks
- See mask mandates as infringements on personal freedoms
- May believe conspiracy theories around masks and COVID-19

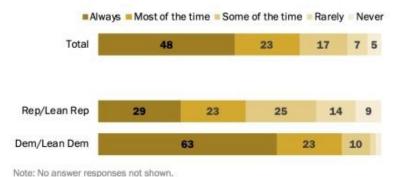
 $<sup>^{17}\</sup> https://www.w2ogroup.com/using-social-and-search-data-to-build-vaccine-confidence/?utm\_source=W2O+\&utm\_medium=webpage\&utm\_campaign=2021+Vaccine+Confidence+Hub$ 

# **Demographics and Mask Behaviors**

A working paper from the Becker Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago found that political partisanship is the single most important predictor of local mask use, not COVID-19 severity or local policies. The researchers also found that former President Trump's unexpected public mask use at Walter Reed in July 2020 significantly increased positive sentiment towards mask-related topics. Other similar research points to this partisan divide. For example, a Pew Research Center survey found that Democrats and Democrat-learning independents were about twice as likely as Republicans and those leaning Republican to say that masks should be worn always (63% vs. 29%). 19

# About seven-in-ten Americans say masks should be worn in public places at least most of the time

Thinking about the coronavirus and your own local area, when people in your community go to public places where they may be near others, how often do you think they should wear a mask? (%)



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

#### PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Graph Credit: Pew Research Center

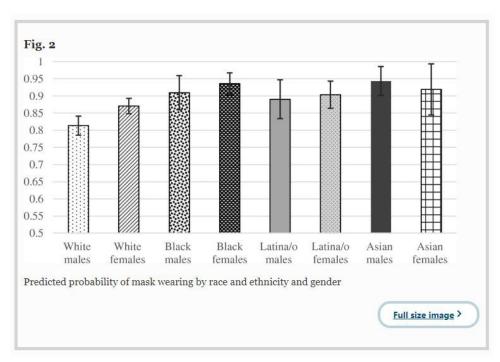
https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/25/republicans-democrats-move-even-further-apart-in-coronavirus-concerns/

A January 2021 study published in *The Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* looked at how race, ethnicity, and gender shape mask use. The study found that compared to white survey participants, Black, Latina/o, and Asian respondents were more likely to report mask use during the pandemic. Results also showed that white men were least likely to wear a mask. Interestingly, the study found that racial and ethnic differences were not the same across genders. The authors of the study speculate that differences in economic resources, perceptions of risk, and ideas about masculinity could contribute to these differences across race, ethnicity and gender.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=3664779

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/25/republicans-democrats-move-even-further-apart-in-coronavirus-concerns/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40615-020-00941-1



Graph Credit: Brittany N. Hearne and Michael D. Niño in The Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities <a href="https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40615-020-00941-1">https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40615-020-00941-1</a>

An October 2020 CDC Report, which drew from the Data Foundation's COVID Impact Survey, found that age was positively associated with self-reported mask use. The study also found that engagement in COVID-19 mitigation behaviors (mask use, hand washing, physical distancing, crowd and restaurant avoidance, and cancellation of social activities) differed significantly by age group. Mitigation behaviors were lowest in adults age 18- 29 and highest in adults over 60. This report identified a need for improved communication and policy priorities, to promote mitigation behaviors, particularly for young adults. Similar research also suggests that older people are more likely to embrace masking. For example, a Pew Research Center survey found that 42% of people 18 - 29 said that masks should always be worn, compared with 55% of those 65 and older.

# Messaging

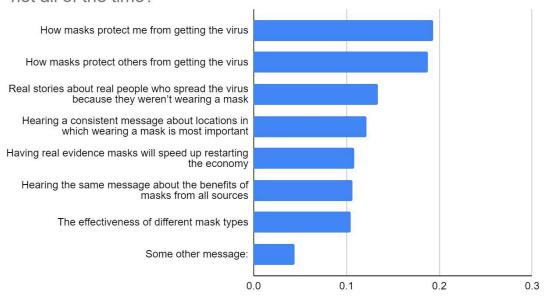
Restart Partners has done extensive research on messaging in order to inform our mask adoption campaign strategy. We partnered with Kantar, a national research firm, to conduct a National Mask Survey with over 1000 participants, and we also ran several social media message testing campaigns on Facebook and Instagram.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6943e4.htm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/25/republicans-democrats-move-even-further-apart-in-coronavirus-concerns/

In the Restart National Mask Survey, participants indicated that they would be receptive to messages about the effectiveness of mask use. Respondents said that they would be most responsive to messages about "how masks protect me from getting the virus" and "how masks protect others from getting the virus."

What information or messages would make you more likely to wear a mask in locations where you currently don't wear one at all, or not all of the time?



