



# DREAMING BIGGER:

LESSONS LEARNED IN CREATING  
THE AMP GRANT INITIATIVE



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## AMP GRANT MODEL AT A GLANCE

ViiV Healthcare's *Positive Action AMP Grant* initiative invests in grassroots networks, projects and leaders that typically can't access funding by supporting community-led organizations in making micro-grants and incubating emerging efforts to disrupt disparities in HIV prevention and care.

**AMP lead organizations** have deep knowledge of community needs and strong relationships with emerging and frontline leaders. They develop and disseminate calls for proposals, identify top talent, guide funding decisions, and provide micro-grants, capacity building and network development to micro-grantees.

**AMP micro-grantees** are emerging leaders and organizations advancing innovative projects to disrupt disparities in HIV. They receive funding, mentorship, networking opportunities, coaching and technical assistance through the AMP lead organization.

# OUR COMMITMENT TO FUELING COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE

## THE CONTEXT

At a moment when the HIV field seeks to respond to persistent intersecting crises in new and innovative ways, ViiV Healthcare is working alongside communities to reimagine its community giving practices. We know that individuals and communities closest to complex issues like HIV carry a deep contextual understanding that fuels more relevant, innovative and viable solutions.<sup>1</sup> Sustainable change requires that we co-create and pilot grant making mechanisms that shift power to communities and extend resources to grassroots leaders, entrepreneurs, organizations and groups that aren't readily able to access traditional funding.<sup>2</sup>

In a recent report by Funders Concerned about AIDS (FCAA), as of 2019, only 2% of global HIV philanthropy makes it way to *community-rooted intermediary funders* – community organizations that can act as intermediaries themselves and re-grant resources to advocacy and action-oriented projects.<sup>3</sup> In light of the intersecting epidemics of HIV, COVID-19 and inequality, global stakeholders in the FCAA report recommended increased and longer-term support to community-rooted intermediary funding as an essential step towards ending the HIV epidemic.<sup>4</sup>



*Being part of the cohort made me realize how much of a need there is... hearing about different programs and opportunities made me think about how we could be doing more and go bigger. I've always dreamed bigger to do different things, I just didn't know how to go about it."*

/ Micro-grantee, Transgender Strategy Center

## OUR RESPONSE: THE AMP GRANT INITIATIVE

Responding to a clear and urgent need, ViiV Healthcare launched its trailblazing AMP Grant initiative in 2019 as a sustained commitment to fund community-led organizations that incubate and support emerging efforts to disrupt disparities in HIV care. These three-year incubators serve as resource hubs and think tanks for leaders, networks and projects, providing micro-grants, mentorship and other network supports.

ViiV Healthcare's AMP Grant initiative is a unique approach to funding in the HIV and AIDS space, investing \$8.1 million in 13 community-led organizations uniquely positioned to distribute funds and network support to 160 emerging grassroots organizations, initiatives and individual community leaders reaching 190,000 community members. The AMP Grant investment means that ViiV Healthcare is now allocating 9% of their annual funding to community-rooted intermediary funders.

Micro-grant initiatives have supported:

- / building networks, fueling advocacy and improving access to HIV resources and care in Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ communities
- / LGBTQ+ youth advocates, young innovators and frontline organizations who are combating HIV stigma, providing emergency services, addressing youth housing needs and supporting social entrepreneurship
- / expanding access to quality care for cis and trans women of color
- / training and supporting emerging advocates in LGBTQ+ communities of color

Resourcing linkage to care, advocacy and network building projects across the United States has expanded engagement in HIV prevention and care in communities disproportionately impacted by HIV and provided funding to grassroots organizations and individuals who typically do not receive grants from large funders.

# OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

SINCE 2019...

ViiV Healthcare resourced...

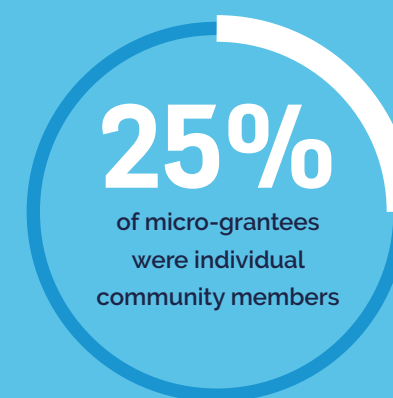
- \$8.1M
- 13 AMP lead organizations
- 25 new funding opportunities
- 160 micro-grantee projects<sup>5</sup>
- 190K community members reached across the U.S.

93% INCREASE

in the number of HIV-related "community-rooted intermediary funders" compared to 2019 globally<sup>6</sup>



Over 50% of micro-grantees received first-ever funding



Four micro-grantee organizations gained 501c3 status as a result of receiving an AMP micro-grant

71%

of micro-grantees identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) or BIPOC-led



One in five micro-grantees were entirely new to the HIV movement, growing the HIV response with new leaders, energy and ideas

# STRENGTHENING GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP & CONNECTIONS

AMP lead organizations bolstered community leaders with organizational and business skills-building opportunities, individual mentorship and network-building. Since 2019, AMP lead organizations have provided **184 group activities to build skills, expand networks and develop leadership.**

These activities helped micro-grantees build confidence, learn about new strategies and tools, give and receive critical feedback from their peers, action plan together and progress on their own personal journeys. AMP lead organizations also provided critical business development training and resources.

