



**Request for Proposals Conexiones Positivas: Positive Connections  
An initiative of Positive Action For Latinx Men**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

AIDS United, with funding from ViiV Healthcare, is pleased to announce the opportunity for grant support through the “*Conexiones Positivas*”: *Positive Connections* Initiative. For this initiative, AIDS United will provide \$100,000 in low barrier grant funds to organizations supporting Hispanic/Latinx gay, bisexual, and transgender men who are from communities most affected by and vulnerable to HIV. AIDS United’s grantmaking experience, our leadership development and grantmaking initiatives in Puerto Rico, and our expanding work in Hispanic/Latinx communities well-position AIDS United to launch this community-driven model of grantmaking. In the Fall of 2021, AIDS United convened a three-day virtual think tank with 12 gay, queer identified, non-binary, and transmasculine Hispanic/Latinx people, some living with HIV and some not, to share perspectives and community considerations on how AU could best structure this collaborative grantmaking initiative to support of the needs of Hispanic/Latinx community members most affected by and vulnerable to HIV. These recommendations formed the foundation of the “Conexiones Positivas” Initiative which emphasizes leadership development, local and national networking, HIV education, stigma reduction, and providing connections to local and/or national public policy leadership opportunities.

This year, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, AIDS United will provide microgrants of **\$10,000 - \$20,000** to organizations serving and advocating for people living with HIV. Applicants must demonstrate organizational dedication to the leadership development of Hispanic/Latinx gay, bisexual, and transgender men living with HIV (PLHIV) predicated on the principles of Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV ([MIPA](#)).

**MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS (MIPA)**

In the forty years since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first cases of what would later be defined as AIDS, biomedical interventions and access to quality care have transformed HIV from a once-fatal disease to a chronic, manageable condition. This progress would not have been possible without the advocacy and leadership of people living with HIV who were the driving force behind pushing for urgent HIV cure and treatment research.



The people living with HIV self-empowerment movement began when an advisory committee of people living with AIDS convened in Denver, Colorado, in 1983 and drafted the Denver Principles. These principles of “nothing about us without us” laid the foundation for the concept of Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MIPA).

MIPA is the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in the development, implementation, resolution, and evaluation of programs and policies that impact their lives. MIPA assumes that:

- People living with HIV are subject-matter experts in the issues that they face and have the right to participate in decision-making processes about issues that affect their lives.
- Those most affected by issues are integral to identifying sustainable solutions to address them; and
- People living with HIV who are involved must be reflective of the local community affected by HIV.

**MIPA does not assume** that all people living with HIV can be represented by a single person, or that perspectives are race and gender neutral. Because disclosure of HIV status can be dangerous, MIPA also does not require disclosure of HIV status for participation. MIPA is more than tokenistic representation and participation.

MIPA affirms that people living with HIV must be involved in decision-making at all levels: their own health, in how organizations serve them, and how their communities and nations respond to their needs. From local HIV planning bodies to the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, MIPA has guided and demanded that the leadership of people living with HIV be followed. This initiative mirrors MIPA principles with the expectation that PLHIV must be involved in decision-making at all levels of this project.

AIDS United knows that realizing the true potential of this moment in the HIV epidemic will require partnership with a revitalized grassroots movement of people living with HIV. People living with HIV have a critical role to play in combating stigma, serving as role models for disclosure and engagement in care, working to decriminalize HIV, and leading advocacy activities by—and for—people living with HIV towards policy and programmatic solutions

For additional information on MIPA, please access our page on the AIDS United website that has several different relevant resources linked [here](#). We strongly encourage applicants to review these resources and reach out to Anselmo Fonseca directly at [afonseca@aidsunited.org](mailto:afonseca@aidsunited.org) if there are further questions. The review committee for “*Conexiones Positivas*”: *Positive*



*Connections* will place great weight on how an applicant has meaningfully involved PLHIV in the design and implementation of its organization's work.

## INITIATIVE BACKGROUND

AIDS United's "*Conexiones Positivas*": *Positive Connections* was born out of the disproportionate representation of gay, bisexual, other identified MSM, and men of transgender experience in new HIV incidence and prevalence in the United States.