Graph Credit: Restart Partners

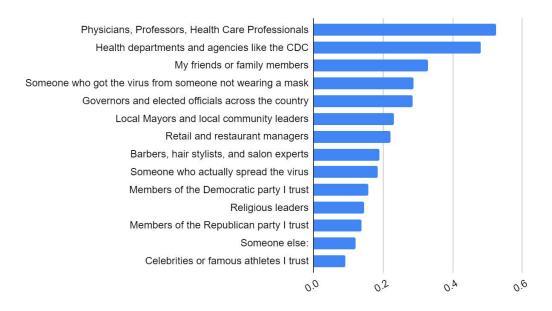
Throughout our research, we found that people want to see a clear connection between recommended COVID-19 behaviors and ending the pandemic. For example, in a survey by Civic Analytics, a Gates Foundation Partner, 63% of respondents said they would be more likely to follow recommended COVID-19 behaviors if they believed that those behaviors would help to end the pandemic as soon as possible.<sup>23</sup> This also aligns the Washington State Department of Health Qualitative Research report on COVID-19 behaviors, which stresses that people really want the pandemic to be over.<sup>24</sup>

Restart National Mask Survey participants indicated that they were most likely to be influenced to wear masks by health care professionals and public health agencies, while celebrities and athletes would be less influential as messengers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> https://www.civisanalytics.com/blog/covid-19-impact-on-the-american-population/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVID19-QualitativeResearch.pdf

Who could influence you, and other people like you, to wear a mask more often?



**Graph Credit: Restart Partners** 

In our social media message testing campaign, we found that funny and cute ads elicited the most comments and had the biggest reach. Ads that promoted messages of solidarity and mutual respect around mask use were most successful in terms of likes and shares.

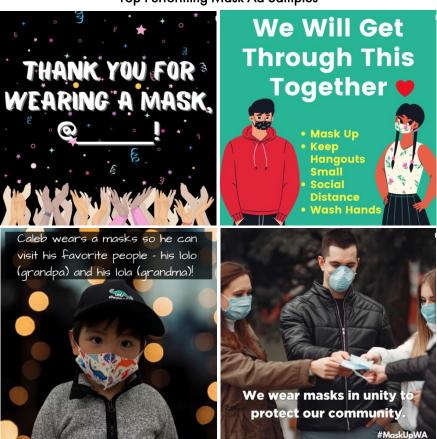
Message Analysis		Reach	Engagement		Cost Per Engagement	Engagements to impressions ratio	
		Impression	Like	Comment	Share		
Commanding/Scolding	*	13,670	1,481.25	93.75	222.67	\$0.16	13.91%
Humorous/Cute	•	61,760	821.96	641.46	175.04	\$0.15	20.02%
Indirect/Masks worn but other msg	*	29,179	687.41	121.45	73.00	\$0.22	14.41%
Instructive/Informative	*	37,574	1,165.90	116.79	234.72	\$0.15	16.27%
Protecting Family/Relatives	*	23,484	1,988.08	148.58	268.00	\$0.08	19.88%
Solidarity/Mutual Respect	•	24,587	2,875.24	237.76	421.43	\$0.12	16.48%
Technical/Statistical	•	6928	380.67	89.33	69.67	\$0.12	8.31%

Chart Credit: Restart Partners

In our social media message testing, we found that the following kinds of messaging were most effective:

- Direct voice (vs. humorous)
- Encouraging (vs. scolding or proscriptive)
- Copy that was clear and short worked better than copy that included jokes or was more lighthearted.
- Posts that encouraged the audience to do something specific (e.g. "Thank someone who wore a mask..." and "There are many reasons to wear a mask. Why do you wear a mask?") had

- better engagement.
- Stills did better in terms of engagement, though videos recorded more impressions due to Facebook recording autoplay metrics.



Top Performing Mask Ad Samples

Image Credit: Restart Partners

# Masks and the Business Community

Masks are an important part of recovery and resilience for the business community. First, masks are an important tool for slowing the spread of the virus and curbing the pandemic in the long term. Additionally, masks signal that businesses are taking COVID prevention measures. In our social media messaging campaign, we are showing images of workers masking up in order to build consumer confidence in the safety of small and medium sized business establishments.





Image Credit: Restart Partners

We are also hopeful that people will be motivated to wear masks in order to help the economy and support businesses in their communities. In our Restart National Mask Survey, 33% of respondents said that reopening the economy is one reason that they wear a mask. We are also created new ad content featuring small and medium sized businesses throughout Washington, encouraging people to mask up and patronize their local businesses.

### Masks and Vaccines

Restart Partners has also been working on social media messaging to promote COVID-19 vaccination. As we ventured into vaccine adoption work, we noticed similarities between our mask work and our vaccine work. We noticed an overlap between mask-hesitant and vaccine hesitant groups. For example, political conservatives are among the most resistant to mask use and to vaccination.<sup>25</sup>

We also saw that many public sentiments around mask use also apply to vaccination. For example, trust and mistrust in science and governmental authority frequently come up in discussions of both mask use and vaccination. As we launch our new vaccine-focused social media campaign, we are excited to use what we have learned about mask adoption to inform our vaccine adoption messaging.

