



# WA Notify Social Marketing Campaign Report

C+C | Washington State Department of Health

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# BACKGROUND

On January 21, 2020, Washington became the first U.S. state with a confirmed case of COVID-19, marking the beginning of what would become a national health crisis for all Americans. As the outbreak grew, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) worked with C+C to develop a social marketing campaign that encouraged behaviors that could help stop the spread of the virus. One of the behaviors encouraged was to get people to add a new exposure notification tool created by Apple and Google to their smart phones. This tool, named WA Notify, can anonymously notify a person if they have been near someone that later tests positive for COVID-19. The tool is available as a setting that can be enabled on iPhones and as an app that can be downloaded on Android phones. The tool and app were created in 36 languages. Oxford research showed that if 15% of the population had this tool on their phones, communities could reduce COVID-19 cases and deaths (impact improved as that percentage increases). WA Notify launched on November 30th, 2020 with the C+C and DOH team creating and launching the campaign in just one month. To maximize adoption of WA Notify, the team used the ten steps of community-based social marketing (CBSM) to create the behavior adoption strategy WA Notify.



## STEP #1: PURPOSE, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The ultimate purpose of all of DOH's COVID-19 social marketing campaigns was to save lives and reduce serious illness from the virus. WA Notify was one behavior in a suite of behaviors (masks, vaccination etc.) helping achieve this purpose.

<b>Purpose</b>	Save lives and reduce serious illness related to COVID-19
<b>Goal</b>	Flatten the curve related to the number of COVID-19 cases, deaths, and hospitalizations in WA State



## Objectives

- **Initial:** Get 15% of Washington adults to add WA Notify to their phones in one month (879,566 people)
- Raise awareness of WA Notify
- **Ongoing:** Increase the percentage of smart phone owners with WA Notify on their phones
- Use WA Notify to anonymously inform others they may have exposed about their positive at-home test (2022)

## STEP #2: RESEARCH

Extensive (and fast) research was needed to better understand how to reach the diverse communities throughout WA State to discover what would drive them to add WA Notify to their phones. The team used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research to inform the program strategy and messaging. The Gates Foundation agreed to add questions to their monthly quantitative poll, the team conducted qualitative research via online discussion boards and also held in-language, one-on-one interviews in 11 languages.

The following research informed key campaign insights:

- **Gates Foundation Statewide Polling:** The team partnered with the Gates Foundation to add questions to monthly polling of more than 1,000 people in Washington to inform on intent barriers, benefits and motivators for using WA Notify.
- **Launch Qualitative Research:** The team quickly added a series of questions about WA Notify to in-progress online COVID-19 discussion board among ten audience groups.
- **In-language Interviews:** In 2020, one-on-one interviews (60 min) via phone and Zoom were conducted in 11 languages. Seven interviews each were conducted in Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Tagalog, and Ukrainian, and six each in Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A team of 11 community members acted as in-language moderators for the interviews. In 2021-2022 this research was expanded to 17 languages.
- **Ongoing Research:** In 2021 and 2022, C+C created a Market Research Online Community (MROC) of more than 850 WA residents to inform the campaign through 2-3 quantitative and/or qualitative research exercises per week (open-ended questions, projective techniques, messaging/concept testing, and ranking/rating barriers and motivations). The MROC was used to track WA Notify attitudes and beliefs as well as to dig into WA Notify experiences among Android phone owners. The MROC was also used to test messages and concepts for all WA Notify campaigns.



Campaign strategies and messaging were created using the following research insights:

- **The number one concern across all audiences was privacy and data security.** People thought that to work, the tool must use and track location data (it does not). To address this, the team built in privacy messages throughout the campaign on every piece of content, multiple times if possible. Later in the campaign, research found a very high awareness of WA Notify (80%+), for the people that knew about it but had not added it to their phones, privacy and the perception of location tracking remained the primary concerns.
- **People had a lot of questions about how it works** and would need more information before they would decide to add WA Notify to their phone. The team created detailed FAQs, flow charts and long-form videos (in 36 languages) explaining the technology and how it works.
- **Tool sponsors (Apple & Google) did not add trust.** In fact, their involvement raised more privacy concerns for people. Due to this, Google and Apple were not featured prominently in materials and messaging.
- **The key benefit to using WA Notify was helping protect self, family and the community from COVID-19.** The team used a launch headline of: “There’s a new way to help stop the spread of COVID-19” to grab attention and articulate this benefit.
- **Young adults and college students were the most willing to add WA Notify** with the LGBTQ+ and Asian communities also being receptive. We launched the campaign with an 18+ focus and then narrowed to younger adults to drive adoption momentum. The Asian community was included as a priority in the media buy through community and in-language media (17 Asian languages). The LGBTQ+ community was reached through community media and influencer partnerships.
- **Rural adults and Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Russian-speaking adults were least likely to add WA Notify** with privacy and trust issues driving skepticism.
- **Android phone owners had unique barriers** to adding WA Notify to their phones and keeping it on their phones. Downloading the app takes extra steps and effort as compared to enabling the setting on an iPhone. In addition, once downloaded, some people felt the app was draining their battery, they did not like to keep their Bluetooth on (required for the app to work) and were worried it wasn’t working since there was no interaction/updates from the app. All these factors were leading people to delete the app from their Android phones.
- **At-home Testing:** Research conducted in early 2022 showed that 75% of people with WA Notify, would be likely to report a positive at-home test result through WA Notify to alert people they had been near (if they knew how to do so).



## STEP 3: DESIRED BEHAVIOR CHANGE

This was a rare situation in a social marketing campaign where the behavior was brand new. No one had ever done it before because it did not exist. This was both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity came in capturing all the early adopters that would be easy to convince to use the technology. The challenge was that we needed to introduce the concept and explain the new technology simply and quickly while overcoming audience barriers.

### INITIAL DESIRED BEHAVIOR:

The ultimate behavior change was to add WA Notify to your phone. But this behavior had some complexity built in since activating the technology had different steps for Android and iOS (Apple) phones. For an Apple phone, people needed to enable a setting to activate WA Notify. For Android phone owners, they needed to download the WA Notify app. To address this, messaging focused on building receptivity for the end desired behavior of adding WA Notify to your phone and then driving people to the website that detailed the steps they needed to take for each phone type.

### ADDITIONAL DESIRED BEHAVIORS:

In 2021 the team realized that adoption of WA Notify was much higher among iPhone owners than Android phone owners. In fact, by December 2021, about 82% of all iPhone users had WA Notify compared to 14% of Android phone owners. In addition, data analysis identified that many Android phone owners were deleting the app within a few months of downloading impacting the tool usage numbers. These stark differences needed further investigation. A new strategy was created to encourage Android phone owners to download the app and keep it on their phone.

In addition, as at-home COVID-19 tests became available in late 2021, WA Notify added a feature that would allow people to indicate a positive at-home test through WA Notify (before at-home tests, if you tested positive through a lab, you received a link to click from public health to instantly notify others you'd been near). A new strategy was created to let people know about this new feature and how to use WA Notify to anonymously inform others about their positive at-home test whom they may have exposed.

## STEP 4: PRIORITY AUDIENCES

The audience for the campaign was smart phone owners in Washington. We sub-segmented this audience to include young adults age 18-29, people who speak Spanish, speakers of 35 other languages and members of the African American/Black, Somali, Ethiopian, LGBTQ+ communities.



Priority Audience	Audience Details
<b>Smartphone owners</b>	94% of WA adult population owns a Smartphone
<b>Young Adults 18-29</b>	Research showed that this audience was more receptive to the technology, likely to be early adopters.
<b>Spanish Speaking community</b>	Spanish speakers make up 8% of the WA population. This group had also been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 making them a priority.
<b>In-language Audiences</b>	<p>People who spoke languages other than English were less likely to be comfortable adopting the technology. It was important that the campaign be inclusive and could reach people in their language. 36 languages groups were included in the WA Notify campaign:</p> <p>Spanish   Amharic   Arabic   Burmese   Chinese (Simplified)   Chinese (Traditional)   Chuukese   Farsi   French   German   Hindi   Hmong   Japanese   Karen   Khmer   Korean   Lao   Marshallese   Mixteco   Nepali   Oromo   Portuguese   Punjabi   Romanian   Russian   Samoan   Somali   Swahili   Tagalog   Tamil   Telugu   Thai   Tigrinya   Ukrainian   Urdu   Vietnamese</p>
<b>African American/Black, Somali, Ethiopian, Latinx/Hispanic communities</b>	These communities had been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 making them a priority.
<b>LGBTQ+ community</b>	The LGBTQ+ community was receptive to using WA Notify if concerns of privacy and data security could be addressed.
<b>People moving around, attending events</b>	People who were moving around the community for work, school or social activities were more likely to benefit from WA Notify.