In March 2019, AIDS United signed on to the Latinx Gay and Bisexual Men's HIV Prevention and Treatment Action Coalition's Call to Action, "[Addressing the HIV Crisis Among Latinx Gay and Bisexual Men, and other Men who Have Sex with Men in the United States.](#)" After several months of collaboration and discussion, a group of coalition members, including AIDS United, developed these recommendations to address the disproportionate rates of new HIV diagnoses among Hispanic/Latinx gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. After participating in the launch of the *Call to Action*, AIDS United continues to strategize with coalitions and national partners to use our expertise to address the following call-to-action recommendations:

- Include targets for Latinx gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men across ALL indicators in the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) update, in close consultation with community leaders.
- Direct increases in domestic HIV funding to Latinx gay and bisexual men's programs and to organizations that provide comprehensive, community-led prevention programs that include PrEP and PEP.
- Meaningfully support the leadership pipeline by funding training and learning exchanges, creating safe professional development spaces, and creating leadership positions and other jobs for young Latinx gay and bisexual men in the HIV sector.

In the formative phase of this project, AIDS United facilitated a three-day think tank with gay, queer identified, non-binary, and transmasculine people, some living with HIV and some not, to share perspectives and community considerations and to give feedback on how AU could support leadership in these communities through participatory grantmaking. While this initiative from ViiV healthcare is focused on gay, bisexual, and men of transgender experience, AIDS United wanted to ensure that multiple identities of communities who intersect with those men were represented in discussions and planning.



## INITIATIVE GOALS

These resources prioritize support for organizations that center people living with HIV in all aspects of their work.

AIDS United will work with grantees to determine their technical assistance needs and broker opportunities for connection to the larger Hispanic/Latinx network of advocates in order both to foster community and collaboration and to support leadership development of PLHIV.

The goals of the initiative are to:

- Use a low barrier grantmaking approach to enhance the investment in and strengthen the networks, leadership, and support of Hispanic/Latinx gay, bisexual and transmasculine communities to educate and lessen stigma regarding HIV/AIDS.
- Enhance the capacity of funded organizations through culturally humble, competent, and linguistically accessible technical assistance and capacity building.
- Support the creation and enhancement of local community networks, as well as leverage national partnerships to support connection and lessen isolation; and
- Support innovative advocacy and education efforts focused on stigma reduction based on grantees' local, state, and federal interest, through community-identified approaches.

AIDS United will closely collaborate with national partners on this initiative, which will support the selection of grantees and the provision of technical assistance. We will provide tools and skill development to organizations, coalitions, networks, client groups, who advocate for people with HIV in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. *“Conexiones Positivas”*: *Positive Connections* will seek to include representation of people living with HIV from throughout the United States to speak with a unified voice for people living with HIV in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Based on recommendations from the Positive Connections Think Tank, AIDS United will consider working jointly with organizations that are currently partnering with incoming grantees on technical assistance.

## ELIGIBILITY

Regional, community and faith-based organizations, including, but not limited to, AIDS service organizations, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and/or established networks of people living with HIV are invited to apply if they meet the following eligibility requirements:



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF WORKING  
FOR EVERYONE IMPACTED BY HIV

- **Documented Non-Profit Status** – Applicants must be non-profit, tax-exempt organizations, per the guidelines set forth by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) with proper 501(c)3 status. Appropriate verification of this federal status will be undertaken by AIDS United before final grant decisions are made. Only organizations located in the United States or the US territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, the US Mariana Islands, and the US Virgin Islands may apply. Organizations that do not hold 501(c)3 status must have an already established relationship with a fiscal sponsor holding such status in order to apply.
- **Organizational Viability** – Organizations should be viable with or without the grant. These funds are not intended to help start new organizations or serve as a replacement for discontinued funding.
- **Representation Table** – Hispanic/Latinx representation of people living with HIV is **REQUIRED**. Organizations that cannot or do not demonstrate a minimum of **51% PLHIV** in the representation table at all levels will NOT be considered. Strong representation tables will show a commitment to PLHIV through all staffing levels and demonstrate that applicants’ staffing, and organizational structure reflect the intersections of the communities served with a commitment to PLHIV leadership. For a copy in [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- **Organizational Chart** – Organizations should be able to demonstrate their organizations hierarchy structure.

***Funded Year One “Conexiones Positivas”:** Positive Connections grantees will demonstrate a commitment to centering people living with HIV. The program will provide opportunities for technical assistance and leadership development support through our [National Latinx Partners](#)*

#### **BUDGET PARAMETERS –**

- Organizations submitting a proposal for “Conexiones Positivas”: Positive Connections should have an annual budget that **does not exceed \$1,000,000**. For a copy of the project budget template click, [English](#) or [Spanish](#) version.

#### **GRANT AMOUNT AND SCOPE**

This year, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, AIDS United will be providing microgrants of **\$10,000 - \$20,000** to 6 to 8 grantees organizations serving and advocating for people living with HIV.



Each applicant's full proposal must demonstrate how they will 1) increase grassroots mobilization of people living with HIV; 2) identify and develop leaders living with HIV; and/or 3) increase meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in their organization.