The key to success in developing leadership is a nonjudgmental, communal approach to learning and growth, which many described as **"learning as a family."** Nearly all AMP lead organizations shared that there was a deepening sense of family, siblinghood and connection among micro-grantees.



“ [Micro-grantees built their] confidence, their commitment to the project - the creativity to make an idea into a reality. We've seen people living with HIV come together and be there for each other, all while educating others.”

✓ SERO Project, Justice Institute Micro-Grant Program

“ Our micro-grantees' curiosity and desire to find new methods of engagement for their focus audiences continued to blossom over time. It can be challenging to accept criticisms and acknowledge areas for improvement, but they've remained open to strengthening their design mindset and readily applied feedback... the improvement in the quality of their visual designs grew exponentially.”

✓ ETR, Peer Health Education Social Media Influence Project for HBCUs

“ Peer patient navigators (PNs) highlighted that the overall structure of EPIC (i.e., refresher courses, introspection and mutual support) was particularly helpful, and the emphasis of EPIC prompted them to think concertedly about the experiences of Black cisgender women. Nearly all PNs emphasized how important EPIC was for their own personal journey in that it created a sisterhood.”

✓ Ribbon, Enhancing Peer Involvement in Care (EPIC) Program

“ Our micro-grantees received basic HIV information in a non-stigmatizing manner and acquired new knowledge about HIV transmission, especially regarding PrEP. As a result, some participants have restarted or started using PrEP or condoms. The training has also fostered a supportive environment where participants living with HIV feel at ease disclosing their status. Participants not living with HIV have also learned how to discuss biases and statistics with greater knowledge, enabling them to communicate about their status personally.”

✓ Thrive SS, Project Innovate

# ACCELERATING INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

AMP micro-grantee projects advanced movement building and representation in policy, connected people to HIV prevention and care and fueled networks and strategies essential for disrupting disparities. Through their community projects, micro-grantees fostered a greater sense of belonging and self-worth, developed narratives that decrease stigma and created stronger advocacy skills among community participants.

✓ **Alabama Latino AIDS Coalition (ALAC)** [AIDS United micro-grantee] convened its first-ever retreat for gay men living with HIV in Alabama to aid in advocating for those living with HIV, help fight stigma and increase HIV prevention efforts. Additionally, for the first time, ALAC's group members created a video to represent the LGBTQ+ Latinx community in Alabama, which is used for advocacy and increasing the visibility of the LGBTQ+ Latinx community.

✓ **East Bay Getting to Zero** [Equality California micro-grantee] implemented an art therapy program where they partnered with a local artist to capture HIV-positive Brown narratives in Oakland. Led by HIV-positive support groups, they created a mural in the heart of Oakland to address visibility and HIV shame and stigma.

✓ **A Family Affair's** project [The AIDS Institute micro-grantee] enhanced the leadership skills and self-worth of Black women living with HIV in the rural South and decreased isolation, depression and loneliness. The micro-grant allowed A Family Affair to expand to four additional Southern states, contributing to the leadership development of all the women in the virtual program.

✓ **Somos Familia Valle** [Equality California micro-grantee] secured additional funding to expand their youth services and open a physical center. Somos Familia Valle reported that the AMP Grant, their first HIV grant, created a myriad of additional opportunities for organizational growth.



## CASE STUDY 1

# STRENGTHENING EMERGING BLACK-LED NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

AMP Lead Organization:

## CHICAGO CENTER FOR HIV ELIMINATION

The Chicago Center for HIV Elimination (CCHE) seeks to eliminate new HIV transmission events by 2041 by using network science to target and integrate prevention as well as create structural and community-specific interventions. In 2021, CCHE received an AMP grant to launch the Black Incubator and Accelerator (BIA) Project with the goal of strengthening the capacity of Black-led organizations in Chicago's South and West Sides.

In their role in Chicago, CCHE observed capacity challenges facing small and emerging Black-led organizations in the South and West Sides. Furthermore, these organizations often did not have the infrastructure needed to qualify for other funding opportunities. To meet these unmet needs, CCHE designed BIA to strengthen capacity and infrastructure for a more robust network of organizations serving the South and West Sides. BIA provides up to \$10,000 in funding along with one-on-one and group capacity building and placement of a CCHE intern to assist in their work. The grantees are categorized as Incubator (pre-501c3 organizations in developmental stages), Incubator+ (501c3 application in process, concept and business plan finalized), and Accelerator (501c3 attained, plan towards paid staff) and capacity building offerings are organized by need.

The selection criteria for BAI micro-grantee organizations included being Black-led and serving communities of color, especially Black transgender women, Black men who have sex with men and Black cisgender women.

