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April 30, 2020

Katie White
Director of Health Promotions
Office of Health Communications
Arkansas Department of Health
4815 W. Markham St., Little Rock, AR Slot 65

Ms. White:

The Design Group is pleased to submit the attached proposal for a minority (African-American) focused COVID-19 public education campaign. We are very excited about the possibility of working together to stem the pandemic that is gripping our state, our country, and the world.

We are the state’s leading multicultural communications company, and The Design Group continues to effectively reach minority, youth and urban populations. We know how to reach these demographic groups from the ground up. As your marketing partner, we ensure the delivery of efficient, impactful messaging that creates behavioral change.

Attached, we have outlined our paid media strategies for a statewide public education campaign that targets African-American audiences with life-saving messaging about safety guidelines on COVID-19. If you have any questions concerning this submission or the services that The Design Group can provide to implement this campaign, please do not hesitate to contact me at 501.492.4900. You may also contact me by cell at 501.247.5055, or email me directly at myron@designgroupmarketing.com.

Sincerely,

Myron Jackson

President / Chief Executive Officer

The Design Group

Contents

[WHO WE ARE 3](#_Toc39180342)

[WHAT WE DO 3](#_Toc39180343)

[CREATIVE SAMPLES/CLIENT GALLERY 4](#_Toc39180344)

[COVID-19 PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW 4](#_Toc39180345)

[Proposed Creative Samples (see attached) 9](#_Toc39180346)

[Proposed Budget 9](#_Toc39180347)

# WHO WE ARE

Design Group Marketing, LLC, is a full-service, multicultural communications company, with expertise in segmented & experiential marketing. Established in October 2007 by agency principals Myron Jackson and Telly Noel through the Office of the Secretary of State of Arkansas, we are the designers and architects behind communication platforms that bridge the gap between your brand and the nation’s ever-growing ethnic-consumer segments.

The company operates under the dba: “The Design Group.” The Design Group, a state-certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), employs 13 full-time employees with current annual billings of $5 million.

**For 13 years, we have bridged the gap between businesses and organizations and hard to reach populations. We are excited to bridge the communications gap between these audiences and the State as we reinforce public health and safety guidelines.**

Today, we are the state’s premier agency for minority-targeted communication efforts.

**We are:**

* **Arkansas’ only full-service, multicultural communications company**
* **Arkansas’ largest buyer of ethnic media**

# WHAT WE DO

We develop and execute integrated marketing solutions across multiple channels that build powerful bonds between brands and consumers.

Our purpose is to equip businesses and organizations with marketing initiatives that assist them in exceeding their goals.

Our expertise runs the gamut of marketing and public relations activities designed to get results:

* Marketing | Strategic Planning
* Advertising (Branded Creative Content)
* Media Planning & Buying
* Creative Services
* Public Relations
* Experiential (Event) Marketing
* Grassroots Outreach
* Ethnographic Research

# CREATIVE SAMPLES/CLIENT GALLERY

The Design Group’s clientele represents a wide range of businesses, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, city municipalities, financial institutions, and institutions of higher learning, to name just a few. Explore our creative gallery at the link below for a sample of strategic communication pieces that have garnered positive results on behalf of our clients.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2tk1hwi2nwm8992/AABQpbYxUTc2Ibur83G3c6fla?dl=0>

# COVID-19 PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Situation Analysis

Disturbing trends have emerged nationwide regarding rates of COVID-19 infection among African Americans. In “[Coronavirus in African Americans and Other People of Color](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities?amp=true),[[1]](#footnote-1)” published on its website April 20, 2020, Johns Hopkins Medicine used this statement in its thesis: *People of color, particularly African Americans, are experiencing more serious illness and death due to COVID-19 than white people.* It cites cases in Chicago and Milwaukee County, where positive cases in black communities are disproportionately higher. Unfortunately, these locations are not exceptions. And while coronavirus doesn’t discriminate, existing health disparities put African Americans at increased risk for severe complications and death.

In Arkansas, the data shows a similar situation regarding coronavirus infection rates. As of April 30, the [Arkansas Department of Health Demographic Slide Deck](https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/Presentation_-_Demographics_PPT.pdf)[[2]](#footnote-2) shows that 32 percent of cases are among Blacks, even though they make up only about sixteen percent of the state’s population. But why? The Johns Hopkins article points to several social and economic factors: living in crowded housing conditions; working in essential fields; inconsistent access to health care; chronic health conditions; and stress and immunity.

