

Crowdsourcing to find sources remotely in COVID-19

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At ProPublica, people talk to us through questionnaires, email addresses, Signal/WhatsApp and social media. Altogether, we've received 8,000+ tips about coronavirus since the end of February. The tips have fueled all sorts of stories.

What would you like to share with us? *

- I want to provide you with a tip or story idea.
- I'm willing to answer reporters' questions if they arise.

What's your connection to the emerging threat of COVID-19? *

- I'm a doctor, nurse or other medical provider
- I'm an emergency response professional
- I'm a hospital employee
- I work for a government agency
- I work in a laboratory
- I'm an elected official
- I work in the pharmaceutical/drug industry
- I work in medical equipment manufacturing or the supply chain
- I work in public health in another capacity

Ask your community questions



Use feedback to fuel story



Report back findings to sources
(with new questions)



You'll get more feedback for future
stories; repeat process

Are you struggling to find sources right now? Consider crowdsourcing!

How to crowdsource: Choose questions. Get your ask out far and wide.

- Who is your community, and what do you need them to help you with?
- Think about specific questions.
- Ask them as openly as you can: as involved as a questionnaire or article post saying what you're reporting on, or simply a tagline or post on social media.

Don't stop! Continue to get the word out

- You can include a tagline at the bottom of your stories, or a shortlink (or easy number to call) for an audio callout
- Ask people who've already talked to you to spread the word in their networks
- Find new online spaces where you can spread the word

More strategies to reach more people

- It's an opportunity: Many of your communities are now online all the time. Consider Zoom town halls or setting a consistent time (weekly or monthly) where people can connect with you via vidchat.
- What about communities with limited Internet access? Can you reach them using letters or flyers right now, or plug in to existing social services?
- Always be thinking: If you were a source, what incentive would you have to talk to a reporter -- especially during a pandemic?