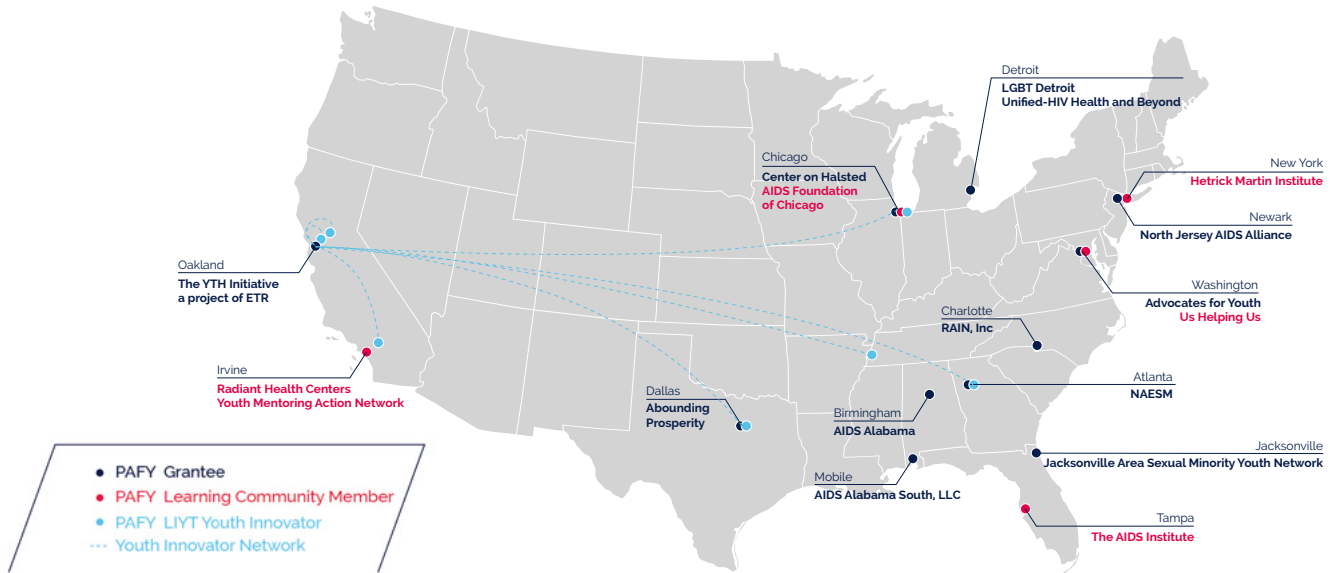


# POSITIVE ACTION FOR YOUTH LESSONS LEARNED | 2021

Since 2017, ViiV Healthcare's *Positive Action for Youth* initiative has invested in community-driven mentoring, leadership development, safer spaces, prevention and peer navigation programs that support youth living with HIV to manage their health, as well as raise awareness and reduce gaps in HIV care.

The impact and lessons learned from 4 years of the initiative are meant to inspire and ignite community centered solutions to disrupt current trends and conditions in HIV care.



## IMPACT FROM \$2M INVESTED SINCE 2017

### ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP

Youth received direct training and mentorship that enabled them to manage programs, earn full-time positions at organizations, engage in ETE and other community planning meetings and facilitate community conversations to decrease stigma.

**286** youth living with or vulnerable to HIV engaged in **67** leadership development activities in 2020.

### LINKAGE TO CARE

Youth leaders in 5 cities served as peer navigators who connected other young people to care and strengthened trust and relationships between young people and health organizations.

**740** youth linked or re-linked to HIV medical care and supportive services, including transportation, housing and mental health services.

### NETWORKS

Youth were connected to networks of support by peers, mentors and allies through workshops, culture activations, safer spaces, counseling and other stigma-reduction or network-building activities.

**1,252** youth living with or vulnerable to HIV reached through PAFY-funded activities.

# LESSONS LEARNED

**Leadership development and mentorship position youth as community advocates—and they thrive when given the opportunity to utilize their leadership skills.**

Mentorship trains youth to navigate adult care and activates them to lead community conversations around HIV, gender and other intersectional issues. Youth benefit both professionally and personally from being mentored: **Many go on to volunteer as mentors, make the leap from client to part- or full-time employee or become advocates in community planning councils.** Grantees regularly report that, when they hire former mentees to support or lead programming, the organization increases transparency and enhances its ability to connect with young clients. Bi-directional mentoring that engages both mentee and mentor in a process of growth and empowerment is found to be particularly effective at developing leadership and building networks of support among youth and adult allies.

**Investing in youth as peers navigators as a model is an effective mechanism to help navigate and engage clients in care.**

In 2020, **5 out of 8 PAFY grantees invested in young peer navigators** to enhance their services. Youth peers, particularly those with funded full-time positions, help reach, engage and connect with more young people in the community. Peer navigators engage clients by helping connect them to more culturally-appropriate services and care options; effectively leading and facilitating youth-centered support groups that reflect the unique barriers youth face to care and treatment; enhancing trust with clients who need to identify or build trust with service providers; and helping sustain client-organization relationships.

**Cross-sector and community partnerships are key to building trust and enhancing service delivery.**

Between the 11 PAFY grantees funded to provide mentorship-based services from 2017-2020, more than **30 cross-sector community partners were engaged to**

## Mentorship for Youth Living with HIV



In 2017, Advocates for Youth was funded to conduct a collaborative co-creation process that would leverage the voices and expertise of community as well as best practices, learnings and recommendations for mentorship shared by the first *Positive Action for Youth* cohort of grantees. The resulting toolkit, *Medical Mentorship for Young People Living with HIV*, is available on the Advocates for Youth website.

To date, the toolkit has reached **3,000 people**.

**enhance the local response to HIV.** Grantees reported that youth were more likely to trust them and engage in services when a grantee's reputation was bolstered by strong relationships with other community-based organizations. Youth value an organization that prioritizes meeting the community where they are and supporting their basic needs as the first step towards long-term, whole-person health.

**Youth appreciate spaces that are trauma-informed and help them connect with resources and other like-minded peers.**

Youth stay engaged in care when their basic needs are met and programming addresses their mental, emotional and physical well-being in a way that reflects their identity and desires. Safer spaces are equally important, particularly when they establish cohesion and connection during moments of isolation, such as the COVID-19 pandemic—and in 2020, PAFY grantees operated **4 in-person safer spaces engaging 75 youth in networks of support.** Virtual, in-person and hybrid environments can all create pathways to engage youth where they are through a variety of activities that respond to their evolving needs.



## POSITIVE ACTION

**ViiV Healthcare was established to take an innovative approach to the challenge of HIV—and we do. It's who we are.**

An innovative approach means we go beyond developing new medicines. We seek insights to better understand the unmet needs of people living with HIV. We connect individuals and communities to help drive solutions focused on providing the same standard of care for all people living with HIV. We develop and support community programs that focus on HIV prevention, care and treatment. The voice of the HIV community informs everything we do. As the only company solely focused on HIV, we think differently, act differently and connect differently to improve the lives and outcomes for all people affected by HIV.