In Year 1, BIA worked with four organizations and was able to grow to 12 organizations for Year 2 (the current year). BIA plans to add 16 organizations in Year 3. BIA defines grassroots organizations as "Individuals or organizations with an HIV service delivery concept who may have friends or other volunteers involved in conceptualizing

the organization, volunteering as staff and have goals to apply for 501c3 status; OR are a young 501c3 (five years old or younger)/ 501c3 reinstated, under \$250k fundraised through grants, donations, etc."

All BIA participants received individualized needs assessment, tailored capacity building, provision of seed funding (up to \$10,000), linkage to University of Chicago resources, mentorship and peer networking. The program is designed to strengthen the capacity of these organizations so they can serve their communities more effectively.

To learn more about the BIA work, visit: [www.hivelimination.uchicago.edu/biaproject/](http://www.hivelimination.uchicago.edu/biaproject/) or contact Jessi Dehlin at [jdehlin@bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:jdehlin@bsd.uchicago.edu).



## MICRO-GRANTEE SPOTLIGHTS

### ✓ FUL Treasures Community Center:

An incubator grantee, FUL Treasures' mission is to build community and break the cycle of intergenerational trauma through creative arts, mental and social services. Tiana Hill, the founder of FUL Treasures, saw a need for these services in her South Side community and was working to get her start-up organization off the ground when she became a BIA grantee. The hope is that eventually FUL Treasures will be a neighborhood community center offering programming, HIV care and prevention, creative arts and other supports needed in the community. Since becoming a BIA grantee, FUL Treasures has served 200 individuals in their community.

### ✓ TaskForce Prevention and Community Services:

Located in the Austin community on Chicago's West Side, TaskForce seeks to improve the well-being and sexual health of LGBTQ+ youth of color. TaskForce provides a number of services to their community including violence prevention, mental and sexual health services including HIV/STI screening and education and Mpx vaccination, legal services and professional development. The community is the heart of TaskForce's work and programming. TaskForce is an incubator grantee in the BIA cohort and has served 1,543 community members since becoming a BIA grantee.

While the primary intended impact of this grant is to strengthen cohort organizations, the AMP grant has had a strong impact on CCHE, the micro-grantees and the communities served by the micro-grantees.

## IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

While communities served by BIA grantees were not interviewed directly for this case study, interviewees shared some of the ways BIA has impacted the community at large.



*It helps you to not feel alone. It was nice to know that there were other organizations like mine trying to figure out what are our next steps and what does growth look like for us."*

✓ BIA Micro-grantee

✓ **Improved service delivery.** Micro-grantees, through BIA support, were able to strengthen services to the community. One micro-grantee held a very successful community health event reaching 300 families. These families have made lasting connections to this micro-grantee who is continuing to provide HIV testing, hygiene kits and other services in their incubator phase. Another BIA micro-grantee strengthened their evaluation capacity so that they could identify ways to strengthen and improve services.

✓ **Increased reach.** BIA support has allowed micro-grantees to increase their community reach in a number of ways. BIA provided supports for marketing and community engagement allowing for greater word of mouth for events and services. BIA micro-grantees were also able to leverage their expanded networks to connect with other community partners to promote services and partner on programming, and access resources like condoms and safer use kits. BIA programming also allowed for greater reach by providing support on how to negotiate with funders and how to effectively write grants.



*Nothing in my training prepared me to be an executive director. It's been a lot of learning on the job, and BIA gave me the opportunity to learn."*

/ BIA Micro-grantee

## IMPACT ON MICRO-GRANTEES

- Decreased isolation as Black leaders.** Prior to BIA, micro-grantee leaders felt a sense of isolation and a lack of peer support in their work. In some instances, these leaders are starting their organizations on top of working a separate full-time job, leaving less time for networking and connection. Furthermore, before becoming part of BIA, micro-grantees were not always able to find networking opportunities for start-up leaders who looked like them and faced similar barriers. BIA provided meaningful connections to the overall University of Chicago network which had not been available to cohort members previously. BIA aims to provide a "community of support" for their emerging organizations to strengthen their capacity.
- Increased leadership and management skills.** Micro-grantees have gained substantial knowledge about the nuts and bolts of running a non-profit organization, seeking and attaining 501c3 status, compliance, grant writing and marketing. Three micro-grantees have made strong progress on attaining 501c3 status and one has attained additional funding from ViiV Healthcare and a large foundation.
- Sharpened strategic focus.** The BIA program supported micro-grantees to incrementally develop their programming to achieve growth. Many of the BIA micro-grantees had a lot of ideas but not a strong sense of how to implement and to identify interim steps. BIA gave these organizations the space to grow into who they wanted to be.



## IMPACT ON AMP LEAD ORGANIZATION

CCHE wanted to engage in this kind of capacity building work for a long time, recognizing an unmet need in the community. Being an AMP lead grantee has given them the opportunity to strengthen their network and deepen their community impact. To date, CCHE has described multiple positive impacts from the BIA project including:

- Providing the initial "boost" for emerging organizations.** Two micro-grantee organizations received their first-ever outside funding from the BIA cohort, providing validation for their concept and work.
- Increased connections to grassroots and community-based organizations.** CCHE, as part of the University of Chicago, already had a very strong network citywide and was well-connected to the HIV and public health communities. However, BIA allowed them to strengthen their connections with smaller, more community-driven organizations and emerging leaders in HIV and public health.
- Deeper learning about effective community practices.** Building a trusting and reciprocal relationship with BIA grantees has given CCHE greater insights to inform their own work. For example, CCHE has learned more on how to build trust with communities through events by having a "no ask" environment with attendees (e.g., not requiring testing or payment).