# **Looking Forward**

In the months and likely years to come, masks will continue to be important tools for COVID-19 protection. Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Biden's chief medical advisor for COVID-19, recently said that he expects that Americans may still need to wear masks in 2022.<sup>26</sup> Dr. Fauci also recently recommended that states not ease COVID-19 restrictions until new US cases fall below 10,000 daily.<sup>27</sup> Based on Washington's population, case counts here would need to be around 200 - 210 for it to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> https://fox11online.com/news/coronavirus/resistance-to-coronavirus-vaccines-remains-high-among-republicans-polls-show

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/21/science/fauci-face-masks-2022.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/04/health/us-coronavirus-thursday/index.html

safe to start easing restrictions. We are now seeing about 650 - 700 cases per day.

To date, 50 million Americans are at least partly vaccinated against coronavirus. As more and more people get vaccinated (and gain immunity through illness), public health experts are urging people to continue to wear masks in public.<sup>28</sup> Masks are still necessary, even for those vaccinated, because vaccines are not 100% effective. The vaccines have been shown to be 66% to 95% effective in protecting against COVID-19 infection (depending on which vaccine).<sup>29</sup> Additionally, there are still many unknowns about the vaccine, like how they will perform for children and whether vaccinated people can transmit the virus to people who are unvaccinated.<sup>30</sup>

With news this week of Texas and Mississippi lifting their mask mandates, and new more contagious variants on the rise, public health experts warn that a fourth wave of the virus. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky warned that reopening too early could threaten "the hard-earned ground we have gained." Americans are fatigued after a year of living with COVID-19, and there is a real danger of people letting their guards down. We believe that our work around mask and healthy behavior adoption is more important now than ever.

<sup>28</sup> https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/health/coronavirus-vaccination-transmission.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> https://www.statnews.com/2021/02/02/comparing-the-covid-19-vaccines-developed-by-pfizer-moderna-and-johnson/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/health/coronavirus-vaccination-transmission.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/05/new-covid-variants-us-states-reopening-fourth-wave

# **Small Business Campaign**

(April st, 2021 - May 31 st, 2021)

After the success of initial small business campaign ads in March, the campaign further evolved to leverage people's enthusiasm to support their local community and businesses. Also, the expansion of vaccinations eligibility starting April 15 encouraged people to get vaccinated and henceforth businesses saw an uptick with loosening restrictions. It, therefore, became imperative to run the small business campaigns and the vaccine campaigns side-by-side to achieve dual goals of economic recovery and maintaining public health safety. Below are some of the key details of the Small Business and Vaccine campaigns run by Restart in the months of April and May 2021.

### I. Campaign Results and Observations

Below are the results of the small business campaign in April and May 2021 (88 total ads) that reflect the increase in the footfall at small businesses, also supported by the steady decrease in the Covid-19 graph of Washington.

Metrics	Apr 1, 2021 – Apr 30, 2021	May 1, 2021 – May 31, 2021	
Total Reach	774,858	310,085	
Total Impressions	3,473,444 1,048,385		
Total Post Engagements	221,560	241,748	
Total Post Reactions (likes etc.)	91,891	9,129	
Total Comments	2,734	188	
Total Shares	4,007	560	
Total Spend	\$42,853	\$10,766	

- 30 Top performing ads have around total 2,133,594 impressions which constitute almost 50% of the total campaign impressions.
- **30 Top performing ads** have around **2800+ engagements** (that includes reactions, comments, shares, views etc.) with **top 10 reaching almost 7000 engagements**.
- 30 Top performing ads have average cost per post engagement of \$0.72 and result rate of 3%.

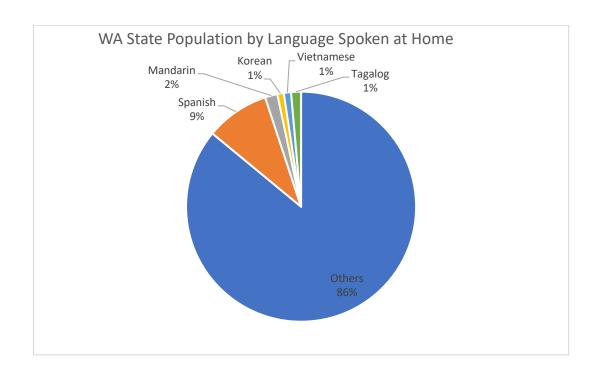
#### II. Campaign Audience and Insights

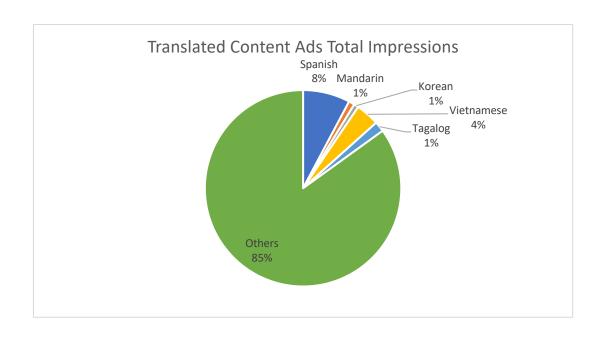
For the small business campaign, we had started with six different ad sets targeting the following groups. For our Spanish speaking audience, we created original Spanish language content as well as translations of English language content to expand understanding and consequent actions.

