



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

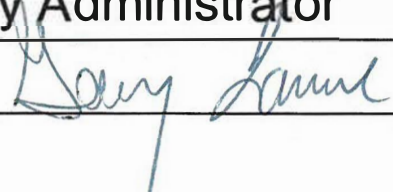
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Botetourt County  
Program Title: Botetourt Fire & EMS Agency of the Year  
Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Tiffany Bradbury  
Title: Director of Communications  
Department: Communications  
Telephone: 5402931251 Website: www.botetourtva.gov  
Email: tbradbury@botetourtva.gov

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Gary Larrowe  
Title: County Administrator  
Signature: 



## **VACO Awards Application 2022: "Botetourt Fire & EMS Agency of the Year & Boost Botetourt"**

### **Executive Summary:**

Botetourt County is a rural county located in southwestern Virginia. The county is 548 square miles and is home to approximately 33,500 residents. Some parts of our population are greater than 30 minutes from a community hospital. The populations are also aging, with 59% of residents being over 40 years old.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, local communities pivoted and supplemented state and local health departments to improve COVID-19 mitigation efforts. After the initial December 2020 vaccine rollout, communities across the country faced challenges concerning equitable distribution of vaccines. Homebound populations, especially those with mobility and transportation challenges, had difficulty accessing vaccines. Minority communities and those with language barriers also struggle with accessing vaccine information or are hesitant to receive them.

To ensure equitable vaccine access, Botetourt Fire & EMS leveraged community paramedicine (CP) and launched "Boost Botetourt". The goal of this project was to use the mobility and flexibility afforded to EMS providers to vaccinate rural citizens and address existing gaps in vaccine distribution. Because of the departments innovative thinking with "Boost Botetourt" along with other EMS advances, the department was recognized at the state level and received the 2021 EMS Agency of the Year from the Governor's Office!

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION  
botetourtva.gov

57 S. Center Drive, Suite 200  
Daleville, VA 24083

P: (540) 928-2006  
F: (540) 473-8225



## Background and Program:



# BOOST BOTETOURT

To address disparities in the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, Botetourt County Fire & EMS achieved vaccination distribution status with the Virginia Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control. Since mid-2020, department leadership worked to ensure that Botetourt County residents could gain access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Most of this coordination took place with the Roanoke-Alleghany Health District, as they serve as the area's main point for widespread distribution for the vaccine. Through the combined efforts of a part-time paramedic, Kyle Sperber, who is currently a graduate student at Georgetown University studying biodefense and infectious diseases, Emergency Manager Daniel Murray, the department's medical director Dr. Carol Bernier, and department leadership, the administrative process to become an approved vaccination distribution point was completed. On Tuesday, April 13, 2021, the Department received its first allotment of 20 doses of the Moderna vaccine and the "Boost Botetourt" vaccination campaign was launched. "We made a concentrated effort to push for becoming a vaccination site and get to the people that can't get to the vaccine through other means. Our citizens deserve every opportunity to access the vaccine, if they want to receive it, and this is just one more way that we can get vaccines in arms," said Botetourt Fire & EMS Chief Jason Ferguson. A lot of work has been



put into the efforts of completing all the administrative paperwork, ensuring proper vaccine storage requirements are met, and that personnel delivering the vaccine have received appropriate training on the vaccine being offered. "I am super excited to see our men and women of the Department take on this crucial role in delivering services to the community. This goes above and beyond traditional emergency medical care, this is preventative medicine and public health. During times like these, we need our 1st responders to be far more than emergency focused, and Botetourt has really stepped up to the plate," explained Dr. Carol Bernier, Operational Medical Director for Botetourt's Fire & EMS system. "This is an excellent opportunity for Botetourt County. I could not be prouder of the efforts of our Fire & EMS throughout this entire pandemic. This is just one more way that we are trying to ensure our communities are taken care of. Our crews definitely go above and beyond traditional emergency services delivery, this is just one more example of that," explained Board of Supervisors Chairman, Dr. Richard Bailey.

The CP model was utilized to distribute the COVID-19 vaccines to marginalized populations in Botetourt County. The project involved developing and implementing an EMS vaccination program, followed by the subsequent acquisition and distribution of vaccines using experienced EMS providers. The vaccinations were initially provided to Botetourt County's homebound population, followed by other targeted groups in the community. Botetourt County Fire & EMS was the only department in the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health District to set up a CP program to ensure that our most vulnerable had equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine.



### **Persons and Organizations Involved:**

The COVID19 Vaccine "Boost Botetourt" program would not have been possible without collaboration. Early on, the county realized that it truly would take a village to ensure equitable access to vaccines for our community. Botetourt County Fire & EMS staff teamed up with our local health district (Roanoke City and Alleghany Health District), our Operational Medical Director Dr. Carol Bernier, Dr. Erin Sorrell from Georgetown University, the Local Office on Aging, Botetourt Resource Center, AmeriCorps and BlockIt Scheduling to launch the CP program. Local media outlets also partnered up to help spread the word about the program. The project was also amplified with community partners and businesses.

### **Expected Outcomes and Results:**

The Community Paramedicine Vaccination Program was successfully developed, implemented, and executed as intended. The community vaccination campaign was branded "Boost Botetourt". Among those vaccinated using the CP model, 75% were county residents and 25% lived in neighboring counties. As expected, ages for the homebound recipients were skewed higher, with a mean age of 66.3 and a median age of 72. Most homebound recipients were elderly and disabled, with 55% being over 65 years old and 46% over 75 years old. The goals of this project were achieved by using CP to broaden access to the COVID-19 vaccines. Recipients who were otherwise unable to get a vaccine were provided vaccines in the convenience of their home or business. Since the program's inception Botetourt County Fire & EMS has administered just over one thousand COVID-19 shots, of all varieties, to very diverse populations of people in our



community. These recipients varied from school aged children and undocumented immigrants to disable senior citizens and inmates who reside in the jail.

