



From: AIDS Funding Collaborative and The Center for Community Solutions

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## **Local HIV/AIDS programs awarded over \$350,000, focus on expansion of testing**

(Cleveland, OH) Of over \$350,000 in recent grants to local organizations, close to half will help create or expand programs that provide HIV testing to Greater Clevelanders.

Twelve (12) organizations will benefit from grants from the AIDS Funding Collaborative (AFC) to support HIV/AIDS-related services and prevention programming in Greater Cleveland. The grants were awarded to agencies that submitted proposals in response to the AFC's annual request for proposals. The priorities for this round of grants were capacity building projects and general program support for HIV/AIDS programs with a successful track record.

Grants to five organizations will help develop or expand programs that provide HIV testing. They include:

- **Care Alliance**, to support their peer HIV/AIDS outreach program, which includes HIV testing.
- **Cuyahoga County Board of Health**, to initiate a pilot program for rapid HIV testing at the Board of Health clinic in Parma.
- **The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland**, to increase rapid HIV testing, both at The Free Clinic and in community venues.
- **MetroHealth Foundation**, to implement universal opt-out HIV testing across the MetroHealth hospital system, with an initial focus on inpatient services and community health centers.
- **University Hospitals of Cleveland**, to integrate rapid HIV testing in the Emergency Department.

*Through this grant, University Hospitals will become the first hospital in Northeast Ohio to initiate routine rapid HIV testing in its Emergency Room protocol. The only other Ohio hospital conducting such testing is University Hospital of Cincinnati.* Routine testing leads to early detection and care and is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of a strategy to reduce the spread of the virus and provide appropriate health care to those who are infected.

**David Merriman**, AFC Vice Chair, noted, "The AFC is responding to the local HIV/AIDS epidemic and the call for more routine HIV testing by funding projects aimed at expanding access to HIV testing, and integrating testing into existing clinical settings. HIV testing is a critical part of prevention, and we're very proud to support the dedicated professionals and volunteers that do this work."

Other awards went to:

- **AIDS Walk of Greater Cleveland**, to support the final John T. Carey Memorial AIDS Walk in May.
- **American Indian Education Center**, to increase organizational capacity and strengthen ties with HIV/AIDS service providers to better serve the needs of the local Native American population.
- **Association of Nurses in AIDS Care**, to conduct a needs assessment of frontline, non-HIV nurses, to determine gaps in training and knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

- **Cleveland Department of Public Health**, to implement a new data system for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program, to improve data tracking and resource management.
- **NorthEast Ohio Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. (NEON)**, to expand their Youth/Adolescent Awareness Program to two additional clinic sites.
- **Planned Parenthood of Northeast Ohio**, to support Teens Talking to Teens (Triple T): East Cleveland, a peer education program for East Cleveland teenagers (age 13-15).
- **Recovery Resources**, to expand comprehensive risk reduction counseling services for clients with mental illness.

In announcing the awards, AFC Chair **LaTida Lester** stated, "The AFC is pleased to create new partnerships and respond to community need through these strategic projects."

Throughout its nearly 15-year history, the AFC has leveraged and invested nearly \$7 million to support HIV/AIDS-related services, awareness activities, and prevention efforts in the Greater Cleveland region. The AFC's funding partners are: Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board of Cuyahoga County, The City of Cleveland, The Cleveland Foundation, Cuyahoga County Board of County Commissioners, The George Gund Foundation, Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation, Saint Luke's Foundation of Cleveland, and United Way of Greater Cleveland.

*The AIDS Funding Collaborative (AFC) strengthens the community's response to HIV/AIDS as a public/private partnership providing coordination, leadership, and funding in Greater Cleveland. The AFC is located within the offices of The Center for Community Solutions, which provides fiscal and administrative oversight.*

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