- Suburban/Urban Residents (areas with a population of 10,000+)
- o Rural Area Residents (areas with a population of < 10,000)
- o Instagram (WA residents 18-39 year old)
- Parents with Children (25–64-year-olds in Washington, filtered based on interests related to children and parenting)
- Spanish Speakers (13-65+ year old Spanish-speakers, in Washington)

### Spanish Speakers on Instagram

However, we realized that the socioeconomic impacts of Covid-19 pandemic are far reaching but not equitable. In Washington state, the vulnerable essential worker population is composed of people of color, and this population faces a higher number of infection and mortality rates from the virus. So, towards the end of April (April 26th), we deployed small business content translated into Spanish, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Simplified Chinese to reach more ethnic communities around Washington State (based on the population data given below). At the end of the **translated ads campaign**, we reached 163,643 people and made **854,866 impressions** just with the translated content alone. Moreover, the impressions performance breakup was similar to the population by language statistics as given in the graph below. Also, the top performing **Spanish ads** have **average 131 post shares**, higher from an ad with 80 shares in March. We chose content based on the English variants' past performances, adjusted any imagery to make it more culturally correct and relatable, and relied heavily on native speakers to ensure proper translation.





Overall, more women (60%) engaged than men (39%); 35-44 y.o. and then 25-34 y.o. range engaged the highest. However, in rural audiences, more women of the age group 45-54 displayed the highest engagement, comprising 40% of the total engagement by women in rural Washington.

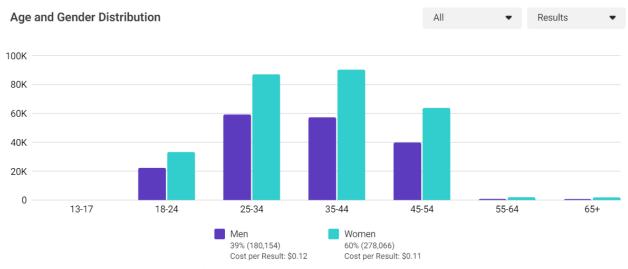


Figure 1: Total Campaign Demographics

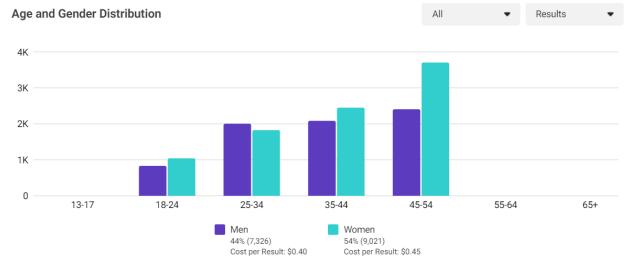
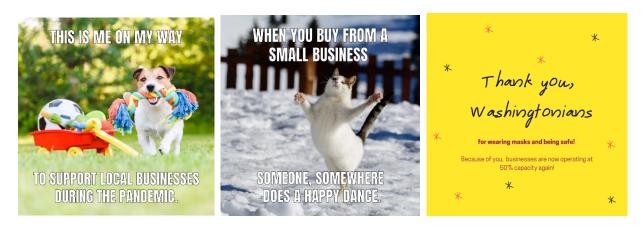


Figure 2: WA Rural Audience Campaign Demographics

### III. Top Performing Ad Samples

### **April 2021**







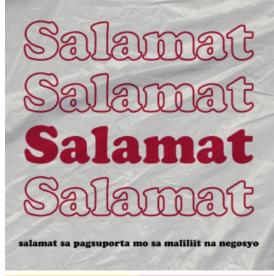




### May 2021 Translated Content Top Ad Samples

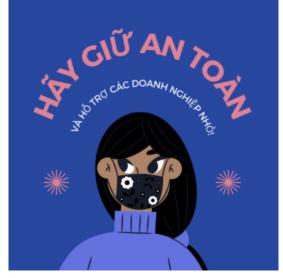
Our goal was to try many different types of ads to see what was resonating with the audience we were reaching. In some cases, ads like the one below with the cat doing a happy dance that did not have a health message but just a small business message performed better. We found more engagement from our Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese audience. However, this may stem from these populations having a bigger presence in the state. In terms of types of engagement, community members shared our content more than they commented. We can make an insightful guess that they resonated with the messages as they shared it with their network. Additionally, we found that memes did just as well in the translated version as they did our English counterpart.











