POZ Givers Guide

February 1, 1995 By David Thomas

POZ likes to say that information is power. In that spirit, we present the POZ Givers Guide. All these groups deserve your support, but before you give, you deserve to know how a group raises money and how it spends it.

The Guide includes factual information as well as subjective evaluation and comments. We encourage everyone to make their own assessments about each of these organizations. If you want more information, call either the National Charity Information Bureau or the Council of Better Business Bureaus and ask for a copy of their file on the charitable organization of your choice.

POZ polled seven executive directors and charitable-funding experts in order to establish our grading criteria. All information from groups is self-reported. Here's how we arrived at the grades.

FUNDING SOURCES: "If you limit yourself to a particular kind of funding, you're putting yourself up for great risk," says Bill Misenhimer. Groups that received more than 50 percent of their funding from a single source received an F; groups with more than 50 percent of total funding from special events or the government received a D. An A went to groups with diversified funding sources and at least 10 percent of their income from direct marketing, a steady, forward-thinking source of income.

USE OF MONEY: Groups got an A if less than 15 percent of their budget went to overhead, meaning administrative expenses that include fundraising costs. Only groups with 40 percent or more administrative expenses got an F. We defined administrative expenses as those that could not be allocated back to a program. Still, slight variations in accounting methods between groups may have resulted in a different grade for the same real overhead. The United Way standard for overhead is 25 percent of total budget.

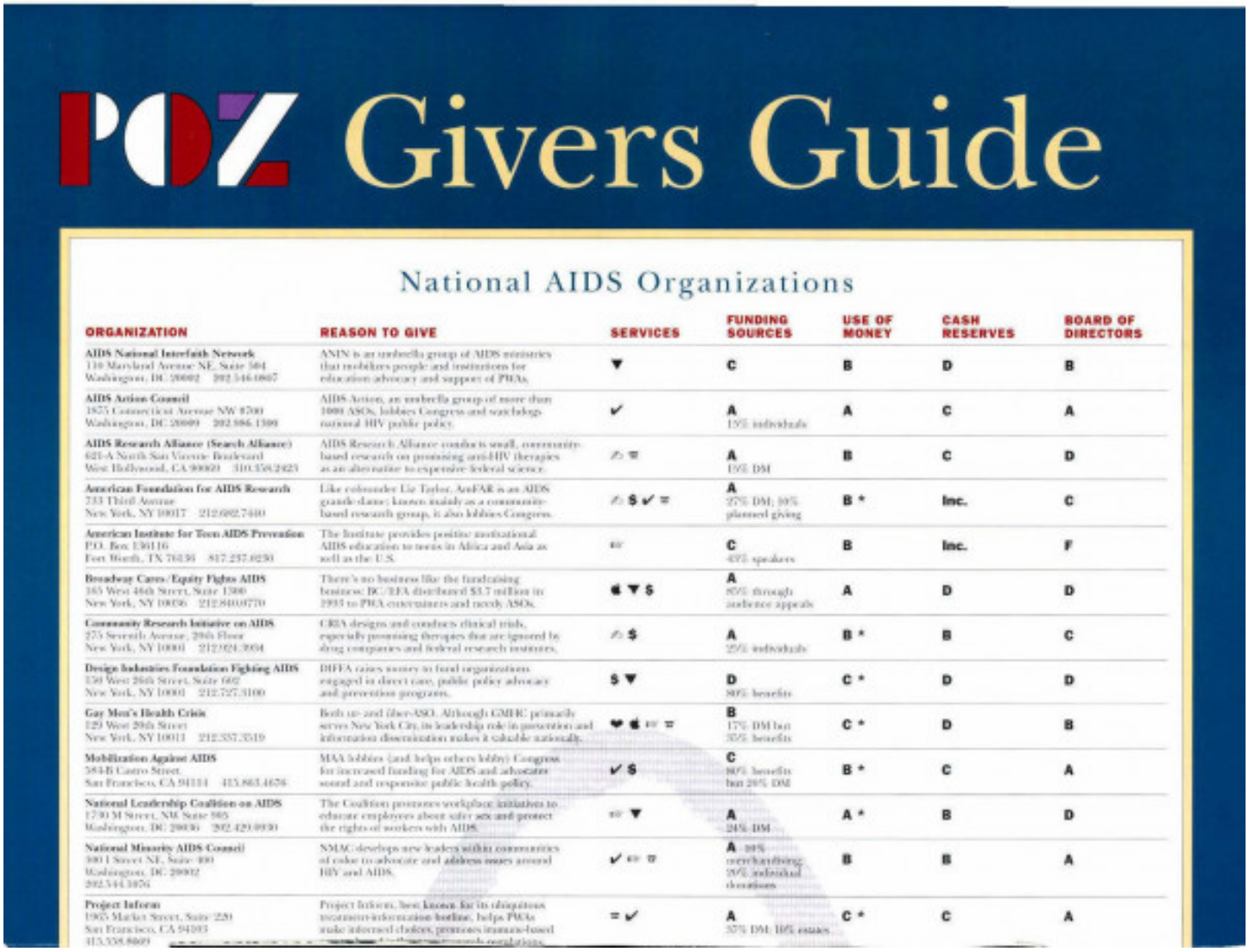
CASH RESERVE: "You shouldn't sit on money in a crisis," says Gregory Britt. True, but POZ believes that a group should have at least a month's reserve in case there's a dry period. Groups with one month's reserve received a B, groups with up to two months received an A. Groups with less than a month's reserve received a C. An F went to groups with more than two months operating expenses. Some executive directors believe in zero cash reserve; if you agree, then when we assign a D would be an A to you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The board is sometimes an organization's brain, rarely its hands, but always its soul. Out of fairness to the organizations and a reluctance to make politically correct judgments based on demographics, a B is the benchmark; an A means it's obvious that there's