## CASE STUDY 2

# IMPLEMENTING DIRECT CASH TRANSFER PROJECTS FOR YOUTH-LED INNOVATION

### AMP Lead Organization: **POINT SOURCE YOUTH**

Point Source Youth (PSY) envisions a world where all young people can enjoy the right to safety, stability and joy. Established in 2015, PSY has worked to end youth homelessness, especially for those most vulnerable, LGBTQ youth and youth living with HIV/AIDS (roughly 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ, compared to 9.2% of the overall youth population).<sup>7</sup> PSY's approach centers youth voices and ensures that resources go directly to youth.

In 2021, PSY received an AMP grant to launch the QTBIPOC Community Fund, a program providing resources (financial and capacity building) to grassroots organizations. The purpose of the fund was to support innovative and youth-driven services like **Direct Cash Transfers (DCT)** while strengthening the advocacy capacity of the micro-grantee organizations.

**Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) are an intervention proven to meet the needs of young people remotely, digitally and efficiently. The way DCT programs for youth work is simple: program staff distributes cash to youth either remotely or safely in person at a frequency that works best for them. To learn more about PSY's approach to DCT visit: [www.pointsourceyouth.org/interventions/direct-cash-transfers](http://www.pointsourceyouth.org/interventions/direct-cash-transfers).**

PSY has been a leader and innovator in the youth homelessness space because of their focus on youth leadership and on work that directly benefits youth and disrupts exploitative systems. Having the ability to resource other organizations to engage in similar approaches was exciting to PSY. They co-created a request for proposals

(RFP) with their Youth Advisory Council and distributed it widely across their network. PSY looked for micro-grantees aligned with their values and with a history of advocacy, access to local networks and located in areas most impacted by the HIV epidemic. PSY defined "grassroots" as organizations with less than 20 employees and that have been in operation for less than five years. Initially, PSY intended to fund 15 organizations and did receive 15 applications but decided to fund nine organizations with the intention of providing larger grants and deeper supports.

To provide the most needed supports, PSY surveyed micro-grantees to assess needs and designed their curriculum around these needs. The support model consisted of group and individual technical assistance including explicit coaching and guidance around DCT work (including supportive services like Peer Navigation in the work), developing an advocacy plan, how to advocate for DCT, how to advocate for Peer Navigation, securing funding, and messaging. To date, PSY held nine learning communities, 20 individual sessions with micro-grantees and four conference sessions.

To learn more about the QTBIPOC Community Fund visit [www.pointsourceyouth.org/qtbipec-community-fund](http://www.pointsourceyouth.org/qtbipec-community-fund) or contact Kenyon Farrow at [kenyon@pointsourceyouth.org](mailto:kenyon@pointsourceyouth.org).

## MICRO-GRANTEE SPOTLIGHTS

- Safe Place for Youth, Inc:** Safe Place for Youth, Inc (SPY) is an organization based in Venice, California, providing wraparound services for young people experiencing or at risk for homelessness in West Los Angeles. SPY's goal is to provide critical resources and empower young people to take control of their lives. PSY worked with SPY to launch their DCT program and provided support in shaping the program, targeting the strategy to the unique needs of their community (e.g., being able to serve undocumented youth who are not eligible for General Assistance). SPY served six youth with DCT funding.



✓ **AYA Youth Collective:** AYA Youth Collective (AYA) is an organization in Grand Rapids, Michigan, that serves youth with a drop-in center, supportive housing and medical/social resources such as vital document recovery and healthcare navigation. AYA sees their DCT work as a way to fill in the gaps of their other programming and continue to build trust and stability with the youth they serve. They worked closely with PSY to launch their program and learn from their previous experiences with DCT work so that their youth clients would not risk losing benefits due to DCT payments (while DCT payments are not large, they could trigger a reduction in food stamp support, for example). AYA served 20 youth with DCT funding.

While the long-term impacts of this program may take time to be fully realized due to the complex nature of advocacy work, this grant program allowed nine organizations to implement DCT programs and provide services and resources with much greater flexibility than before. It also helped transform attitudes and beliefs organizationally for micro-grantees who had never done DCT work before.

## IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

While community members were not interviewed directly for this case study, micro-grantees shared some of the ways the QTBIPOC Community Fund has impacted the community at large.