Priority Audience	Audience Details (cont.)
<b>Android phone owners</b>	In early 2021, we learned that Android phone owners were not enabling the tool at the same rates as iPhone owners. Because of this, Android phone owners became a priority audience segment in 2021 and 2022.
<b>WA Notify Users</b>	In 2022, we needed to let people that had WA Notify know how to use it if they got a positive test result using an at-home test.

## STEP #5: BARRIERS, BENEFITS & MOTIVATORS

The research uncovered the barriers, benefits and motivators for adding WA Notify.

BEHAVIOR: ADD WA NOTIFY TO YOUR PHONE.		
Barriers	Benefits	Motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy and data security concerns</li> <li>• Lack of awareness/new technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping protect self, family and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that tool is private and anonymous (detail how it works)</li> <li>• Easy to add to phone</li> </ul>





## BEHAVIOR: DOWNLOAD THE WA NOTIFY ANDROID APP AND KEEP IT ON YOUR PHONE.

Barriers	Benefits	Motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't believe it is really anonymous/private</li> <li>• Don't want to keep Bluetooth on/ concerns about draining battery</li> <li>• Not sure if it's working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WA Notify is an important tool in helping the community to continue to manage COVID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The app is completely private; does not know who you are or where you go</li> <li>• Provide education about use of Bluetooth and battery use</li> <li>• Explain the app works in the background – no news is good news</li> </ul>

## BEHAVIOR: USE WA NOTIFY TO ANONYMOUSLY INFORM OTHERS THEY MAY HAVE EXPOSED ABOUT THEIR POSITIVE AT-HOME TEST.

Barriers	Benefits	Motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not remember they have WA Notify on their phone</li> <li>• Several steps are needed to report a positive at-home test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help stop the spread of COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to anonymously alert others if you test positive for COVID-19</li> </ul>

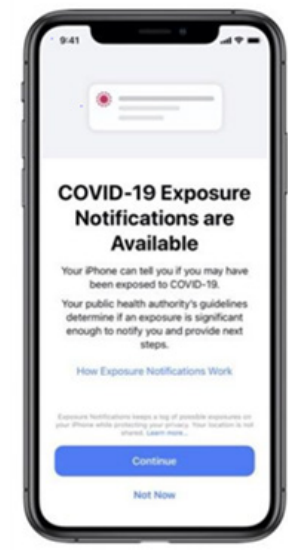
## STEP 6: CBSM INTERVENTION

To effectively drive behavior change, a wide range of CBSM tools and strategies were included in the campaigns:

- **Communications:** The communications plan included a mix of earned, owned, and paid media. The team created websites, flow-charts, detailed FAQ and long form videos in 37 languages explaining the technology and how WA Notify works.



- **Social Norms/Feedback:** Messaging focused around social norms, asking people to join the millions of others who had added WA Notify to their phones. Pushed adoption milestones through media relations and organic social channels.
- **Prompts:** Prompts included push notifications sent to phones from Apple and Google. These notifications created initial momentum for tool adoption. The team also created signage and bar coasters with prominent QR codes for bars, events and partners to post.
- **Social Diffusion:** Social diffusion was used through influencers and large businesses reaching out to their networks of followers and employees.
- **Convenience:** It was very easy to add WA Notify to phones (especially iPhones). The push notifications included “deep links” that sent people direct to where they could enable the feature of download the app.

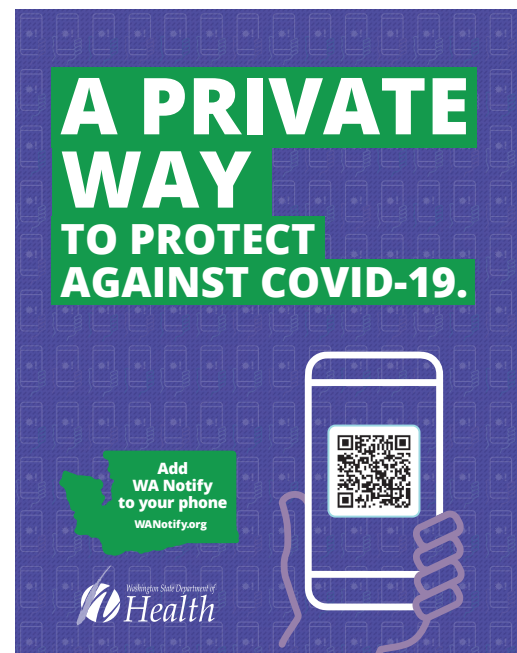


## STEP 7: MESSAGE STRATEGY

The campaign has included four messaging phases:

**Launch:** Informed by research, the launch messaging strategy was designed to grab attention and articulate the key benefit of WA Notify, leading with the headline “There’s a new way to help stop the spread of COVID-19”. This was paired with a clear call to action to “Add WA Notify to your phone.” This message was then transcreated into 36 different languages, taking cultural nuances and phrasing into account wherever necessary.

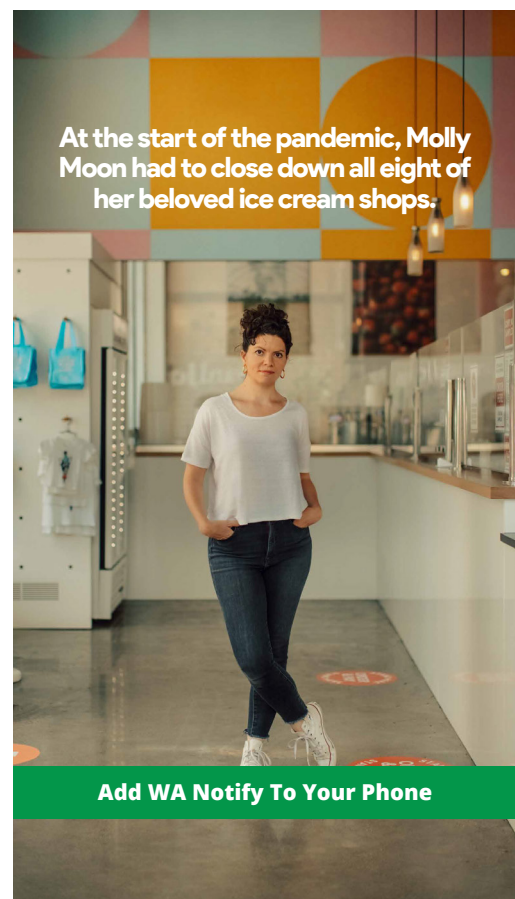
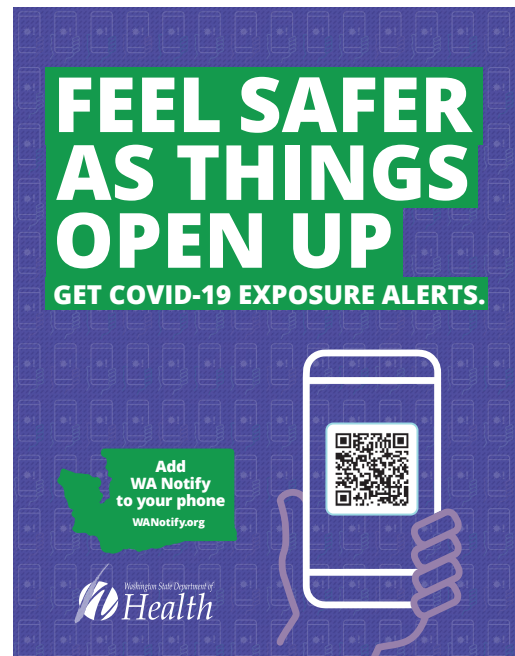
**Maintenance:** As the pandemic progressed, and early adopters had already added WA Notify, our research showed that we had



very high awareness of WA Notify (>80%). For people who were aware, but had not enabled the tool, the key barrier continued to be privacy. A new benefit of feeling safer as things opened back up also surfaced. Messages were created to address both these findings and encourage more people to add WA Notify to their phones. Both through local outreach and a partnership with Google, we incorporated creative into the campaign that focuses on testimonials from people who had been helped by WA Notify. Examples included business owners like Molly Moon (Molly Moon's Homemade Ice Cream Shop) and a local real estate agent.

**Android Phones:** Android phone owners became a special audience for focus for the campaign due to low adoption rates and the unique barriers they were experiencing. Messaging directly asked Android phone owners to download the app. The team also created supporting materials that addressed specific barriers Android phone owners were experiencing with the app.

