CienciaPR awarded grant from the Simons Foundation's Science Sandbox to engage Puerto Rican audiences with the science of COVID-19 [1]

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The non-profit organization Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR) received a $230,000 grant from Science Sandbox [3], an initiative of the Simons Foundation, to create a collection of public engagement resources to help Puerto Ricans prevent COVID-19.

The collection will include multimedia content (audio, videos, infographics), educational materials, and messages that are relevant to the Puerto Rican reality and culture, easy to use and disseminate, and based on the most recent and rigorous scientific knowledge.

To ensure that the information addresses the concerns and needs of different audiences, the creation of the content will guided by the input of community-based and non-profit organizations, science and public health experts, and journalists.

"For us it is extremely important that the content of this collection connects with people's everyday life," said Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer, Director of Communications for CienciaPR and who will direct this project. "We are going to host listening sessions for different communities to provide their input and recommendations. We want to know what their COVID-19 questions are and how they prefer to receive information: whether it is through traditional media, social media, WhatsApp messages or speaker trucks," added the science communication expert.

The collection will provide practical answers to frequently asked questions, such as: *How is the coronavirus transmitted? What test should I take to find out if I am infected? How can I celebrate Christmas safely?*, among others.

According to John Tracey, Program Officer for Science Sandbox, the project is aligned with their mission of stimulating a deeper interest and understanding about science among the general public and to empower communities to think outside the box. "CienciaPR is an essential resource for thoughtful, engaging, and culturally relevant science communication. We're thrilled to partner with an organization that's brought science to the people of Puerto Rico—and beyond—for nearly 15 years," said Tracey.

The grant was made through the Center for a New Economy [4], which serves as the project's fiscal sponsor.

"During emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, having access to accurate, practical, and easy-to-understand scientific information can make the difference between illness and health," stated Dr. Giovanna Guerrero Medina, Executive Director of CienciaPR. "Since the beginning of the pandemic, at CienciaPR we have harnessed the collective knowledge of our community to inform, educate and promote science-informed decision making [5]. This grant will allow us to enhance these efforts and increase our reach and impact", concluded the biologist and science policy expert.

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