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HIV-Related Stigma Reduction (Southern AIDS Coalition)

Background

In the southern United States, the pervasive stigma surrounding HIV remains a significant barrier to effective healthcare and support for individuals living with the virus. Deep-rooted societal misconceptions, fear of discrimination, and lack of education contribute to this enduring stigma. As a consequence, people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the southern states may be hesitant to disclose their status, hindering their access to essential medical care and support services.

This stigma not only exacerbates the emotional and psychological burden on those living with HIV but also has tangible consequences for their health outcomes. Persons facing HIV-related stigma in the southern US are often subject to delayed diagnoses, reduced engagement in medical care, and face internalized stigmatism that should be addressed. As a result, the association between stigma and poorer health outcomes for individuals with HIV is a pressing concern in the southern region, highlighting the urgent need for targeted efforts to dismantle stigma, raise awareness, and promote a more supportive and inclusive environment for those affected by the virus.

The South stands at the forefront of a challenging healthcare landscape, marked by the highest rates of HIV diagnoses and mortality in the United States. This region grapples with a complex interplay of factors, including limited access to healthcare resources, socioeconomic disparities, and entrenched stigma surrounding HIV. Tackling the HIV epidemic in the South requires a

comprehensive approach that addresses both medical and socio-cultural aspects, aiming to bridge gaps in healthcare accessibility and dismantle the barriers contributing to the region's alarming rates of HIV diagnoses and mortality. For this reason, there is a dire need for programming and services in southern communities that specifically address the impact of stigma on those living with HIV. See Compass Map <https://www.gileadcompass.com/maps-infographics/#map-and-infographic-content4>

Content Areas

There is a pronounced need to design, implement, and evaluate interventions to reduce HIV-related stigma for PLHIV. This need is greatest in the South, where stigma is a significant driver of the epidemic, and stigma-reduction services are lacking in many communities. [The Southern AIDS Coalition \(SAC\) COMPASS Coordinating Center](#) seeks to support the development of interventions focused on reducing internalized HIV-related stigma in the South. Specifically, we are looking for any combination of program elements or strategies designed to reduce HIV-related stigma impacting PLHIV by:

- a. Influencing knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills among PLHIV;
- b. Increasing social support for PLHIV; *and/or*
- c. Creating supportive environments, policies, and resources for PLHIV.

To that end, [SAC](#) seeks to support organizations that are addressing the unique challenges and needs of PLHIV in the South through community-informed interventions. Applicants are encouraged to think creatively. The intervention design should reflect the demonstrated need and programming gaps in your community.

Focus Areas

The Southern AIDS Coalition will allow applicants to seek funding for interventions addressing HIV-related stigma in two focus areas:

- (1) Development or adaptation of an intervention to meet specific community needs.
- (2) Implementation of an intervention that the applicant has previously developed or adapted to meet specific community needs.

Applicants may only apply to one (1) focus area.

Focus Area One. Intervention Development or Adaptation

Proposed projects in this focus area should result in the development and effective piloting of an intervention that addresses HIV-related stigma. Programs in this area may be either:

- 1) Original intervention with a proposed comprehensive formative process that considers existing programming gaps and relevance to the culture and experiences of the community of focus.

2) Adaptation of existing evidence-based intervention(s) with a proposed comprehensive process and justification for developing additional content that specifically addresses HIV-related stigma.

Successful proposals in this focus area will clearly outline steps that will be taken to effectively develop an intervention from conceptualization to piloting, inclusive of evaluation activities at each stage of work. Example of funded activities in this focus area might include (but not limited to):

- Focus groups, online surveys, or other formative research with PLHIV and/or those providing social or emotional support to PLHIV;
- Formalizing an existing program that has been well-received by PLHIV in your community;
- Adapting an existing evidence-based intervention to include more focused content that addresses the needs of a specific community of PLHIV or a specific stigmatizing behavior or practice that is prevalent in your community; or
- Trainings for PLHIV to build their capacity to develop content and/or facilitate the intervention.

Focus Area Two. Intervention Implementation

Proposed projects in this focus area should result in the implementation of an intervention that was previously developed and piloted by the applicant. In this focus area, your project should culminate in a minimum of one complete cycle of your intervention with program evaluation at every step of programming by the end of the funding period. Your application should clearly demonstrate an existing program of promise, with existing programmatic content. Example of funded activities might include:

- Program implementation with appropriate audience based on earlier program development, evaluation, and/or piloting;
- Adjusting existing program content based on data/feedback from earlier participants;
- Recruitment and outreach activities;
- Training of program facilitators in intervention content;
- Analysis and application of data to improve program delivery;
- Development of communications planning—to include strategies for virtual delivery of content previously offered in person

What We're Looking For

For the purposes of this opportunity, “intervention” can be broadly interpreted to include a range of strategies, including (but not limited to):

- Collaborating with PLHIV to develop a community-based education program for providers, family members, or employers;
- Working with PLHIV to develop an initiative that supports the creation of improved public or organizational policies;
- A health promotion campaign to increase knowledge about HIV in faith, social, or healthcare settings, with a focus on the impact of stigma; or
- A combination of interventions implemented in different settings, including communities, worksites, schools, health care organizations, or in the home.

