Boosting the Use of Technology at Southern HIV Groups

AIDS United launched the iFORWARD program to fund and accelerate technology use at Southern HIV groups. Applications for grants close February 17.

January 28, 2022 By AIDS United

AIDS United has launched iFORWARD: Equipping Organizations in the South through Technology to End the HIV Epidemic, a special project designed to address barriers southern organizations face in accessing appropriate technology to carry out their services and achieve their mission.

iFORWARD will provide cash grants up to $10,000 along with professional development and technical assistance. Applications open Jan. 24, 2022, and close Feb. 17, 2022, at 5 p.m. EST.

Have you heard? We're giving away up $10K to orgs in the South to support using tech to end HIV. Applications are due by 2/17.

Questions? Join our Q&A webinar on 2/4.https://t.co/qQiaZ2V0xW

— AIDS United (@AIDS_United) January 25, 2022

The South has a disproportionate burden of HIV when compared with other regions of the U.S. An estimated 51% of all new HIV diagnoses (at any stage of the disease) occurred in the South, and eight of the 10 states with the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses are in the South according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These barriers have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The converging epidemics of COVID-19 and HIV have made us acutely aware of the lack of equity and access around technology that is now critical in ensuring access to health care and mental health services, particularly for HIV, LGBTQ and BIPOC [Black, indigenous and people of color] communities in the U.S. South,” said John Barnes, executive director of Funders Concerned About AIDS. “This new initiative is yet another example of innovation on the part of the Southern HIV Impact Fund to equip and empower community-based solutions to end the HIV epidemic.”

The full request for proposal text can be accessed here.

For this initiative, iFORWARD will provide eight-month cash grants to 8-10 organizations in the U.S. South for professional development and technical assistance. Professional development will take the form of dive deep sessions into specific topics facilitated by advanced practitioners in the field.

“If the COVID-19 crisis has illuminated anything, it is that health inequities are not simply the difference in access to care but also the difference between life and death for many people in the south,” noted Athena Cross, AIDS United’s vice president and chief program officer. “This project comes at an important time when we confront a worsening public health crisis, a widening digital divide, and one of the most pressing social justice issues of our time. We are grateful for partners like Janssen Pharmaceutical who have provided much-needed resources to make this initiative possible.”

Eligible organizations include:

- Community-based organizations.
- AIDS service organizations.
- Federally qualified health centers.
- Other networks of people living with HIV.

Each organization, based on their proposal, will also be assigned a tech coach who will provide guidance on digital campaigns and digital health literacy; telemedicine and telehealth; and infrastructure, marketing and communications.

“During the pandemic, we lost traction in ending the HIV epidemic, not because the workforce wasn’t able but because of our limited technology and infrastructure in the South to pivot. iFORWARD attempts to address this identified need,” said Marvell L. Terry II, senior program manager for the Southern HIV Impact Fund.

iFORWARD is a special project of the Southern HIV Impact Fund and is supported by a charitable contribution from Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson.

Convened by Funders Concerned About AIDS in 2017 to coordinate and expand philanthropic efforts in the United States South, the Southern HIV Impact Fund is managed by AIDS United and

receives support for Year 5 from Gilead Sciences, ViiV Healthcare, the Levi Strauss Foundation, Janssen Pharmaceutical and a generous anonymous donor.

AIDS United will convene an optional webinar to provide clarification about the RFP and essential application submission tips. This webinar will be held on February 4, 2022. Click here to register. A recording of the webinar will be available on the AIDS United website.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/iforward-boosting-use-technology-southern-hiv-groups