



# RIDING THE TIDES OF TRANSFORMATION

FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA | JULY 27-29, 2025



Sunday, July 27, 2025

Dear COMPASS Family,

Welcome to Riding the Tides of Transformation! On behalf of the COMPASS Coordinating Centers and the Southern HIV Impact Fund at AIDS United, I'm honored to gather with you in Fort Lauderdale for three powerful days of learning, reflection, and collective strategy. This convening is rooted in sustainability, impact, and innovation—values that mirror the brilliance, resilience, and community-led leadership you bring to the South every single day.

For the past eight years, we've had the privilege of walking alongside you—investing in grassroots vision, building capacity, and learning in real time what it takes to move resources to the people closest to the work. Together, we've navigated shifting political climates, public health emergencies, and funding headwinds while still advancing bold, community-centered solutions. That history of partnership is our compass; it reminds us that transformation is not a moment, but a sustained commitment to each other.

Over the next few days, I invite you to lean into curiosity, candor, and collaboration. Share your hard-won lessons. Celebrate your wins. Name the barriers we still need to dismantle. Together, we can sharpen our strategies, deepen our networks, and leave here more aligned—and better resourced—to meet this moment. Let's use this space to be bold, candid, and generative. Thank you for showing up for your communities and for each other. I can't wait to see what we build together.

With gratitude and solidarity,

*Kia Colbert*

Kia Colbert

Director, Emory COMPASS Coordinating Center

On behalf of the Gilead COMPASS Coordinating Centers & Southern HIV Impact Fund of AIDS United



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Dear Attendees,

Welcome to the 2025 Gilead COMPASS Coordinating Center Grantee Meeting.

Under the theme *Riding the Tide of Transformation*, we gather at a time when courage, creativity, and collaboration are more essential than ever. This convening is a space to reflect, reconnect, and recommit to the work we each carry into our communities.

I want to extend my deepest thanks to the planning team whose dedication brought this gathering to life. Their insight and care shaped what we hope will be a meaningful and energizing experience.

And to each of you—thank you for showing up, not just physically, but with your full selves. Over the next few days, you'll engage in rich discussions, connect with peers across sectors and regions, and leave with tools to strengthen your work in these uncertain times. From ocean-side chats to grounded conversations on policy, storytelling, funding, and resilience, this convening is your space to be affirmed, inspired, and renewed.

Let's ride this tide together—and help shape what comes next.

In solidarity,

*Christopher Mathews*

**Christopher Mathews, MPH, LCSW**

Planning Committee Chairperson