### IV. Campaign Approach – Creative and Messaging

We ran **88 different ads**, both on Facebook and Instagram, all from the Restart Us Facebook and Instagram accounts in the combined months of April (57) and May\* (31). Supporting small businesses is a good uniting idea that people respond to. To follow the successes of March, we continued our experiments with the following different types of messaging – direct, humorous/cute, instructive/informative, solidarity/mutual respect on a broad scale and adding the asking question messaging type ads too to encourage more engagement. Our on-ground small business team, tied up with more local small businesses like a local restaurant, coffee shops, food truck, a gym, an eye studio, a healing arts institute to name a few. Below is a table that depicts the breakup of results of the different messaging ads.

\*Ads were turned off on May 14 as ad credits got over.

Most effective messaging, voice, tone, medium and platform:

- Humorous/Cute messaging 33% of top performing ads
- Solidarity/Mutual Support messaging 50% of top performing ads
- Humorous/Cute ads that featured pet animals also saw the highest engagement.
- "Thank you" messages of solidarity worked well again to entail the action we want the users to take.
- The Food & Beverage category local small business ads (like Spice Waala restaurant,
  Grumpy's Food Truck shown above) performed quite well and garnered good number
  of impressions and engagement, as people were able to relate to them. They
  commented and provided supporting reviews for their offerings.

# **Vaccine Campaign**

The vaccine campaign started with the learning campaign in April that comprised 15 ads with the objective of reach and engagement that was being tested. This campaign was done as a precursor to the 5-week vaccine lift campaign that was started on April 19<sup>th</sup> and concluded on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Hence most of the results below will discuss the vaccine lift campaign.

# Vaccine Lift Campaign

(April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021)

### I. Campaign Results and Observations

A total of 88 ads were run in the vaccine lift study across Facebook and Instagram to encourage the vaccine adoption behavior in the people, especially to influence the holdout audiences. Below are some of the metrics.

Metrics	Apr 19, 2021 – Apr 30, 2021	May 1, 2021 – May 31, 2021	
Total Reach	1,078,392	1,174,652	
Total Impressions	5,540,704	6,961,660	
Total Post Engagements	206,793	280,187	
Total Post Reactions (likes etc.)	4,815	3,533	
Total Comments	357	451	
Total Shares	343	288	
Total Spend	\$35,351	\$43,248	

### Lift Study Results

- The 5-week campaign, with a total reach of 1.4 million people and a spend of \$76K, achieved a spectacular brand (awareness) lift of 3.8%. This means that around 53000 people recalled seeing the post about COVID vaccines from Restart Partners on web or a mobile device.
- We also see a brand lift of 3% for knowledge, which means around 43600 people submitted
  desired response (yes) to the question on possessing the knowledge of where to get a covid
  vaccine.
- A brand lift of **1.5% brand lift for social norms** tells that 25600 people believe that those whose opinions they value would approve of them getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Most of this lift was driven by the age group between **18–24-year-olds** who **look for social acceptance**.
- And finally, a **lift of 1.6% for safety** tells that **26100 people feel that covid vaccine is safe for them** after seeing the ads. Further **safety** brand lift is **driven by** a 2.2% lift in **men** and a 2.8% in **55–64-year old's**.
- With 88 ads posted with the **frequency** was observed at **8.6**, that is the average number of times each person in your audience saw the ads, while the top content still only received ~10% of the total budget, therefore such great frequency numbers **did not cause message fatigue.**

#### **Other Campaign Results**

- 25 Top performing image ads have around total 5,917,181 impressions which constitute almost 47% of the total campaign impressions.
- **25 Top performing image ads** have around **13790+ engagements** (that includes reactions, comments, shares, views etc.) with **top 10 reaching almost 10518 engagements**.
- 25 Top performing ads have average cost per post engagement of \$2.85 and average result rate of 7.81%.
- Apart from lot of obvious anti-vax comments, constructive conversation was also seen about the vaccine's effect on variants and some users even pointed to some of the credible sources.
- Cat Meme (Humorous/Cute) ad saw around 120+ shares on both Facebook and Instagram
- The total number of times the videos were played for 75% of their length was 4.3% of total video plays.

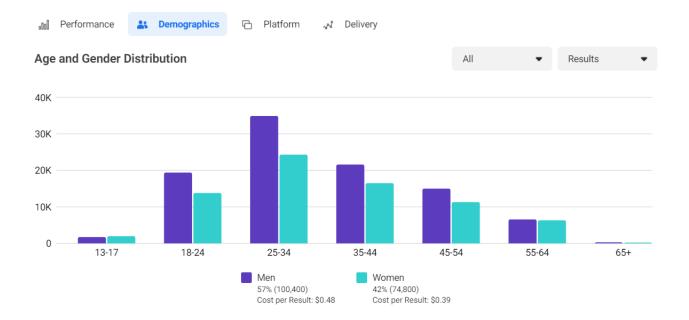
### II. Campaign Audience and Insights

Various research informed how vaccine behaviors are associated with political affiliations (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/04/17/us/vaccine-hesitancy-politics.html).