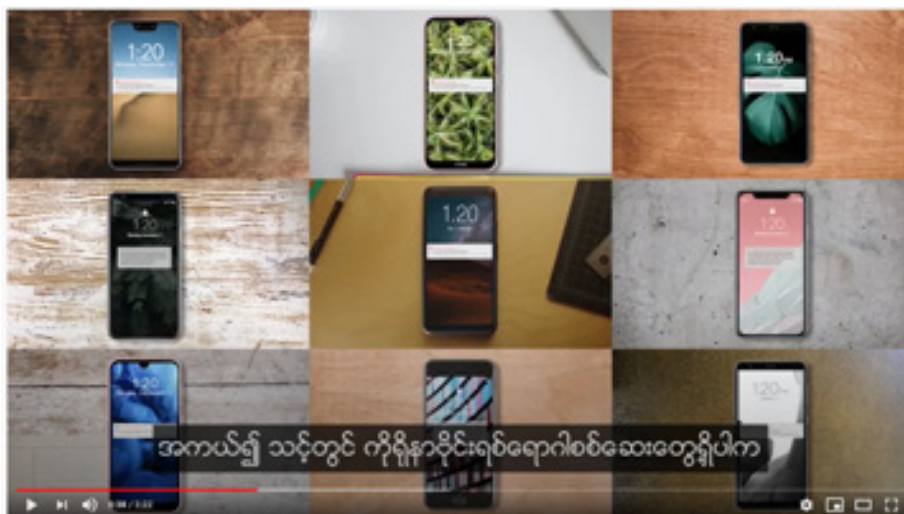
**At-home testing:** With the launch of the new at-home testing feature, the team needed to let people know that if they tested positive through a rapid test, they should use WA Notify to alert people they had been near. The message strategy for this was integrated with the chosen communications channels. The team used social media to raise awareness that this new feature was now an option with a click through to the website to learn how to do it. The media buy layered this with radio and audio ads that were able to explain in more detail how to use the tool to notify others if they tested positive at home.





## TRANSCREATION

Transcreating the messaging was a key way that DOH ensured it was reaching all people in Washington. WA Notify was the first COVID-19 campaign where DOH expanded its list of languages to 36. This was an important part of ensuring that the WA Notify tool was available and accessible to as many Washingtonians as possible. This required working with Apple and Google to ensure that the tool itself was available in these languages (DOH was the first state to request this level of translation) and that DOH had supporting websites, videos and instructional factsheets in all the languages. To create in-language messages and creative assets, the approach to transcreation went beyond just translating to looking at cultural nuance to ensure we were customizing messaging to be appropriate for each community. The team worked collaboratively with linguists and translation companies to look holistically at each message and piece of content. They worked to figure out the best ways to communicate the content to each community taking into account linguistic differences and cultural context. The team built in quality control systems so each piece of content had multiple reviews by the native speaking linguists or community members then also made sure systems were in place to respond to and engage with in-language social media comments.



## STEP 8: PARTNERS

Partners were critical to the success of the WA Notify launch. First and foremost, **Apple and Google** were key partners in the creation of the technology and the support of the roll-out. In addition, Google worked hand-in-hand with the DOH team to help plan the launch campaign. Even though Apple and Google were “silent partners” from a messaging standpoint, they were key to the success.

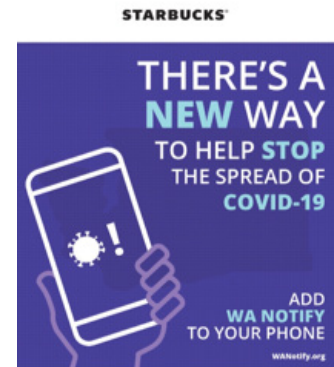
The team also engaged with **macro influencers** including Governor Inslee, large employers, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), sports teams and venues across the state to reach priority audiences:

- More than 20 top companies shared communications to employees and/or customers for no fee, including **Starbucks, Amazon** and the **WA State Bar Association**
- **Sea Tac airport** posted signage and ran baggage claim area videos
- The **Seattle Seahawks** sent e-mail and social media messages to fans and posted WA Notify banner ads on their website. The **Seattle Kraken** also promoted WA Notify through their media channels.
- **Stone Gossard (Pearl Jam)** created a PSA at no charge
- **The University of Washington** and other colleges and universities promoted WA Notify to students and to visitors at sporting events
- The campaign also garnered 12+ earned media stories about influencer endorsement of WA Notify

The team also vetted and collaborated with more than **25 paid micro influencers** that had reach and engagement in Washington to priority audience segments. Paid micro influencers were given the creative freedom to create content that they felt would work with their audience.