- ✓ **Being able to meet previously unmet needs.** Micro-grantee organizations simply did not have the budget/budget flexibility to provide the kind of DCT support that they are able to provide through the QTBIPOC Community Fund grant. While savvy case managers and navigators are able to do a lot with limited resources, they were incumbent on designated programs for rent/utility and other support. With DCT resources available, youth were able to determine their own needs and priorities and have resources to help with stability and safety.
- ✓ **Increased local support for DCT.** Micro-grantees initially found that there is considerable stigma around DCT projects, even within their own agencies. Through capacity support from PSY, micro-grantees were able to advocate for DCT within their own organizations and with community and governmental partners. Having greater support and understanding for the potential of DCT has already proven to be fruitful, with some cohort members finding additional funding to grow their DCT work and entrench the model further in their communities.
- ✓ **Increased resources and stability for youth.** In the first year of the project, micro-grantees served over 135 youth with DCT and other services through this program. Services ranged from providing funds for gender-affirming medical care and legal name change,

temporary housing, permanent housing, transportation, past due medical/utility/rent bills, food/basic needs and education. One of the added benefits of the DCT model as led by PSY is that having the ability to receive DCT has given youth participants more agency and skills to direct their own finances and their future, building a foundation for greater financial stability.



*There's an avenue that wasn't there before, to assist youth and not say 'I'm sorry.' With funding we're able to imagine something that we wouldn't be able to do before. It gives us so much flexibility. This could be a long-term solution to help co-create what their futures are like."*

✓ **PSY Micro-grantee**

## IMPACT ON MICRO-GRANTEES

- ✓ **Increased ability to build trusting relationships with clients.** Micro-grantees felt that the DCT model allowed for greater trust to emerge between staff and clients. The DCT model follows the PSY values of being youth-driven and youth-led. Implementing DCT models that allow youth to determine their own priorities for resources has strengthened the trust between staff and client by removing some of the hierarchical barriers inherent to the relationship.
- ✓ **Increased commitment to youth-led programming.** While all micro-grantee organizations were committed to youth leadership, working with PSY and other cohort members made many aware of areas where they were not sufficiently giving space for youth leadership. Some organizations made changes to their programs and plans in order to incorporate youth voice more effectively and honestly.

✓ **Increased knowledge and awareness of advocacy.** While a few micro-grantee organizations had dedicated advocacy staff, many micro-grantees were engaging with advocacy work for the first time and never had made an advocacy plan before. The work with PSY opened the door to growing advocacy skills and developing more local support for DCT. Micro-grantees were able to develop general advocacy skills as well as skills for advocating for public and private funding for DCT. Given that DCT as a concept has some sceptics, even within the service provider community, there was also an emphasis on shifting the narrative around DCT.

## IMPACT ON AMP LEAD ORGANIZATION

PSY has had success with other DCT work in the past and saw the AMP Grant as an excellent opportunity to further expand their offerings and resources in helping grassroots organizations implement DCT as well as engage in youth-led programming. Specifically, AMP Grant has had a strong impact on PSY, including:

- ✓ **Being able to more fully live their values.** PSY had provided presentations to grassroots organizations on how to implement DCT but hadn't been able to back up that encouragement with actual financial resources. Being awarded the AMP grant allowed PSY to take their advocacy for DCT much further, in a more concrete way. The flexibility of the grant allowed PSY to administer the funding in a way that aligned with their values.
- ✓ **Expanding reach to people served by smaller organizations.** PSY did not always have sufficient resources to partner with small organizations, though they recognized the need and opportunity. The AMP grant allowed PSY to work with organizations who were less connected to their large network and bring them into the fold, strengthening the organizations as well as the network.
- ✓ **Developing sharable tools to expand impact and reach.** As part of this grant, PSY is working with the micro-grantee cohort to develop a video highlighting the work as well as a workbook highlighting the different models. These can be used to accelerate uptake of the models and DCT as a whole among a larger audience and create more excitement and interest in DCT and peer navigation models for QTBIPOC youth-serving organizations overall.

# INVESTING IN TRANSGENDER HEALTH AND LIBERATION

## AMP Lead Organization: TRANSGENDER STRATEGY CENTER

The Transgender Strategy Center (TSC) is a national organization focused on reducing transgender health disparities, building transgender leadership and strengthening the capacity of transgender-led organizations. TSC was established in 2017 and is led by and for transgender people. In 2020, TSC began serving as a grantmaker to other organizations and also serving as an incubator for new organizations.

In 2021, TSC received an AMP grant to support the Transgender Strategy Fund (TSF), an existing fund and capacity building intervention for transgender-led organizations. The AMP Grant funds were designated to support grassroots organizations, networks and individuals, allowing TSC to resource nascent programs and emerging leaders. TSC funded eight micro-grantee organizations and selected four individual fellows for this work. TSC defines grassroots as small (one to five staff) and low revenue/infrastructure.

TSC strived to develop a low-barrier application but found that some potential applicants lacked capacity to complete it. They worked closely with the cohort and provided a mix of one-on-one coaching and 13 group sessions to leaders. For this case study, we interviewed two fellows, one of whom was also an organizational AMP micro-grantee.

To learn more about the Transgender Strategy Fund visit [www.transgenderstrategy.org/the-transgender-strategy-fund](http://www.transgenderstrategy.org/the-transgender-strategy-fund) or contact Jordan Blaza Olsen at [jordanbo@transgenderstrategy.org](mailto:jordanbo@transgenderstrategy.org).