**Grassroots mobilization** may include, but is not limited to, local, state, or national advocacy campaigns led by people living with HIV to address HIV-related issues.

### **AIDS UNITED'S CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORT**

A core value of AIDS United's partnership with our grantee jointly determining areas for technical assistance and capacity development.

Our technical assistance experts have provided TA for projects addressing leadership/capacity development of PLHIV and reduction of HIV stigma. All trainings are rooted in a thorough understanding of the principles of MIPA at the community and organizational level. These and other topics will also be available in Spanish as needed. Areas where AIDS United can provide technical assistance include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **HIV-related stigma** is prejudice against people and populations based on perceived HIV sero-positive status. This prejudice may be institutionalized through policies such as HIV criminalization or enacted at the individual or community level. Applicants may propose addressing HIV-related stigma through institutional, community-level, or individual interventions, including policy change.
- **Building the capacity of people living with HIV for involvement in state-level advocacy.** There is a need to build capacity among people living with HIV to participate meaningfully in and lead state-level advocacy efforts. Applicants may propose projects that support and enhance participation of people living with HIV in state level advocacy and policy work.
- **Leadership development** is a central tenet of MIPA. At the organizational level, this could include processes that prepare people living with HIV to participate at the board level, to apply for jobs with increased responsibilities, to develop an active and engaged advisory board, and to organize networks of people living with HIV to address local and regional challenges.



## PROJECT TIMELINE

*The following outlines key benchmarks for the initiative:*

### **December 2021**

- Launch of the request for proposals

### **January 2022**

- Launch full proposals
- Review and selection of grantee cohort
- Grant period of 8 months begins (January 2022 - August 2022)

### **February 2022**

- Grantee submission of workplan
- Identification of grantee TA needs

### **March 2022**

- Support for grantees to participate in AIDSWatch 2022
- Virtual Grantee Gathering, either March or April 2022

### **April – July 2022**

- Ongoing TA and workplan progress check-in

### **August 2022**

- *“Conexiones Positivas”*: Positive Connections Project Ends

### **September 2022**

- Grantee final reports due

AIDS United expects to award funds through this grantmaking initiative by **January 17, 2022**.

***Please Note: Full proposal submissions will specify the start and end date reflective of an 8-month project period.***

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

### **I. Organization Information**

1. Organization type (CBO/ASO/faith-based/human rights organization/clinic or medical provider/legal aid/other \_\_\_\_\_.)
2. Total organizational budget, rounded to the nearest dollar (current fiscal year)
3. Summarize the organization’s mission (two to three sentences)



4. Geographic area served (urban, suburban, rural, reservation-based, statewide, region, etc.)
5. General Client Profile: Please note the clients whom you intend to serve under your AU-funded project during the grant period
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Race and ethnicity
  - Socio-economic status
  - Self-identified sexual orientation
  - Self-identified HIV status
6. If your organization is not recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3, please list your Fiscal Sponsor's\* information.  
*A Fiscal Sponsor is a 501(c)3 organization that may be acting as your financial agent if you do not have 501(c)3 designation.*
  - Organization name
  - Contact person at your fiscal sponsor
  - Contact telephone number
  - Contact e-mail address
  - Fiscal sponsor EIN
  - Fiscal Sponsor Address
  - Fiscal Sponsor City/State/Zip

## II. Project Narrative

The maximum length of answers in the section below should be the equivalent of **4-5 single-spaced pages** in a word processing program such as MS Word, using 12-point font. Proposals should strive to provide complete information as these following questions serve as review criteria.

1. Describe the current context in which you are working, including information about the epidemic in your jurisdiction (demographics, barriers, etc.); any information on HIV-related stigma, discrimination, or related issues; information on previous and/or current efforts related to PLHIV organizing in your jurisdiction; and relevant info about the organization and projects that you are currently implementing that this seed money can supplement. Do NOT include national data/statistics, unless the project proposed is national in scope. **(10 points)**





2. Please describe the community (groups of people impacted by and vulnerable to HIV) you are trying to reach with this project. Why have you chosen these communities of focus? **(10 points)**
3. Please describe current and/or future efforts to meaningfully involve individuals living with HIV within your organization, from governance to front-line staff, and how such individuals have been involved in the development of your proposed effort to date. Please also clarify how the proposed leadership of people living with HIV reflects the local epidemic or target community/communities. **(20 points)**
4. Please describe how you plan to use the requested funds. Include specific goals, activities, and outcomes stated in measurable terms and reflect numbers you will report back to AIDS United. Explain why this funding is critical to supplement your program and what the additional value added will be if you receive funding. Please include timelines and benchmarks you will use to measure your progress, as well as key person(s) responsible for activities listed. **(25 points)**
5. Please describe how this project may impact/support the broader work of the organization and the organization's ability to ensure ongoing meaningful involvement of people living with HIV. **(15 points)**
6. Describe how you will collect information, measure success, and identify challenge areas. **(10 points)**