great representation, and the grades decrease as the composition of the board seems to bely its ability to really understand its target constituency. An F was reserved for groups that have no openly HIV positive people on their board.

THE PANEL: Bob Boswell, executive director of the Committee for Responsive Philanthropy in Washington, D.C.; Gregory Britt, executive director of AIDS Research Alliance in Los Angeles; Rodger McFarlane, former exccutive director of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS in New York City; Bill Misenhimer, chief financial officer of AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA); Michael Seltzer, executive director of Funders Concerned About AIDS in New York City; Steve Wakefield, executive director of the Night Ministry, former executive director of Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) in Chicago; and Bennett Weiner, director of the Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Council of Better Business Bureaus in Arlington, Virginia.

The POZ Givers Guide was compiled by David Thomas with additional reporting by Melanie Zurlo and Johnjon Emigh.



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National AIDS Organizations

ORGANIZATION	REASON TO GIVE	SERVICES	FUNDING SOURCES	USE OF MONEY	CASH RESERVES	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AIDS National Interfaith Network 110 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 504 Washington, DC 20002 202.546.0807	ANIN is an umbrella group of AIDS ministries that mobilizes people and institutions for education advocacy and support of PWAs.	▼	C	B	D	B
AIDS Action Council 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW #700 Washington, DC 20009 202.986.1300	AIDS Action, an umbrella group of more than 1000 ASOs, lobbies Congress and watchdogs national HIV public policy.	✔	A 15% individuals	A	C	A
AIDS Research Alliance (Search Alliance) 621-A North San Vicente Boulevard West Hollywood, CA 90069 310.358.2623	AIDS Research Alliance conducts small, community-based research on promising anti-HIV therapies as an alternative to expensive federal science.	✍ ☎	A 15% DM	B	C	D
American Foundation for AIDS Research 733 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017 212.682.7440	Like cofounder Liz Taylor, AmFAR is an AIDS grande dame; known mainly as a community-based research group, it also lobbies Congress.	✍ $ ✔ ☎	A 27% DM; 10% planned giving	B *	Inc.	C
American Institute for Teen AIDS Prevention P.O. Box 136116 Fort Worth, TX 76136 817.237.0230	The Institute provides positive motivational AIDS education to teens in Africa and Asia as well as the U.S.	✉	C 43% speakers	B	Inc.	F
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS 165 West 46th Street, Suite 1300 New York, NY 10036 212.840.0770	There's no business like the fundraising business: BC/EFA distributed $3.7 million in 1993 to PWA entertainers and needy ASOs.	🍎 ▼ $	A 80% through audience appeals	A	D	D
Community Research Initiative on AIDS 275 Seventh Avenue, 20th Floor New York, NY 10001 212.924.3934	CRIA designs and conducts clinical trials, especially promising therapies that are ignored by drug companies and federal research institutes.	✍ $	A 25% individuals	B *	B	C
Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS 150 West 26th Street, Suite 602 New York, NY 10001 212.727.3100	DIFFA raises money to fund organizations engaged in direct care, public policy advocacy and prevention programs.	$ ▼	D 80% benefits	C *	D	D
Gay Men's Health Crisis 129 West 20th Street New York, NY 10011 212.337.3519	Both us and fiber-ASO. Although GMHC primarily serves New York City, its leadership role in prevention and information dissemination makes it valuable nationally.	❤ 🍎 ✉ ☎	B 17% DM but 35% benefits	C *	D	B
Mobilization Against AIDS 584-B Castro Street San Francisco, CA 94114 415.863.4676	MAA lobbies (and helps others lobby) Congress for increased funding for AIDS and advocates sound and responsive public health policy.	✔ $	C 80% benefits but 20% DM	B *	C	A
National Leadership Coalition on AIDS 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 905 Washington, DC 20036 202.429.0930	The Coalition promotes workplace initiatives to educate employees about safer sex and protect the rights of workers with AIDS.	✉ ▼	A 24% DM	A *	B	D
National Minority AIDS Council 300 I Street NE, Suite 400 Washington, DC 20002 202.544.1076	NMAC develops new leaders within communities of color to advocate and address issues around HIV and AIDS.	✔ ✍ ☎	A - 10% overhanding; 35% individual donations	B	B	A
Project Inform 1965 Market Street, Suite 250 San Francisco, CA 94103 415.558.8669	Project Inform, best known for its idiosyncratic treatment-information hotline, helps PWAs make informed choices, promotes trauma-based	= ✔	A 57% DM; 10% issues	C *	C	A

Read the digital version here.

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