## FELLOW MICRO-GRANTEE SPOTLIGHTS

- Power Safe Place Resource Center of VA/Mya Power:** When Mya Power moved from Washington DC to rural Virginia, she found that there were next to no services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA) people



(and especially not LGBTQIA people of color) and that community members frequently had to travel to Washington for services. She and her husband decided to make a difference by founding Power Safe Place Resource Center of VA, an organization providing a safe space for people of color/LGBTQIA people in rural Virginia that offers a variety of services including harm reduction, HIV testing, education, and support groups.

- Tranz of Anarchii, Inc./Omega Chuckii:** Tranz of Anarchii is a nationwide organization serving Black/African American/Indigenous masculine people of all genders and sexual identities. They seek to support these communities through a variety of services including mental health, supportive housing and harm reduction. Omega Chuckii, the founder of Tranz of Anarchii, applied to be a TSF fellow in order to be better equipped to serve his communities.

Given the current political climate, support to transgender-led organizations is urgent. The Transgender Strategy Fund (TSF) has had a strong impact on micro-grantees and fellows, allowing for increases in capacity, reduced isolation, increased reach and increased funding (five of the eight micro-grantees secured additional, new funding).

## IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

While community members were not interviewed directly for this case study, micro-grantees were confident that they were successful in strengthening services to their communities in a few ways, including:

- Expanded services for transgender people in community.** The additional funding has allowed for the expansion and improved efficiency of services. For example, one micro-grantee is now providing transgender-competent HIV testing in their rural community.
- More safe employment opportunities for transgender people.** Having increased funding has allowed micro-grantees to hire additional staff members including individuals from their communities. Safe employment has been a challenge for many community members in more conservative areas, and micro-grantees being able to hire more from the community has made an impact.

## IMPACT ON MICRO-GRANTEES & FELLOWS

- Decreased isolation as transgender leaders.** Micro-grantees had been largely isolated from other transgender-led organizations and had not been able to pause and connect with peer organizations. Having the fund be led by experienced transgender non-profit leaders and to be able to connect with transgender peers was extremely transformative for micro-grantees. In TSC evaluations, fellows described their experience as being part of a family.
- Increased organizational effectiveness.** Many of the fellows and micro-grantees had not had a lot of support or even time to stop and breathe as new founders. The cohort experience gave them the support and structure they needed to work more intentionally and effectively.
- Increased organizational resources.** Micro-grantees were able to leverage the TSC investment to obtain other grant funding. Not only was the investment from TSC a stamp of approval, but they also provided substantial technical assistance for grant writing. Five of the eight organizations obtained additional funding. One micro-grantee received funding for an HIV testing program. Both fellows interviewed for this case study secured additional funding for their organizations.



## IMPACT ON AMP LEAD ORGANIZATION

- Expanded capacity as a grantmaker and technical assistance provider.** TSC is a relatively new grantmaker and was able to use the AMP Grant funds to grant to individuals for the first time. This gave new knowledge and skills to the organization along with added flexibility. The small size of the fellows cohort (four members) allowed TSC to work more intimately with the fellows, build trust among the cohort and learn how to work among smaller groups.
- Decreased isolation for TSC staff.** TSC is a pioneering organization and is staffed by transgender people who did not have opportunities to receive capacity building in their career trajectory, especially capacity building led by and developed for transgender people of color. Being able to provide a service that they would have wanted to have in their early careers was especially meaningful for TSC staff.



*I appreciate that they [TSC] have transgender people in leadership and they can relate to our issues. To see all these transgender individuals in these positions made me proud and want to keep going."*

/ TSC Fellow



# LESSONS FOR... COMMUNITY-ROOTED INTERMEDIARY INITIATIVES

## CHALLENGES FOR AMP LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Unexpected shifts in organizational and community needs, such as:

- / lead and micro-grantee staff transitions and promotions
- / a slower pace of planning than anticipated
- / changes and new learnings about the desires of the micro-grantees and community they serve and/or are part of

Recruitment and selection process, including:

- / getting enough applications from prioritized geographic regions
- / designing an equitable selection process (especially for new funders)
- / assessing whether applicants had sufficient capacity to utilize training and other supports
- / having to reject promising and innovative proposals

Community and state violence in communities most impacted by HIV, especially anti-LGBTQIA+, anti-migrant, anti-Black and anti-Brown policies and sentiment. This includes upticks in hate crimes and policies that discriminate and further fuel stigma, as well as environments where resources and safe spaces are limited or non-existent.

Reporting, evaluation and data collection, including:

- / demonstrating impact
- / syncing data collection requirements across micro-grantees
- / aligning with funder reporting requirements

## EFFECTIVE APPROACHES & SOLUTIONS

- ✓ Give space for learning, flexibility and strategic adaptiveness in program plans
- ✓ Ask micro-grantees what is most important about additional support when it's requested
- ✓ Adapt timelines to fit the realities of micro-grantees' lives, especially youth
- ✓ Develop one-on-one professional development options
- ✓ Find spaces to strengthen business development opportunities, such as QTBIPOC co-working spaces
- ✓ Consider program design serving a single cohort for two years to deepen impact, rather than two cohorts for one year each