So what can we do now to slow the spread of COVID-19 in minority communities? It is crucial that targeted, culturally relevant messaging be employed to communicate regularly and frequently about the necessary measures to flatten the curve. In the following proposal, The Design Group will present straightforward and simple, yet effective strategies to ensure African Americans, particularly in rural parts of the state, increase their awareness of their increased risk, but most importantly, make behavioral changes to protect themselves and their communities from the virus.

The Design Group’s approach to launching and executing a statewide public education campaign on current public health and safety guidelines is as follows:

* **Objective**
* To execute a paid multimedia campaign that educates Arkansas’ African-American population about the importance of staying home and exercising social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic
* **Target Audiences**
* Arkansas’ African-American Population
* **Target Geography**

Our statewide strategy consists of three tiers determined by the African American population of each county (in number of persons). **Based on the strategy below, the media plan outlined by
The Design Group will cover a geographic area that houses approximately 99 percent of Arkansas’ African American population (more than 455,000 individuals).**

**Tier 1** This geography includes:

* + Approximately 400,000 African Americans (or nearly 87 percent of the state’s total African-American population)
	+ 25 counties with the highest African-American population
		- Pulaski
		- Jefferson
		- Crittenden
		- Mississippi
		- St. Francis
		- Craighead
		- Faulkner
		- Union
		- Phillips
		- Miller
		- Ouachita
		- Sebastian
		- Columbia
		- Garland
		- Washington
		- Saline
		- Hempstead
		- Chicot
		- Desha
		- Lee
		- Clark
		- Drew
		- Ashley
		- Arkansas
		- Lincoln

**Tier 2** This geography includes:

* Approximately 54,900 African Americans (or nearly 12 percent of the state’s total African-American population)
* 34 counties that are not directly targeted, but will be reached by the spillover created by the purchase of radio satellite or cable television through the Tier 1 geography
	+ Benton
	+ Cross
	+ Jackson
	+ Little River
	+ Poinsett
	+ Sevier
	+ Lonoke
	+ Hot Spring
	+ Bradley
	+ White
	+ Dallas
	+ Monroe
	+ Lafayette
	+ Conway
	+ Pope
	+ Woodruff
	+ Calhoun
	+ Prairie
	+ Cleveland
	+ Independence
	+ Grant
	+ Yell
	+ Perry
	+ Nevada
	+ Johnson
	+ Logan
	+ Pike
	+ Izard
	+ Cleburne
	+ Polk
	+ Van Buren
	+ Montgomery
	+ Searcy
	+ Stone

Tier 3: This geography includes:

* Approximately 5,500 African Americans (or nearly 1 percent of the state’s total African-American population)
* 16 counties where the African-American population will not be exposed to messaging due to fiscal constraints
	+ Howard
	+ Crawford
	+ Greene
	+ Carroll
	+ Franklin
	+ Randolph
	+ Lawrence
	+ Boone
	+ Clay
	+ Sharp
	+ Madison
	+ Baxter
	+ Fulton
	+ Marion
	+ Scott
	+ Newton
* **Universe of Opportunity**Based on the target geography, a total of 59 counties will be targeted. **The total African-American population in these counties is over 455,000, and this makes up our universe of opportunity.**
* **Key Messaging**
	+ COVID-19 kills. Do you want it to be someone you love?
	+ Black and brown people account for more than half the cases in the country
	+ Do your part to protect your family and our community.
	+ Stay home. Stay safe.
	+ Stay at home, if you can.
	+ Together by staying apart, we can save lives.
	+ Learn more at healthy.arkansas.gov.
* **Strategies**African Americans make up 28 percent of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States, but only 13.4 percent of the country’s total population. Additionally, African Americans make up 32 percent of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in Arkansas, but only 16 percent of the state’s total population. This data indicates that African Americans are disproportionately affected by this illness. As the numbers continue to climb, a public health campaign that directly targets the demographic and reinforces the importance of social distancing and other preventative measures are imperative to slow the spread of COVID-19 in African-American communities.
* **Paid Media**

The Design Group recommends a multimedia campaign that maximizes reach and frequency based on identified media consumption patterns of minority (African American) Arkansans.
The proposed strategies are recommended based on the following:

* The varying age demographics of the target audience
* The existing media infrastructure (and the lack thereof) serving minority and rural communities across the state

* The loss of grassroots outreach in the marketing mix due to social distancing guidelines

* **Television**

**SAT-TV (DirectTV & Dish Network) & Cable TV**

**Satellite TV's** footprint is identical to the Little Rock Designated Market Area (DMA). Utilizing the two popular satellite options, Direct TV and Dish Network, we can penetrate 14 of our Tier 1 and 29 of our Tier 2 target counties.

