

**Frequently Asked Questions to the
Southern HIV Impact Fund
Letters of Intent
Updated June 13, 2019**

This document addresses frequently asked questions related to the Southern HIV Impact Fund Request for Letters of Intent to Apply announced in June 2019.

We will update the following questions periodically until the proposal deadline and will repost them on our website.

Eligibility

- 1. My organization is not located in one of the nine Southern states listed in the request for letters of intent. Can we still apply for Southern HIV Impact Fund funding?**

No, if your organization is not located in one of the nine Southern states named in the request for letters of intent, you are not eligible to apply for funding through this initiative.

- 2. We are an organization that works in one or more of the nine Southern states listed in your request for letters of intent, but we are based in another part of the country. Are we eligible to apply?**

Your organization is welcome to apply for funding if you maintain a staffed office in one or more of those Southern states. Remember that organizations may only apply for one grant. So, if you have multiple southern offices, you will need to choose one project for which to apply for funding. Regardless, you will need to make sure that all grant monies you would receive for this grant would go to your office in the eligible state(s) and that no funding would support your national headquarters.

However, if you have branch offices that have their own independent tax-exempt status, they would be eligible to apply for a Southern HIV Impact Fund grant independently of and separate from your national office grant.

- 3. We are a public health department, other government agency, or a university-based program. Can we apply for funding?**

As long as your organization is tax-exempt or has a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation, your organization is eligible to apply.

- 4. Is there a formula being used for funding distribution (i.e. each state will have at least one funded proposal)?**

No. AIDS United and the External Review Committee for the Southern HIV Impact Fund do not have or utilize a formula for determining funding distribution. Furthermore, there is no minimum funding level per eligible Southern state/area. Applications are reviewed and scored based on their own merits and the reviewers are responsible for making funding decisions that are best for the region.

- 5. What if we do not have a Board of Directors?**

If the organization does not have a Board of Directors, please send your fiscal sponsor's board of directors list. If neither is available, a detailed letter of explanation is required.

Application and Deadlines

- 6. Our organization's fiscal year is different than the Southern HIV Impact Fund grant year stated in the request for letters of intent. Can we use Southern HIV Impact Fund funding over the period of our fiscal year instead?**

No. Funding may only be used during the specified grant year: December 1, 2019 through November 30, 2020. All grant funds must be expended and all project objectives must be met before the grant period end date.

7. The request for letters of intent asks for budget information. What does this need to include?

You are required to include a specific dollar amount of your request, the organization's total budget for 2019 and the percent of the organizational budget that this grant would represent.

8. The request for letters of intent asks for a diversity table to be completed. Should this information reflect the diversity of the project staff or organizational staff overall?

The diversity table should reflect the diversity of the overall organization, including management personnel. Clarifying definitions of different types of organizational staff have been provided in the diversity table instructions.

9. What are the reporting and oversight requirements for this grant, if awarded?

There is an interim report inclusive of a budget expenditures report, where applicable, due approximately six months into the grant year and a final narrative report and financial report will be due one month after the grant period concludes. If you would like to make changes to the budget that exceed 10% of your overall approved budget within the first six months of the grant period, a revised budget must be submitted for approval.

Submitting an LOI (AIDSUnited.force.com)

**PLEASE NOTE: THE COMMUNITY PORTAL WILL OPEN FOR LOI SUBMISSION ON FRIDAY, JUNE 21.
PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO BEGIN AN LOI IN THE SYSTEM BEFORE THIS DATE.**

10. Can we submit our LOI using the online system before the deadline?

Yes, please feel free to submit your LOI and diversity table attachment as soon as you would like. Indeed, we strongly encourage you to begin the submission process early to allow for any technical difficulties you may experience.

11. For the online submission process, are we allowed to initiate an LOI, enter information, save and return for completion at a later date/time?

Yes. The system allows for you to save the LOI as you go along and submit once it is completed. However, keep in mind that the system will automatically log you out if too much time is taken completing a question. For this reason, it is strongly advised that you complete the application in a Word document before copying and pasting the answers into the online system.

12. The LOI will not load in the online system.

Please use Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox to access the online system. Frequently, users experience issues with forms not loading properly if they are using Internet Explorer or Microsoft Edge, particularly with older versions of Explorer. We strongly suggest beginning your application early so that any unforeseen technical difficulties can be addressed prior to the submission deadline.

13. I hit the save button, but my LOI did not save.

You are able to save your LOI, so that you can work on it in phases. However, you are required to enter text into all the required fields in order to save the LOI. You can also enter "test" into all the required fields to save the LOI before it is complete. We recommend completing your LOI in a Word document, then transferring it into the online system.

14. My work did not save, is there a way to recover it?

Unfortunately, unsaved work cannot be recovered. Please complete your LOI in a Word document before transferring it into the system to avoid any issues. Hit save often once there is text in all required fields, as the system will automatically log you off if too much time passes.

15. Do I have to submit my LOI via the online system?

Yes, all LOIs must be submitted via the online system. If you have any questions regarding navigating the web portal, please contact Shannon Wyss at swyss@aidsunited.org. We encourage organizations to submit their LOI early to allow time for AIDS United staff to support with any technical challenges that may arise.

Allowable Funding Requests

16. Can I submit an LOI for funding to support general operating costs?

Yes, though please note that organizations that intend to apply for funding to support general operating costs will need to demonstrate an understanding and history of intersecting HIV and racial/gender justice work. We encourage organizations with a history of HIV work and organizations with a history of racial or gender justice work to apply; however, for organizations without a clear and demonstrable history of that intersectional work, we recommend applying for project-specific funding.

17. Can a small group of community-based organizations (for example, three to four) apply for the grant as a single HIV/AIDS advocacy collaborative?

