

Background

In January 2005, after a year-long assessment process, the AIDS Funding Collaborative (AFC) adopted a strategic plan that envisioned an expanded community leadership role, a shift to focused, strategic grantmaking, and a more formalized structure to support that growth. That year, the AFC formed a new relationship with The Center for Community Solutions as its fiscal sponsor, hired its first full-time staff person, and crafted bylaws to define its structure and governance. Over the subsequent three years, the AFC has:

- brought on three new funding partners;
- increased the size and expertise of its advisory committee;
- expanded its grantmaking and resource allocation strategies to include discretionary, responsive, and targeted grants, as well as AFC-led initiatives such as large-scale evaluation projects, research, and community convening;
- identified and reassessed gaps and priorities at regular intervals;
- become heavily involved in community planning processes;
- begun defining its public policy and advocacy role; and
- raised its profile as a trusted and important community leader and partner.

The AFC now has one full-time and one part-time staff to support its work. In 2008, recognizing the importance of sharing the AFC's story of a model public/private partnership that has successfully and strategically evolved and adapted, the AFC assessed its communication strategies. This resulted in a revised mission statement (see front cover) that articulates the AFC's three primary functions of coordination, funding, and leadership.

Funding Partners of the AIDS Funding Collaborative

Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health 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

United Way of Greater Cleveland

The AIDS Clinical Trials Unit/Center for AIDS Research Clinical Core at Case Western Reserve University participates in the AFC as a designated organization. The AFC is one of approximately 30 Community Partnerships of the National AIDS Fund, and is located within The Center for Community Solutions, which provides fiscal and administrative oversight.

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2009-2012 STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS



Mission:

The AIDS Funding Collaborative strengthens the community's response to HIV/AIDS as a public/private partnership providing coordination, leadership, and funding in Greater Cleveland.



Planning Process

Over the course of the first several months of 2009, prompted in part by the effect of the economic crisis on funding and by a commitment to communication, the AFC's chair and director met individually with the AFC's funding partners. The goal was to update them on the AFC's work and accomplishments, learn about how their priorities intersect with the AFC's work, and hear their assessments regarding future support for the AFC. The funding partners overwhelmingly affirmed the value of the AFC, their support for the AFC's strategic growth and evolution, and their commitment to continued participation. They also asked important questions the AFC's advisory committee had been contemplating regarding the future focus, direction, and relevance of the AFC in light of the chronic nature of HIV/AIDS for many people, the national discussion of health care reform, and the many issues that overlap with HIV/AIDS.

While a full-blown strategic planning process was not warranted, given the ongoing deliberate and strategic assessments the AFC has engaged in over the past three years, the AFC planned a focused half-day retreat to enable thoughtful discussion of the questions raised by the AFC's funding partners. The focus of the retreat was to develop the framework for creating a written plan to guide the AFC's work over the next three years. The Advisory Committee met and discussed potential scenarios for the future of the AFC. An affirmation of the AFC's core values and identification of strategic commitments emerged from this retreat.

Core Values

In the midst of health care reform, the need for this dedicated work may increase if funding for HIV/AIDS care is folded into broader systems. In light of this, the AFC re-affirms its foundation based on the following core values:

- The public/private partnership model focused on HIV/AIDS remains relevant and essential to improving the health of the community.
- The funding partnership model, where resources are pooled for collaborative grantmaking, is the core strength upon which the AFC is built.
- The AFC is committed to being flexible and adaptable. The structure and functions of the AFC evolve to address strategically the HIV/AIDS needs of the community.
- The AFC approaches its work proactively and strategically as needs change and successful outcomes are reached in the community for HIV/AIDS.

Strategic Commitments

Over the next three years, the AFC will be committed to the following equally weighted strategic areas of focus:

Community Impact

Statement of Intent: The AFC strives to bring about positive change in the community's response to HIV/AIDS.

Goals:

- Engage with the community (stakeholders, agencies, related systems, and concerned citizens) in ways that the AFC can add value.
- Monitor the needs of organizations providing HIV/AIDS care and services.
- Evaluate funded programs and agencies to ensure resources are maximized.
- Define and document the extent to which participation in the AFC enhances funding partners' individual grantmaking.
- Leverage funding to enhance HIV/AIDS testing, prevention, and care.
- Implement innovative grantmaking strategies.

Advocacy

Statement of Intent: The AFC will use its resources and position to help shape and inform systems and policies related to HIV/AIDS.

Goals:

- Engage in a broad range of advocacy activities, including funding systems change, supporting and conducting research that can inform policy decisions, communicating with public officials, and engaging in public discourse.
- Increase general community knowledge around HIV/AIDS, related issues and how others address them.
- Convene organizations, institutions, agencies, and related groups to address HIV/AIDS.
- Increase communication among HIV/AIDS stakeholders.
- Coordinate AFC's advocacy efforts with those of others to identify the places where the AFC can add value to the efforts of others.

Integration

Statement of Intent: The AFC supports the integration of HIV testing, prevention, and care services and the linkage of HIV/AIDS with related issues and associated systems within the community.

Goals:

- Explore different models for stakeholders' involvement and clarify roles.
- Support enhanced coordination between HIV prevention and HIV/AIDS social services and medical care.
- Identify the appropriate degree and means to impact associated issues (e.g., sex education, STDs, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol addiction).
- Identify, prioritize, and engage with service delivery systems and related groups (e.g., coalitions serving youth, homeless, or re-entry populations) to ensure information, resources, and perspectives are shared.