Washington state primarily being a blue state, however had around 1.8 million people who voted for red for the state governor elections. Hence, we decided to target the following different groups of people based on their political affiliation, and accordingly target with tailor-made messaging. We chose younger audiences on both Instagram and Facebook as separate audience sets based on the research so that the young teens are not considered languishers w.r.t. vaccine adopters in WA state. Also owing to the diversity in the state especially a lot of Spanish speaking population, we created original Spanish language content as well as translations of English language content to expand understanding and consequent actions.

- o General Washingtonians (18-59 year old Washington residents)
- 18-39yo (18-39 year old Washington residents who are either politically liberal, conservative or moderates)
- Instagram (WA residents 16-39 year old)
- Spanish Speakers (16-65+ year old Spanish-speakers, in Washington)

The Spanish ads achieved a reach of 127405 people and received 442,507 number of impressions. Overall, more men (57%) engaged than women (42%); 25-34 y.o. and then 35-44 y.o. men engaged more.



### **III.** Top Performing Ad Samples

### **April 2021**



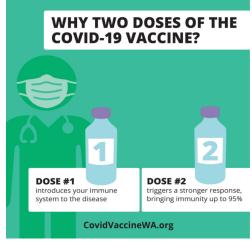


Me watching all of my friends getting vaccinated.

















### Spanish ads





### IV. Campaign Approach – Creative and Messaging

We ran **88 different ads**, both on Facebook and Instagram, all from the Restart Us Facebook and Instagram accounts in the combined months of April (43) and May\* (46). We took an iterative, audience-informed and research-informed approach to the messaging, observing its performance, and then refining based on what we learned. Our ads comprised still images and videos and we increased engagement and interaction with tactics like asking questions, using puns, catchy slogans, and including diverse groups of people in the ads. Messaging Types Include Instructive/informative, Technical/Statistical, Engagement/asking a question, Messages of solidarity, Humorous/cute, Direct statement, Protecting family. We also decided to run ads from the content of HHS, Department of Health, and the CDC as credible sources to provide the correct information about vaccine and to tackle misinformation.

\*Ads around the week of May 14 were allocated uneven budget as ad credits were limited.

Most effective messaging, voice, tone, medium and platform:

- V. Humorous/Cute messaging 20% of top performing ads
- VI. Solidarity messaging 28% of top performing ads
- VII. **Humorous/Cute** ads that featured **pets** and **memes** with popular **celebrity** figures like Oprah, Drake, Yoda also witnessed great engagement.
- VIII. **20% of the top performing ads were infographics**, which worked very well as seen above in the ads. Mass Vaccination sites ad (shown above) was a blockbuster with almost 400,000 impressions also addressing **vaccine access and ability** factors in the messaging.
- IX. Ads that were created from the aspect of **motivation** like "I Got Vaccinated because..." did well or even the new **carousel** format ad that suggested feelings.
- X. Ads which are **asking questions** like "Do you still need a vaccine?" or "What about you?" have **done well**.
- XI. **HHS ads**, especially their **video ads performed very well** in providing proper information about the minor side effects of covid vaccine.

# **Vaccine Hesitancy Campaign (Post-Lift)**

(June 04th, 2021 – June 21st, 2021)

After completing our Vaccine Lift campaign, we took a more targeted approach to reach the more hesitant populations based on <u>Surgo Venture's research</u> and the COVID-19 Vaccine Personas. We dialed in on the following personas:

- Cost-Anxious (rural, younger, lower income, essential workers)
- System Distrusters (urban, younger, lower income, essential workers, black/minority, Democrat)
- Conspiracy Believers (rural, Republican)

We used the *reach objective* in Ads Manager to reach as many people as possible due to our limited time frame. With reach, we had less comments and reactions, but are still able to gauge the best performing creatives based on other metrics such as: impressions, cost per engagement, and result rate.

### **Campaign Results and Observations**

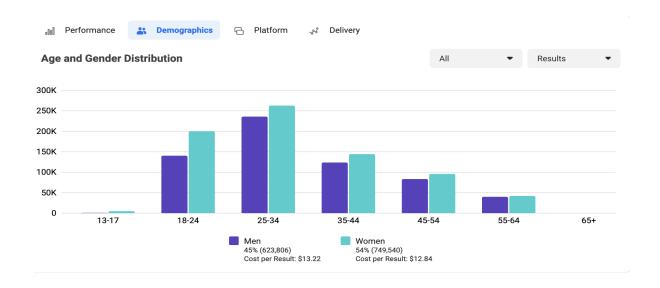
A total of **60 ads** were run in the vaccine hesitancy study across Facebook and Instagram to encourage the vaccine adoption behavior. Below are some of the metrics.