- ✓ Expand outreach by leveraging connections in new areas
- ✓ Create multiple rounds for applications to fill in gaps
- ✓ Prioritize funding for those in areas with limited services for their key population

- ✓ Create networks of support for micro-grantees to lessen isolation, trauma and fatigue
- ✓ Share tools, resources and spaces to learn, resist and create solutions with peers
- ✓ Use power, platforms and capacity as lead organization to co-create campaigns and materials for advocacy, visibility, education and narrative change

- ✓ Use powerful micro-grantee stories to highlight impact of the AMP Grant model
- ✓ Access capacity building and work with ViiV Healthcare during deliberate touchpoints, such as "connection calls," to create systems and adjustments to micro-grantee reporting to reduce burden and ensure that the right data is being collected

# LESSONS FOR... FUNDERS

Evaluation findings suggest that AMP lead organizations, as community-rooted intermediaries, have several advantages compared to traditional funders:

- / More trusted relationships with grassroots organizations and individuals, locally and within key populations impacted by HIV. This is instrumental in getting resources to projects and people closest to the solutions.
- / Greater flexibility in funding individuals and community groups without non-profit tax status, a common barrier with traditional funding.
- / Greater ability to engage in extensive and tailored capacity building directly.

## HOW TO...

### CREATE MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-ROOTED MICRO-GRANTING INITIATIVES

#### 01 Flexible funding structures, goals and timelines.

As the world, our communities and our organizations evolve, adaptiveness and flexibility in project goals, activities and timelines is critical for creating lasting, trusting relationships that advance equitable change. Grantees across all ViiV Healthcare cohorts have consistently identified flexibility as an essential element of their success.

#### 02 Learning communities and opportunities for peer connection.

Just as the micro-grantees thrived more in networked spaces for connection, support and learning, AMP lead organizations reported that ViiV Healthcare's learning communities were especially important in their success as they were a space that nurtured collaborative peer learning.

#### 03 Sustained resources.

AMP lead organizations and micro-grantees seek more general operating support, longer grant terms (3+ years), continuity in funding streams and increased resources year-over-year to make a lasting impact on HIV and intersecting areas that impact overall health and wellbeing.



# CONCLUSION

Given the overwhelming success of our AMP Grant model, ViiV Healthcare is committed to expanding AMP Grant funding, resources and support in the next three years.

Since its inception, ViiV Healthcare has committed to centering the voices and lives of people living with and affected by HIV. With the AMP Grant initiative, we are striving to seek out, invest in and scale new mechanisms to eliminate stigma so people can live full and healthy lives. This evaluation highlights the effectiveness of trusting communities that have generations of experience, relationships and new ideas.

As of 2023 reporting, the large majority of AMP lead organizations had not yet secured resources from other funders to sustain and expand their micro-granting programs. This builds on the findings of the FCAA's Community-Rooted Funders Report and highlights the need and urgency to

increase the use of community-rooted micro-granting funding models in HIV and adjacent spaces.

We call on other funders to work alongside community partners to co-design participatory, community-rooted micro-granting programs that move resources closer to innovative community solutions. ViiV Healthcare is committed to sharing lessons learned from implementing the AMP Grant model with other funders in the health equity space to encourage increased use, evolution and sustainability of these models. We acknowledge the immense work, bold collaboration and deep joy of our partners, leads and micro-grantees in creating spaces that center people living with and most impacted by HIV.

# METHODOLOGY:

## OUR LEARNING AND EVALUATION APPROACH

As the AMP Grant initiative approaches its five-year milestone, ViiV Healthcare, in collaboration with TCC Group, expanded its learning and evaluation activities to assess the AMP Grant model as a new mechanism for resourcing grassroots efforts, make adjustments and illuminate key learnings to facilitate greater impact where needed. While learnings are often kept private, we believe it's important to broadly share our findings to help the field grow and strengthen programs for individuals and communities affected by HIV.

Our understanding of grantee impact is informed by grantee funding reports, which include qualitative and quantitative reporting, storytelling data and a reporting supplement completed by lead organizations. Additionally, in depth case studies with three organizations and a selection of their micro-grantees provided a greater understanding of the nuances of diverse micro-granting models.

Learnings and insights from the AMP leads continuously inform the development of the AMP Grant model and evaluation. Our evaluation team at TCC Group conducted

