# 275 Ways to Raise Funds for NYC's LGBT Center and HIV Services

Create your own virtual 275 Challenge—complete any task 275 times or in 27.5 hours or along 27.5 miles—and raise HIV and LGBTQ funds.

September 1, 2021 By Trent Straube

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Want to set a fun personal goal for yourself this month and raise HIV and LGBTQ funds while you complete it? Of course you do! So join the more than 500 people who signed up for the 275 Challenge, a virtual fundraiser throughout most of September to support New York's LGBT Community Center (aka The Center) and its HIV services.

The 275 Challenge gives you 27.5 days to complete your goal, and it includes an optional in-person event held the last day of the challenge, Saturday, September 25. There are four different ways you can participate:

- 27.5-mile bike ride on September 25 (in-person);
- 2.75-mile run on September 25 (in-person);
- 2.75-mile walk on September 25 (in-person);
- A personal goal you set yourself and complete at home between now and September 25.

The in-person challenges will be held on Pier 84 in New York City, located on West 44th Street and the West Side Highway, near the historic aircraft carrier the USS Intrepid.

Get creative with your own goals. Maybe you want to jog a total of 27.5 miles by September 25, paint for a total of 275 minutes (4.6 hours), read 27.5 poems, bake 27.5 cookies, meditate 27.5 minutes a day for 27.5 days, complete 27.5 pullups—or 275 pullups!—or set yourself on the couch for 27.5 episodes of RuPaul's Drag Race. The beauty is you can tailor this to your own interests,

abilities and goals.

Why 275? That's the total number of miles completed in the annual Cycle for the Cause (C4C) bike ride. Since 1995, riders have trekked from Boston to New York City in a three-day event to support the LGBT Center. That is, until COVID-19 put the brakes on the bike ride—but not on the need to support the Center or on the community's determination to overcome the new obstacles. Last year, the virtual C4C: 275 Challenge was born. It continues in 2021, slightly altered and now including the in-person event.

Anyone can attend the event, regardless of whether you're running, walking or biking that day. Entertainment and refreshments will be provided, and participants who completed personal goals at home, such as sketching pictures or knitting caps, are invited to showcase their creations.

The LGBT Community Center in Manhattan shares a deep history with the city's HIV community. AIDS activist group ACT UP first met there, and HIV support groups continue to do so. As The Center notes, about 128,000 people live with HIV in New York City—that's 10% of HIV-positive people in the United States.

A press release and social media posts by The Center promoting the 275 Challenge note how fundraising dollars help:

- Every $250 provides one HIV positive person with support, including assistance with health insurance enrollment and options for finding affordable medication.

- Every $500 raised enables 10 individual counseling sessions for youth, adults, and families each month.

- Every $5,000 raised sustains one week of 25 virtual substance use treatment and recovery groups for more than 250 community members dealing with challenges related to substance use.

- Every $10,000 raised ensures operation of virtual drop-in spaces where 200 LGBTQ young

people can access affirming support and connect with peers.

There is no registration fee or minimum amount you have to raise in order to participate in the 275 Challenge. To learn more and register, visit cycleforthecause.org.

“The uncertainty we’re all living through is not going away anytime soon, and that means our community depends on The Center more than ever,” said Glennda Testone, The Center’s executive director, in the press release. “Thankfully, people are really embracing The 275 Challenge as a fun way to support The Center and ensure we can be there for those who need us. We mean it when we say the sky is the limit! Folks are photographing 275 pieces of street art in New York City, walking 10 miles a day, cycling 275 miles across state lines or even making 27 micro-quilts. But no matter where we are or what we’re doing, we are all bound together by a determination to make a difference for LGBTQ people.”

The last time the Cycle for the Cause bike ride was held, in 2019, it raised $2.1 million. For a collection of articles in POZ exploring the links between HIV and the queer community, click the hashtag #LGBTQ. You’ll find headlines such as “This Gen Z Program for LGBTQ, Black and Latino Youth Aims to End HIV,” “Biden Reinstates Health Care Protections for LGBTQ People” and “Mom and Son Are Both LGBTQ Ministers Honored for Their HIV Work.”

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