Metrics	June 04 - June 21
Total Reach	1385126
Total Impressions	4100074
Average Frequency	2.96
Cost per 1000 impressions	4.4
Total Spend	\$18,032.12

### **Campaign Audience and Insights**

We had 5 main targets:

- 1. Cost Conscious (targeted by job type and industry)
  - a. Example
    - i. Job title: Grocery store worker, Barista, Waitress, Janitor
    - ii. Industry: Food and Service, Construction, Repair, etc.
- 2. Rural Residents (mainly in Eastern Washington), Facebook only
- 3. **18-34 year olds**, Instagram only
- 4. All Washingtonians (age 16-60), Facebook only
- 5. Spanish Speakers



### **Top Performing Ad Samples**

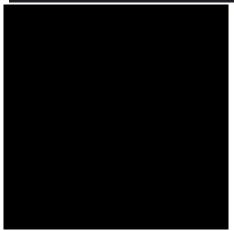






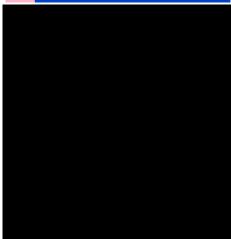
















### Campaign Approach - Creative and Messaging

We ran **60 different ads**, both on Facebook and Instagram, all from the Restart Us Facebook and Instagram accounts. Unlike our previous campaigns where we took an iterative approach, this campaign is more research-informed due to the limited amount of time. Our ads consisted of more still images and fewer videos. For our rural audience, we capitalized on a more patriotic approach. We addressed cost consciousness in two different ways. The first is to emphasize that the vaccine is, in fact, free. The second is by providing tips on when to get vaccinated (i.e. on Friday so they have the weekend to recover), as the fear of side effects inhibiting them to work is a larger concern amongst essential workers. Messaging Types Include Instructive/informative, Technical/Statistical, Engagement/asking a question, Messages of solidarity, Humorous/cute, Direct statement, Protecting family.

Most effective messaging, voice, tone, medium and platform:

• Instructive/Informative

o EX: Herd Immunity

Direct Statements

EX: "In Vaccines We Trust" and Easy Vax

Solidarity

- o Ex: "For Your Country" and Community Vax
- Humorous/Cute
  - o EX: "Me and the Girls"

# AWB (Association of Washington Business)

(June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

We assisted the Association of Washington Business (AWB) and 11 Chambers of Commerce in their \$50 VISA Gift Card giveaway by using ad credits to boost their incentive program. The \$50 prepaid debit VISA cards were used to encourage people to not only get vaccinated, but also to support local businesses around eastern and central Washington. Although 11 Chambers were participating in this giveaway, we were only able to put ad credits behind the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce, Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce.

We set this campaign set with a *Traffic* Objective. The traffic objective is designed to drive people to a website. In this case, the website was a google drive link or website that listed out the various vaccination sites where people can redeem their VISA gift card.

### **Campaign Audience and Insights**

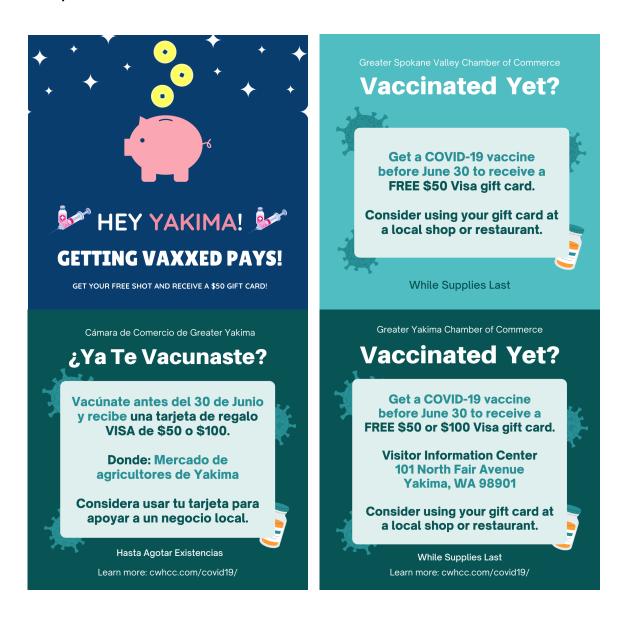
We created 11 different ad sets for the 11 chambers. As previously stated, because we did not hear back from specific chambers, we were unable to support their efforts. For the Chambers that did run, we targeted by location and individuals between the ages of 17 and 35 for English Speakers and ages 17 to 65 for Spanish Speakers (to increase estimated audience size).

For the Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, we targeted based on location and language. We saw the most engagement with this group. Comments leaned more towards the negative such as, "So the people who care about others and got vaccinated earlier get nothing?" or "What about those who got vaccinated before others?"