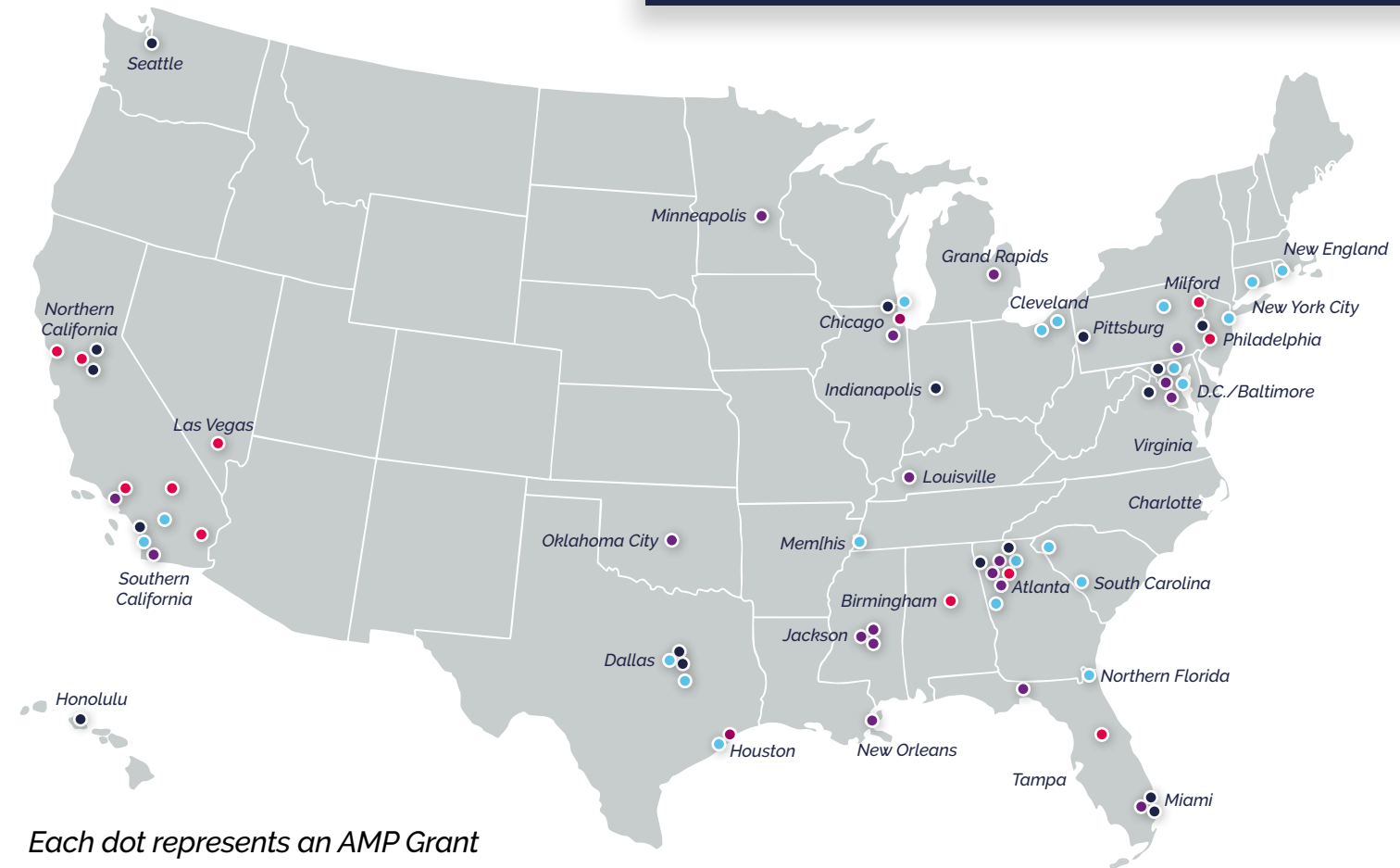
45-minute, semi-structured interviews with AMP lead organization staff (seven total interviewed) and micro-grantees (six total interviewed, one per micro-grantee). We used a content analysis approach to identify themes in implementation, impact and learnings around the micro-granting model.

ViiV Healthcare aims to incorporate a flexible, participatory approach to how we share our evaluation and learning findings. For this report, lead organizations and micro-grantees who participated in the case study data collection were invited to review this report to provide perspective and ensure accuracy and thoroughness – 67% of the interviewee organizations contributed to this review.

We hope that this document informs, inspires and ignites community-centered solutions to disrupt current trends and conditions in HIV prevention, treatment and care and improve the health and well-being of people living with and affected by HIV.

# AMP GRANTS BY CATEGORY

SCAN THE QR CODE to learn more about the AMP grantees who are disrupting disparities in HIV care nationwide.



Each dot represents an AMP Grant lead or micro-grantee organization.

## AMP GRANT LEADS BY CATEGORY

- **Activating Youth**
  - / ETR
  - / Point Source Youth
  - / Teen Health Mississippi
  - / Thrive SS
- **Addressing Local Needs**
  - / Texas Pride Impact Funds
  - / The Chicago Center for HIV Elimination
- **Building Networks for Women**
  - / Ribbon
  - / The AIDS Institute
- **Elevating Latinx Leaders**
  - / AIDS United
  - / Contigo Fund
  - / Equality California
- **Fueling Advocacy in LGBTQ+ Populations of Color**
  - / SERO
  - / Transgender Strategy Center

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- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> A final round of funding to micro-grantees will occur in 2023/2024 and is not included in these numbers.
- <sup>6</sup> Funders Concerned about AIDS. (2021). Making the case for greater investment in community-rooted funders. Available at: <https://www.fcaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Final-Community-Rooted-Funders-Report-October-2021.pdf> Accessed on: August 21, 2023. This document reports 14 HIV-focused community-rooted intermediary funders in 2019, globally.
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**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.

For more information, visit [viiVhealthcare.com/us](https://viiVhealthcare.com/us) or follow us @ViiVUS.