### **Beneficiaries of the Program:**

Botetourt County had numerous success stories thanks to the "Boost Botetourt" COVID-19 Vaccine Community Paramedicine Program. One favorite story is of Mr. and Mrs. Bird, who are 90 and 88 years old, respectively. They are homebound residents in the Blue Ridge area and were the first Botetourt County residents vaccinated through the program. (See attached links to news articles)

**Articles :** (1) [https://fincastleherald.com/botetourt-fire-ems-now-administering-covid-19-vaccinations/?fbclid=IwAR1sexKJHZmYOXezW4Z5dxgV-Kr7xwwPpryq\\_YbUfzjC70kDTc2zN-CUWY8](https://fincastleherald.com/botetourt-fire-ems-now-administering-covid-19-vaccinations/?fbclid=IwAR1sexKJHZmYOXezW4Z5dxgV-Kr7xwwPpryq_YbUfzjC70kDTc2zN-CUWY8)

(2) <https://www.wfxrtv.com/news/health/coronavirus/botetourt-county-department-of-fire-ems-delivering-vaccine-to-residents/>

A family member of a non-verbal, bed-bound young female with CP described how meaningful it was that "Taylor wasn't forgotten or left out from being protected just because of her unique challenges". Because of this program Taylor and her family were served in the comfort of their own home.

Beyond the homebound COVID19 vaccine success stories, another shining moment of the



"Boost Botetourt" program was the ability to provide COVID-19 vaccines to our Spanish speaking residents who were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The CP program worked with local Hispanic owned businesses in the county and took the vaccine to their place of business to vaccinate nearly all the staff. Paramedics found that most individuals had reservations and hesitations about taking the COVID-19 vaccine and were not planning to be vaccinated. However, they were encouraged by trusted Fire & EMS Paramedics that took the time to bring the vaccine to them in a safe and familiar environment. Vaccine information was also shared in Spanish and translators accompanied CP teams. CP staff worked within the Hispanic Community of Botetourt County to find trusted influencers that in turn gave other Spanish speaking residents comfort and trust in also receiving the vaccine.

Other noteworthy success stories were being able to visit residents in the northern part of the county in the more rural Eagle Rock and Buchanan areas. In these rural areas, there was not a fixed vaccine location within 30 minutes of their home. These residents were excited that they would have access to the vaccine within 5-10 minutes of their home instead of having to drive 1-2 hours round trip to receive a vaccination.

There are also success stories of the factory workers and restaurant workers that wanted



to receive the COVID-19 vaccine but were faced with challenges due to their work schedules. Some of their schedules are abnormal and conflict with times that pharmacies and other places offering them were open. The "Boost Botetourt" Community Paramedicine program allowed vaccine access to these individuals and truly showed equity in action regarding vaccinations.

**Replication:**

In order to develop a Community Paramedicine program focused around administering vaccinations, support of administrative leadership is paramount. Innovation and service are a must as well. Chief Jason Ferguson, Botetourt County Administration and the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors were innovative and supported this program to ensure equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine. They knew that getting the vaccine to the doorsteps of our residents was a must in order to save lives during the pandemic. The next step is to ensure that the Operational Medical Director in your jurisdiction supports the program and is open to the different ways that EMS can help alleviate the needs of the community. Then you must develop a team that will execute the vision and spearhead the project. This team must be multi-faceted and have abilities to navigate through administrative coordination to produce policies and protocols for the Vaccination Program as well as training those who wish to participate. These people will also need to work





closely with the local health department and other parties involved to ensure a usable program is produced. A crucial piece is to also establish a Board of Pharmacy-approved pharmacy location and securing a means of pharmacy refrigeration, which is a necessary step.

**Conclusion:**

COVID19 was a game changer for our county, region, country and world. It made many of us realize what is most important and that is our friends, family and loved ones. Our county knew that the safety of our residents was the top priority, and we know that without the forward thinking of the Botetourt County Fire & EMS Department and the "Boost Botetourt" Vaccination Program, that many of our residents might not be with us today. The County knew that we had to do our part to help slow the spread and by taking COVID-19 vaccines to the homes of the most vulnerable or hesitant, we are certain that lives were saved. We are very proud of the "Boost Botetourt" Team, our partners and our citizens for making community paramedicine a priority during a very dark time in our history. Because of this program, we know that we are prepared to keep our citizens safer and healthier. Botetourt Fire & EMS will continue our Vaccine Program moving forward and remain operationally ready to implement other vaccinations for our staff and/or the community as it is deemed necessary.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION**  
botetourtva.gov

57 S. Center Drive, Suite 200  
Daleville, VA 24083

P: (540) 928-2006  
F: (540) 473-8225



Botetourt Fire & EMS is one of the most community minded departments in Virginia and is focused on providing top notch pre-hospital care and they continue to evolve as one of the leading departments in the region. The department was recognized for all of their diligent work and received the 2021 EMS Agency of the Year Award from the Governor's Office.

# WE CAN FIGHT COVID-19 TOGETHER

---

**#BOOSTBOTETOURT**  
**COVID-19 VACCINATION TEAM**