Throughout COVID-19 response efforts, El Paso County Public Health collaborated with trusted partners and local grassroots organizations to learn more about the disparities and needs of community members most impacted by the pandemic. Public Health received state funding from the Protect Our Neighbors grant in late September 2020, which funded these efforts.

**ENGAGING COMMUNITY TO GUIDE RESOURCES**

The Spanish-speaking community has been one of the most impacted groups as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding what barriers existed and where supports were needed was the focus of the project.

Community partners, Resilient Inspired Strong Engaged Coalition (RISE) and Servicios de La Raza (SDLR), helped Public Health develop a survey that was tailored to the community.

In addition to collecting valuable survey responses, RISE and SDLR staff and community navigators provided referrals, care navigation and information about other COVID-19 resources.

More than 1,500 surveys were collected. More than 89% said they had access to social support and more than 95% reported frequent hand-washing, social distancing and wearing a mask in public.

But... one-fourth lost a job or wages; one-fourth struggled to pay for basics like food; one-fifth struggled to pay bills/rent; and three-fourths experienced at least one disparity.

**BASING ACTION ON NEED**

Public Health purchased ads with outlets popular with Spanish-speakers, to provide information on resources they said were needed. Public Health worked with partners to create an extensive resource list that has been widely distributed.

Public Health partnered with local nonprofits to distribute grants that helped struggling local families (in various hard-hit groups) with housing costs, meals and shelter. Public Health, in partnership with SDLR, coordinated a drive-up Thanksgiving event to distribute flu shots, COVID-19 tests and meals.

Making healthy living accessible and equitable for everyone is a top priority of Public Health. Community-supported projects like these can improve public health and increase understanding, while meeting the immediate needs of the community.