Below are some of the metrics:

Metrics	June 17 - June 28
Total Reach	65,083
Total Impressions	245,491
Link Clicks	2,249
Frequency	3.77
Total Spend	\$1,916.05

### **Example Creatives**



# Conclusion

Encouraging behavior change traditionally has been a long and arduous process. Campaigns against drunk driving, seat belts, and tobacco use have all been very effective but have take decades to get traction and have been supported by enormous amount of financial resources and eventually tied in to some sort of national or state level enforcement and in some cases severe penalties.

The Covid-19 response work undertaken by Restart Partners was to test out a different approach as we did not have time nor the amount of resources required to enact behavior change at massive scale. We

started with a theory of change that said if we used social media to counter what was already being promoted on social media against mask adoption and anti-vaccination, we could drive behavior change but also counter negative messaging with positive messages to keep our community safe and economy open. Taking a page from the business community that uses Facebook ad campaign to test product and services and glean quick lessons to take further action, we designed our 9 month effort with financial support from the Department of Commerce, Washington State, Facebook (in-kind ad support) and Upswell (in-kind support to undertake the ads campaign and conduct lift measurement studies).

What we found that with consistent, quick, and creative messaging we can gain traction around increasing mask adoption, practicing healthy behaviors, increasing vaccination intake and supporting small business to open up safely. Our approach was based on science and data which included surveys to gain sentiment analysis and then rapid creatives that showcased the importance of wearing masks, keeping small business safe and getting vaccinated.

We also depended on forming partnerships with a wide range of organizations and leadership in the State to help support the work and evangelize the efforts. What we learnt was that it was important to test and test quickly, learn, rinse and repeat. We also understood that our campaign will unleash massive amounts of negative and vitriolic comments given the partisan and divided environment in which we were undertaking our work. It was also clear that every negative comment meant that the messages were having some impact. There were also lots of positive and reinforcing messages. Our focus was on the middle where we could change minds most quickly but providing them with supporting evidence and additional messaging.

Through an audience-informed approach which used rapid message testing and microtargeting, communication strategies shifted in accordance with engagement levels and audience response. Results from the lift test tools used to analyze the campaigns indicate that these efforts were successful in reaching millions of users, identifying varying attitudes toward public health protocol, and facilitating positive behavioral changes which increased support for and participation in prosocial actions, such as wearing a mask or receiving a vaccine. In social media message testing regarding mask wearing, messages that were encouraging or used a direct voice, as opposed to being humorous or scolding, performed the most effectively. Results from the surveys found that 33% of respondents stated that reopening the economy is one reason that they wear a mask, informing later campaigns which linked local businesses and mask wearing. After the success of small business ads, these were then combined with vaccination campaigns to associate economic reopening with increased vaccine uptake. Impressions on the top 30 ads for business reopening constituted nearly 50% of total campaign impressions. The most effective messaging tones to increase vaccine uptake included informative messaging, direct statements, humorous or cute statements, and messages which showed solidarity. This campaign showed a 1.5% lift for social norms and 1.6% lift for safety. Our learnings are based on the fact that our overall campaigns had a reach of 26 million people, in 9 months we created and tested over 689 ads and the total impression i.e., the number of times our content was displayed was over 140.2 million

Strategies from this campaign have been expanded to reach particularly vulnerable or hesitant populations in other states and countries. As a highly anticipated full reopening is now among us, the strategies outlined in this paper should be utilized throughout Washington State to protect our communities against COVID-19. What is clear is that this one approach of effectively utilizing social media messaging to build a solid platform to message creatively is effective and important arsenal to have when launching any campaign that is focused on behavior change.

### Acknowledgement:

We are enormously grateful to the Department of Commerce, Washington State for their financial support to undertake this work. To Facebook for their in-kind ad support, to Upswell and Drew Barnard for their support in understanding the intricacies of running such a campaign and undertaking lift studies to measure the impact of the work, and Mitch Eggers and Kantar for undertaking the survey to measure mask adoption sentiment to get the work going.

### **Team of Partners:**

Facebook

Kantar

Upswell

Washington State Department of Commerce

Finally, our deep appreciation to Alex Stonehill and his team of students at the University of Washington, Department of Communication Leadership, they spent countless hours on developing the creatives, managing all of the various feedback (both negative and positive) that we received, and undertaking the measurement studies to effectively understand the impact.

#### **Restart Partners Team:**

Caitlin Bishop Hanna Peterson Julia Nussenbaum Sarah Siddiqui Genevieve Tremblay

**UW Communication Leadership Team:** 

Niharika Arora Marina Baur Sasha Buz Mo Herbert Ashley (Ai Heng) Lee Jordan Melograna Marisol Morales Ikram Navia Alyssa Seng Isabel Shen Stasea Stewart Alex Stonehill Audrey Widner