Starbucks  
To: Greg Endler > 10:20 AM

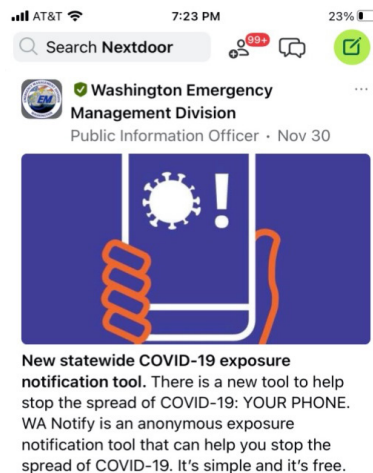
Help stop the spread of  
COVID-19



Examples include:

- Creative and engaging PSA from Seattle-based writer, director and performer **Alyza Del-Pan Money** and other Seattle LGBTQ+ influencers
- Cartoon from **Penny Arcade**, a popular Seattle game cartoon, engaged a younger audience and had the highest click-through rate
- The **Latino Community Fund** promoted the tool in Spanish through its channels

The team also worked with other **public sector organizations** to promote WA Notify through their communications channels. This included Local Health Jurisdictions, state agencies like the Department of Natural Resources, the Emergency Management Division (who pushed a message out through Nextdoor) and the Department of Labor and Industries. Local governments agencies like the City of Seattle and King County helped as well through e-mail communications, online posts and free transit advertising.

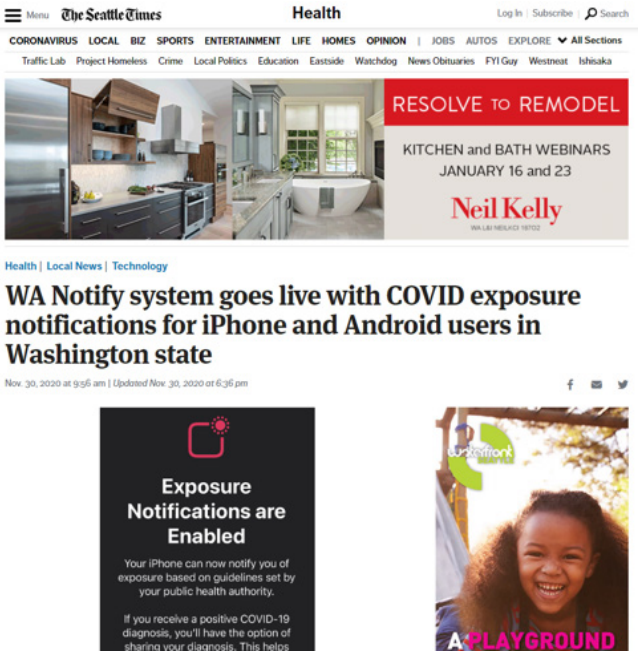




## STEP 9: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The team built and launched a communications plan that included paid, earned, and owned media. The campaign strategy was to start strong and broad to build momentum and then pivot to outreach targeting the most receptive priority audiences.

The campaign included five key strategies working together:

- **Macro influencer outreach** included large employers, community-based organizations (CBOs), celebrities, sports teams and transit agencies.
- **Paid micro influencers** with large social media following that reached priority audiences were also part of the campaign mix.
- **Media relations** included the launch with a press conference with Governor Inslee. To ensure a depth of coverage, we gave exclusive “pre-look” to AP, GeekWire and Univision. We also pitched media on program milestones. Earned media included the press conference, media pitching in English and Spanish, an extensive media packet of videos, graphics, and how-to guides. Ahead of the tool’s launch, three major outlets were briefed in advance to drive coverage. Media were pitched by C+C staff in English, Spanish and Chinese. Coverage was extensive (300+ stories) including an editorial from Seattle Times, the state’s largest media outlet, urging residents to enable WA Notify.The image shows a screenshot of a news article from The Seattle Times. The article is titled "WA Notify system goes live with COVID exposure notifications for iPhone and Android users in Washington state". It includes a sub-headline "Health | Local News | Technology" and a byline "Nov. 30, 2020 at 9:56 am | Updated Nov. 30, 2020 at 6:36 pm". There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Email, and Twitter. Below the article title, there are two images: a black graphic with white text that says "Exposure Notifications are Enabled" and a photo of a smiling young girl with the text "A PLAYGROUND" overlaid.
- **Paid media** has been used throughout the campaign. For the launch, week one included heavy levels for the 18+ audience and then segmented outreach for weeks 2-4 for adults 18-49, in-language speakers and other audience groups. Maintenance communications has focused on smart phone owners. We also used paid digital channels to reach people on their Android phones. The following **paid media** reached priority audience groups:



<b>Adults 18+/ Smartphone owners</b>	Wide suite of media channels including social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat), digital display, video, and audio, podcasts, TV, radio and Google Search
<b>Young Adults 18-29</b>	Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, digital video and audio, podcasts
<b>Spanish Speakers</b>	Facebook, Instagram, banner ads, TV/video, radio/audio, community-owned media (broadcast, print, online)
<b>In-language Audiences</b>	Facebook & Instagram (28 languages), banner ads (20 languages)
<b>African American/Black, Somali, Ethiopian, LGBTQ+ communities</b>	Community-owned media (print, radio, online)
<b>People moving around, attending events</b>	Ads delivered to the cell phone of people moving around
<b>Android phone owners</b>	Digital video pre-roll and banner ads delivered only to Android phones

- **Materials**, each in 37 languages, included a website, fact sheet, flow chart, and a 2-minute video designed to address the top barriers to adoption and top behavior drivers. The team also produced and distributed 333,000 bar coasters across Washington with a QR code where users could easily enable WA Notify. WA Notify posters were printed with multiple messages in various sizes. Businesses and healthcare providers could order posters for free through a DOH online ordering portal. More than 38,000 WA Notify posters have been distributed through this tactic.





## STEP 10: EVALUATION

The campaign was extremely successful, beating all goals and expectations right out of the gate.

Much of this success can be attributed to an extremely effective community-based social marketing strategy, informed by robust research efforts and supported by influential community partners. WA Notify has contributed to making progress against DOH's campaign's purpose to "Save lives and reduce serious illness related to COVID-19." A UW study in 2021 concluded that in the first four months in use, WA Notify saved an estimated 40-115 lives and likely prevented about 5,500 COVID-19 cases.

**OBJECTIVE: 15% of Washington adults add WA Notify to their phones in one month (879,566 people)**

**RESULT: 15% 30-day goal achieved in 37 hours!!** As of May 2022, 53% of Washington smart phone owners have added adding WA Notify to their phones (more than 3.1 million people).

- At time of launch, **WA Notify had the most first day sign-ups of any other state** (650K on day 1)
- **1 million people at hour 60**
- More than 89,000 iPhones have enabled WA Notify in languages other than English
- One month after launch, of 21 states using the technology, WA ranked #2 in terms of total users (only behind CA which has 5X the population) and #3 in terms of percent of adult population.

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**OBJECTIVE: Raise awareness of WA Notify**

**RESULT:** As of March 2022, 86% of Washingtonians were aware of WA Notify

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You can view a case study video [here](#).



## CAMPAIGN ENGAGEMENT AND REACH METRICS:

Metric	Launch Campaign	2021 Campaign
Completed Video Views (across social, digital, OTT)	<b>81 million</b> views	<b>55 million</b> views
Social Media Engagements (reactions, comments, shares, saves, and clicks)	<b>116,221</b> engagements	<b>40,157</b> engagements
Clicks to DOH Websites	<b>262,000</b> clicks	<b>686,179</b> clicks
Reach and Frequency	Reached <b>82%</b> of audience <b>39 times</b>	Reached <b>88%</b> of audience <b>54 times</b>
Google Search Click Through Rate	<b>26% CTR</b> (top performing COVID-19 health department campaign in the U.S.; Industry average CTR for pay-per-click ads = 2%)	<b>8.25% CTR</b>
News Stories	<b>300+ news stories</b> garnering 500 million earned media impressions. 94 journalists shared on social for combined reach of 1.8 million	
Macro Influencers	<b>200+ high profile influencers engaged</b> (for employee + customer communications)	
Paid Micro Influencers	<b>25+ micro influencers</b> posted content on their social channels	

Note that at the time of writing this report, the 2022 campaign for Android phone owners and the reporting at-home test results is in the field. Those campaigns are projected to reach 65% of the audiences 8 times with 31 million impressions.