### III. Required Attachments

- a) **Budget Forms:** Use the budget form included with the RFP documents. **Do not use any budget form other than the one provided by AIDS United (downloadable from our online Grantee Community, as well as the webpage that lists details of this funding opportunity).** A complete project budget includes the completion of the first two Excel worksheet tabs described below:
  - 1) **Project Budget** –The proposed project budget, including expenses by line item for project period starting **January 2022** and ending **September 30, 2022**. **Funding requests may be approved for less than the full amount.** Please note that the administrative indirect cost rate cannot exceed 15% in the project budget. **(REQUIRED)**



- 2) **Funding Sources (if applicable)** – Please indicate the amount of funding secured and/or pending for this proposed request from other sources, including other funders or donors (individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies). Cost sharing is not required, but applicants can show leverage of additional funds/resources

*Please refer to the instructions tab of the workbook to correctly complete the budget form.*

- b) **Organization’s Current Annual Operating Budget (2-page maximum)**: Please provide the organization’s operating budget for the current fiscal year (i.e., 2021 or 2020-2021), including both revenue/income **and** expenses. Budgets that do not include both income and expenses will be considered incomplete and will not be considered. **(REQUIRED)**
- c) **Audit** – your 2020 independent audit. If your organization does not have an audit, submit your 2019 IRS Form 990. *If you do not have either document, you **must** provide a **detailed** letter of explanation. We advise reaching out to AIDS United should you intend to submit a letter of explanation prior to submitting a proposal. (REQUIRED)*
- d) A list of the organization’s **Board of Directors with professional or community affiliations**. Please note that affiliations of board members are a **required** part of this list. 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. We advise reaching out to AIDS United should you intend to submit a letter of explanation prior to submitting a proposal. (REQUIRED).*
- e) **If your organization does not have IRS determined non-profit status**, please include a signed letter of agreement from your fiscal sponsor.
- f) **Representation Table** – please use the form linked within [our online Grantee Community](#), as well as the webpage that lists details of this funding opportunity. **(REQUIRED)**
- g) **Memoranda of Agreement or Letters of Support** from any key collaborating organizations if applicable. Memoranda of Agreement should reflect the concrete roles, responsibilities, and/or expectations of the collaborative relationship between the applicant organization and any other supporting agency. Letters of Support should reflect how/why an organization intends to support the proposed project, how an



organization and/or community may benefit from the proposed project, and/or how the proposed project is filling a gap identified by a partner organization or community.

- h) **Organizational chart:** Organizations must demonstrate the hierarchical structure of their organization.

### **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

The online submission system and application may be accessed by [clicking here](#). Guidance on use of the online portal can be downloaded from the CP/PC webpage. If you have any difficulties with the online Grantee Community, please contact Shannon Wyss, Senior Grants Manager, at [swyss@aidsunited.org](mailto:swyss@aidsunited.org), or (202) 876-2851

**The application MUST be submitted no later than January 14, 2022. However, we strongly encourage completing the application early to allow for unforeseen technical difficulties.**

Approved applicants will be notified of funding decisions by **February 11, 2022**. Applicants that are not selected for funding will be notified in writing by **February 11, 2022**. ***Please do not call or email to inquire about the status of your application during the review process.***

#### **Application Checklist**

- Grant Application Information
- Project Narrative
- Project Budget - Use only the Excel template provided and ***submit in the original Excel format***
- Organization's Current Annual Operating Budget
- Audit
- Board of Directors List with community affiliations
- Organizational Chart
- Representation Table - Use only the Excel template provided and ***submit in the original Excel format***
- Any Memoranda of Agreement or Letters of Support

#### **Assistance During the Application Process**

AIDS United is committed to assisting eligible applicants with the preparation of a complete and responsive application to the CP/PC initiative. Our staff is available to answer any questions and



to provide technical support. We prefer that you submit questions and requests for assistance via email.

For questions on the content of your proposal, please write us at [CPPC@aidsunited.org](mailto:CPPC@aidsunited.org) with your organization's name in the subject line of the message. You may also call Julio J. Fonseca, Senior Program Manager at (202) 876-2835.

Additionally, AIDS United will offer an applicant technical assistance webinar to go over the application and answer any questions on **January 7, 2022, from 2:00-3:30 pm EDT**. All invited applicants will receive sign-up instructions.