**Along with the exceptional reach, satellite television is a fraction of the out-of-pocket expense of its broadcast counterpart.**

**In most rural counties outside of Central Arkansas, DirecTV and Dish Network are the only premium television viewing options for many families.**

* Direct TV 150,600HH
* Dish Network 72,221HH

In terms of **Cable TV**, we will focus our efforts in rural communities. Due to the relatively low cost, we are able to increase our frequency to make up for the reach we gain via satellite. The priority networks will include but are not limited to BET, OWN, TV One, Bravo, and VH1. Additionally, we are recommending purchasing ads on the newly released docuseries The Last Dance on ESPN. The series documents the legendary Michael Jordan and the 1997 Bulls Championship team.

Additional programming options include:

* Tyler Perry's “Sistas”
* “Boomerang”
* “The Real Housewives of Atlanta”
* “Law & Order: SVU”
* “Love & Hip-Hop Atlanta”
* **Radio**

Radio is an effective medium to deliver messaging to minority (African-American) audiences. However, under the current public health and safety guidelines, Arkansans are in their cars a smaller percentage of their day than usual, which limits their consumption of terrestrial radio. Radio instead becomes a secondary medium in this effort.

Many Arkansans, specifically African Americans, are taking the opportunity to enjoy the pleasant springtime weather, coupled with weekday cabin fever, and are increasing their weekend leisure activity. **With that being stated, The Design Group will have limited activity throughout the week and will concentrate on aggressive radio buys on Saturdays and Sundays**.

Additionally, buying radio will prove an effective way to fill in existing holes in our state’s media infrastructure (where cable television viewing may be limited). Radio will also offer spillover across DMA lines and will expand the number of Arkansans hearing the message.

Radio vehicles include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stations** | **Counties Served** |
| KIPR 92.3  & KHTE 96.5 | Pulaski, Saline, Lonoke, Faulkner, Perry, Garland, Hot Spring, Grant, Dallas, Jefferson, Arkansas, Prairie, White, Monroe, Bradley, Cleveland, Lincoln |
| KPBA 99.3 FM | Jefferson, Lincoln, Dallas, Desha, Lonoke |
| KMGC 104.5 FM | Ouachita, Union, Columbia |
| KCLT 104.9 & KAKJ 105.3 FM | Phillips, Lee, St. Francis, Monroe, Cross |
| KMLK 98.7 FM & KRVV 100.1 FM       | Union, Ashley, Chicot, Ouachita, Bradley |
| KTOY 104.7 & KZRB 103.5                   | Miller, Little River, Lafayette, Hempstead |
| WHRK 97.1 | Crittenden, Cross, St, Francis, Woodruff, Poinsett, Craighead, Lee & Mississippi |
| KQUIS 105.3 FM | Bentonville & Washington |

* **Digital and Social Advertising**

The Pew Research Center reports that 59% of African Americans get news through mobile devices. The Design Group recommends utilizing social and digital advertising as the main thrust strategy for targeting younger Arkansans and a secondary strategy for targeting their older counterparts.

As an advertising medium, social media has tremendous daily reach into the lives of users. The percentage of Americans (by age) who use at least one social media platform daily are as follows:

• 18-29 - 90 percent

• 30-49 - 82 percent

• 50-64 - 69 percent

• 65+ - 40 percent

Possible digital and social platforms include

* + Facebook
	+ Instagram
	+ Local news and entertainment websites
	+ Geo-targeting national websites

# Proposed Creative Samples (see attached)

* + Television
	+ Radio
	+ Social Media

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1. Hill, Sharita, M.D., M.H.S.”[Coronavirus in African Americans and Other People of Color](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities?amp=true).” Johns Hopkins Medicine.

 [www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities?amp=true](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-racial-disparities?amp=true). Accessed 30 April 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Arkansas Department of Health Demographic Slide Deck](https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/Presentation_-_Demographics_PPT.pdf). Arkansas Arkansas Deparment of Health, 30 April 2020, www.experience.arcgis.com/experience/c2ef4a4fcbe5458fbf2e48a21e4fece9 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)