We are particularly interested in applications that are:

- Intentional in the application of MIPA Principles (*Meaningful Involvement of People with HIV/AIDS*), which means centering of PLHIV at all stages of program development and implementation (MIPA)
- Demonstrative of the applicant's alignment with the Gilead COMPASS Initiative Guiding® Principles (noted in the RFP)
- Located in communities that currently lack stigma reduction resources for PLHIV
- Led by members of community
- Clearly defined and developed with appropriate SMART goals and objectives

Tips on Completing the Work Plan

- The initial three months of this funding can be utilized for robust programmatic planning and formative research to support your program design. The planning period is critical and should not be glossed over in your planning.
- Your work plan should paint a clear picture of your vision for the proposed project and convey an understanding of the steps required to effectively meet your stated objectives.
- Your recruitment and engagement strategy should be evident (including how PLHIV are centered in those processes)
- Considerations should be made for any limitations created by COVID-19 restrictions

Application Requirements

1. Applications should include appropriate references when citing data. There will be a section within the application designated to include references.
2. Applications must include all required supplemental materials as well. Applications that do not include all required supplemental materials will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding. Templates for supplemental materials are available within the application.
3. Submitted applications must include two major sections: 1) Project Narrative and 2) Supplemental Materials.

Below is a description of these various components, the amount of points they are weighted in the overall score of our application, and other details.

Project Cover Page	
Section	Additional Details
1. Project Title	-----
2. Total Amount Requested	Maximum \$100,000
3. Coordinating Center	Southern AIDS Coalition
4. Project Abstract	5-6 sentence summary of your project

Project Narrative			
Section	Points	Maximum Length	Additional Details

1. Statement of Need	15	250 words	Please describe the need to build your organizational capacity, skills, and knowledge around the CC you are applying to.
2. Organizational Background and Capacity	15	500 words	Please provide a brief description of your organization's history and purpose, including mission, goals, and priority populations. (If you don't hold 501(c)(3) status, please briefly describe your fiscal sponsor, including its history, purpose, and relationship to your work.) Please also describe the role your organization plays in addressing the content area in which you are applying.
3. Work Plan Narrative	35	2000 words	<p>Please provide a detailed description of your work plan, including a detailed description of the objectives, goals, activities, and timeline. Please organize this section by objectives. Please fill out the work plan template provided. This is an opportunity for you to explain your work plan. A work plan template is provided for you and will also be a required attachment with the final submission.</p> <p>The narrative should include, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed description of the proposed project • Population of focus on which the project is intended to serve. • How your organization/community will benefit from the proposed project. • How the proposed project meets the goals of the respective Coordinating Center. • How the proposed project helps to enhance access to high-quality HIV care and/or prevention services.
4. Alignment with Guiding Principles	10	250 words	Please describe how you plan to practice the COMPASS CC guiding principles. Refer to the Guiding Principles section.
5. Vision/Impact	15	500 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact does your organization want to make? • What does your organization want to see at the end of the project? • How will your organization know that your project was a success?
6. Project Budget and Budget Narrative	10	Use template	Please upload your completed budget template that was provided and describe the duties and expectations of each of the line items.
7. Capacity Building Needs	10	250 words	Please describe (including costs) any technical assistance you anticipate that you would require to implement your proposed project

Supplemental Materials

Required

1. Project Budget Template
2. Work Plan Template
3. 501(c)(3) Verification (or letter from fiscal sponsor or agent)
4. Board of Directors List
5. Diversity Table
6. Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement or Letter from Fiscal Sponsor (if applicable)
7. Organizational Budget

*Note: Applicants who are selected for funding may be required to submit an Audit or IRS Form 990

Evaluation

Ultimately, our goal is to identify scalable and fundable interventions that are effective at reducing HIV-related stigma and capable of being replicated elsewhere in the South. As such, we are deeply committed to the evaluation of these interventions. The evaluation plan for funded programs should outline the expected outcomes from the proposed intervention and a process for measuring these outcomes.

We want to ensure all grantees are collecting data that includes a set of common evaluation indicators and performance measures that can be compiled and compared across Coordinating Centers. In addition to the COMPASS® Initiative evaluator ([ETR](#)), the Southern AIDS Coalition COMPASS Coordinating Center will work collaboratively with its own set of selected evaluation partners to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of this funding. If funded, your organization will be required to work collaboratively with all evaluation parties on these common evaluation indicators and performance measures.

Grant Program Timeline 2024-2025