Organizations may apply as a collaborative, but it must be very clear in your LOI (and subsequent proposal if invited to apply) why the proposed activities would be better executed through a collaborative rather than a single agency. It is important to highlight the unique capacities (e.g., strengths, skills, expertise) that each agency brings to the proposal, as well as the exact roles and responsibilities that each agency would have. A lead agency must be identified and proof of tax-exempt status for that agency must be submitted.

18. We have existing programs that serve multiple communities and would like to use Southern HIV Impact Fund monies to support advocacy for all these groups. Should we instead focus on just one or two communities?

Each organization needs to answer this question for itself. Decide on the purpose of your LOI, while also accurately portraying your organization's capacity to carry out your proposed activities. Be sure that you do not propose something so broad – whether too many outcomes or too many activities – that it will diminish the effectiveness of your efforts.

19. Can we use this grant initiative to start a project for a community with which we already have experience?

Yes. Southern HIV Impact Fund funds may be used to start a new project in order to *expand* your range of projects with a community that you already serve. You may not, however, use this funding to work with a community with whom you have no previous experience. Please keep in mind that this is a twelve-month initiative, and it takes time to develop new networks. In your proposal, focus on what change you can reasonably effect in a one-year period.

20. Our organization has been effective in reaching a certain community and, although we have never had HIV-specific funding, we have incorporated HIV/AIDS information into several of our programs for this group. Consequently, we have never had the effectiveness of our HIV/AIDS work with this community evaluated. How should we handle this in our LOI?

The LOI provides an opportunity to briefly share your track record in reaching your priority community(ies) and also to describe how HIV intersects with the lives of those community members. In this section, you may briefly describe why this impact has prompted you to incorporate HIV into your overall work, even if you haven't previously been funded for it.

21. What focus areas will be funded through the Southern HIV Impact Fund?

Grants funded through this initiative must focus on one or both of the following funding priorities: HIV Prevention & Service Provision and HIV-Focused Political & Social Action. Examples that fall under each of the two focal areas are listed below. Successful applicants will incorporate into their proposed activities efforts to facilitate meaningful participation of individuals directly affected by HIV and intersecting issues.

- **HIV Prevention & Service Provision:** Potential prevention projects may include individual-level, group-level, or community-level interventions, social marketing prevention campaigns, and social media interventions. Applicants are encouraged to integrate harm reduction approaches. While HIV testing is an allowable activity, it is important to note that this funding is not meant to support expansion of an existing HIV testing program. Instead, HIV testing may only be one component of your proposed project. Projects may also include a wide range of interventions that are designed to increase access to and engagement into care, particularly for underserved and disproportionately affected populations; mitigate barriers to engaging into and remaining in care, including provision of legal services for people living with HIV; or to improve the responsiveness and capacity of care systems to meet community need. Examples of such interventions include but are not limited to structural interventions such as integrating trauma-informed care, initiating peer navigation services or implementing new technology to support engagement into care. Intersectional work with non-HIV organizations working on issues such as post-release referrals for people who are being released from incarceration, food security, job training, and housing, are all valued as part of a holistic response to increasing the health and well-being of people living with HIV.
- **HIV-Focused Political & Social Action:** This area of focus will support projects that: 1) contribute to a significant impact on HIV public policy and advocacy in the Southern U.S.; or 2) will play a role in mobilizing and expanding the base of people who support this work. Funding will support state-specific advocacy priorities that may result in changes that also impact the Southern region overall.

22. If an LOI or proposal is submitted on behalf of multiple project/organizations, will the proposed budget be allowed to exceed the one hundred thousand-dollar (\$100,000) maximum?

No. Each LOI and/or proposal submitted by either a single organization or collaborative effort of multiple organizations/ projects is still bound by the one hundred thousand dollar (\$100,000) award maximum.

23. Are we allowed to use funds to purchase incentives for clients to do policy advocacy?

Yes. As long as a clear connection between the utilization of incentives is made to policy advocacy activities, incentives are allowable expenses.

24. If incentives will be included in the proposals, is there a maximum value for each incentive?

There is not a maximum or minimum, but please be sure to include the rationale for the selected amount demonstrating how the incentive value may maximize efforts, participation, etc.

Use of Grant Funds

25. Can we submit a letter of intent to apply for a particular component of a larger program?

Yes, as long as the component can be isolated from other activities of the larger program. Also, the component should be able to stand alone as a program and have the ability to be replicated.

26. Can we submit a letter of intent for funding to contract with another organization or an individual?

You may use this funding to hire contractors. If you are considering contracting with another agency, however, we encourage you to consider ways in which you might collaborate on a more equal basis with each other in carrying out a particular project.

27. I would like to apply under both focus areas; is there still a \$100,000 funding request cap?

We welcome applications that address one or both of the two focus areas; however, the maximum funding request is \$100,000 for all applications.

28. Can we use Southern HIV Impact Fund money as a match for other funding from public or private sources?

No, you may not use funds from this initiative to match other grants that you have received from another source.

29. I would like to use funding from this initiative to continue an existing program. Is this allowable?

Organizations may apply to expand existing programming (e.g. adding or growing a focus on HIV in current advocacy work); however, this funding is not intended to be used as a replacement for discontinued funding.

30. Some advocacy work takes a long time and involves relationship building. We are planning to do some of the long-term advocacy work/activities, but are also planning to do some direct legal services. Are direct legal services still allowable activities?

Yes. If applying to do direct legal service provision, please apply under the HIV-Prevention and Service Provision focus area.

31. Will funding be available for more than one year?

No, at this time the Southern HIV Impact Fund grants are one-year only.

32. Can we contact AIDS United with additional questions?

Yes! We encourage you to let us know whenever you have a question or need clarification via the email address assigned to this initiative – southernfund@aidsunited.org.