Private Funding to Address HIV and AIDS Dropped $9M in 2021

Gilead and Gates lead in HIV grants. But the overall dip in philanthropic funding "raises red flags," say FCAA report authors.

October 27, 2023 By Trent Straube

Global philanthropic funding in the form of private grants to fight the HIV epidemic dipped $9 million to $692 million between 2020 and 2021, according to the latest annual report from Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA).

Although the drop represents a 1% decline in funding, the report authors say it "raises red flags" because "waning support for HIV is not an anomaly…private philanthropic resources for HIV have shown a slow and steady decline in recent years."

Philanthropy is often the only source of funding for advocacy in the HIV landscape. Data revealed a 15% ($20 mil)...

Posted by Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA)

on Friday, October 27, 2023

This year's report on 2021 data marks the 20th edition of "Philanthropic Support to Address HIV and AIDS" and it covers a year that commemorated the 40th anniversary of what's generally considered the start of the epidemic: June 1981, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first wrote about the disease that became known as AIDS.

The report includes information on more than 5,000 grants disbursed by 187 funders and awarded to 2,800 grantee organizations. As such, it offers a snapshot of the philanthropic response to the epidemic.

In 2021, the top 20 HIV-related funders disbursed $659 million. Thank you to these organizations that continue to support the #HIV response. @GileadSciences @gatesfoundation @ViiVHC @BCEFA @ejaf @wellcometrust https://t.co/4SYpQBeT86 pic.twitter.com/aIQQbAfT3W

— FundersConcernedFCAA (@FCAA) October 27, 2023

In breaking down the data, the report offers a look at the top funders, where the grants are going and how the money is being used (for example, to promote pre-exposure prophylaxis, PrEP, to prevent HIV or to invest in research or administrative costs).

#KeyPopulations face a dangerous political & legal environment. #Philanthropy plays a transformational role by...

Posted by Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA) on Thursday, October 26, 2023

The top five funders of 2021 were Gilead Sciences, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Viiv Healthcare, Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Wellcome Trust, with the top two funders—Gilead and Gates—representing 66% of the global philanthropic resources.

For the second year, @FCAA has named us the #1 philanthropic funder of #HIV-related programs. We're

committed to empowering grassroots communities as we work together to eliminate barriers to care.

Learn more: https://t.co/NJiFjC4OD7#HealthEquity pic.twitter.com/uKilQczKgy

— Gilead Sciences (@GileadSciences) October 24, 2023

An FCAA press release highlights other key findings from the report on 2021 data:

- HIV-related philanthropy for advocacy, including human rights–related strategies, reached an all-time high of $150 million—a 15% increase from 2020.

- Despite being the most requested form of funding among communities responding to HIV, grants for general operating support (unrestricted funding that can be used for any purpose) decreased 17%, falling to $45 million.

- HIV-related philanthropy for women and girls reached a historic high of $100 million.

- Funding for key populations—including transgender persons, gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM), people who use drugs, and sex workers—reached a new high of $110 million. However, support for transgender persons—increasingly under attack around the world—remained essentially flat in 2021.

- HIV-related philanthropy for BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and people of color] communities within the United States reached a new high of $58 million.

“It is unconscionable that we know how to end the AIDS epidemic but lack the political will and

financial investment to do so," said FCAA executive director Masen Davis in the press release. "Government and public funding—which account for the majority of resources for HIV and AIDS—are failing to meet the needs of those living with and affected by HIV. PEPFAR [the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which primarily funds HIV programs in Africa] is being increasingly politicized, the U.S. House of Representatives slashed HIV spending by over half a billion dollars in the proposed FY24 appropriations bill, and the Global Fund is not receiving the funding that it has in years past. Any decline of private funding on top of this already perilous situation poses an existential threat to the HIV response and puts millions of lives at risk."

Davis continued to raise warnings and call for action. "This downward trajectory of funding has impacts far beyond a single disease. Human rights, gender rights, LGBTQI rights, reproductive justice, racial justice—these issues are all tightly intertwined with HIV. They are just as susceptible to funding cuts too," said Davis. "It's time for the public, policymakers and philanthropy to think seriously about what's at stake. The most vulnerable people around the world are being left behind, and we have the chance to stop it, but the window is narrowing. We must take action now."

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