



Community Engagement Institute 101: HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau's Framework for Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.

2022 National Ryan White Conference on HIV Care & Treatment

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HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB)
Health Resources and Services Administration

Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People



Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- **Learn how HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau is prioritizing community engagement to improve HIV care and treatment strategies.**
- **Understand what HRSA HAB learned during the 2021 virtual community engagement listening sessions.**
- **Understand resources available to support their community engagement activities.**



Disclosures

Yemisi Odusanya, Alexis Olszewski, and Amy Schachner have no relevant financial interests to disclose.

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Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Overview



Supports more than 90 programs that provide health care to people who are geographically isolated, economically or medically challenged



HRSA does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 3,000 awardees, including community and faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, hospitals, state, local, and tribal governments, and private entities



Every year, HRSA programs serve tens of millions of people, including people with HIV, pregnant individuals, mothers and their families, and those otherwise unable to access quality health care

HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau Vision and Mission

Vision

Optimal HIV care and treatment for all to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S.

Mission

Provide leadership and resources to advance HIV care and treatment to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities for people with HIV and affected communities.



HRSA's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) Overview

- Provides a comprehensive system of HIV primary medical care, medications, and essential support services for low-income people with HIV.
- Funds grants to states, cities, counties, and local community-based organizations to improve health outcome and reduce HIV transmission.
 - Recipients determine service delivery and funding priorities based on local needs and planning process.
- Provided services to nearly 562,000 people in 2020—more than half of all people with diagnosed HIV in the United States.
- 89.4% of RWHAP clients receiving HIV medical care were virally suppressed in 2020, exceeding national average of 64.6%ⁱ.



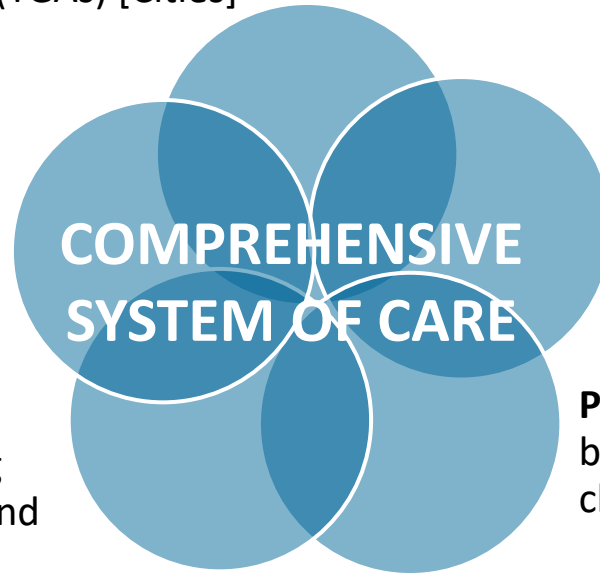
Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Parts and Recipients

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) is a Federal program that provides grants across the country to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of care and treatment for people with HIV who are low-income.

Part A – Eligible Metropolitan Areas (EMAs) & Transitional Grant Areas (TGAs) [Cities]



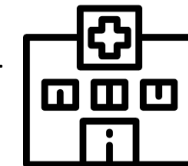
Part F – Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS), AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC) Program and Dental Programs (DRP, CDBPP)



Part B and AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) – States & U.S. Territories



Part C – Local, community-based organizations and clinics



Part D – Local, community-based organizations serving Women, Infants, Children and Youth



Ending the HIV Epidemic

| Ending
| the
| HIV
| Epidemic

Four Pillars of Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE)

75%
reduction
in new
HIV
diagnoses
in 5 years
and a
90%
reduction
in 10
years.



Diagnose

All people with HIV as early as possible.



Treat

People with HIV rapidly and effectively to reach sustained viral suppression.



Prevent

New HIV transmissions by using using proven interventions, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and syringe services programs (SSPs).



Respond

Quickly to potential HIV outbreaks to get needed prevention and treatment services to people who need them.

Achieving the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. Goals

People with HIV in care

- Improve viral suppression rates
- Decrease disparities

People newly diagnosed with HIV

- Enhance linkage to care
- Enhance engagement in care

People with HIV out of care

- Expand re-engagement in care
- Improve retention in care

Promoting Health Equity



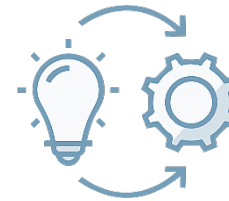
Engage the Community: We engage community directly, have developed a community engagement framework, and the RWHAP legislation has requirements for community engagement and partnership.



Utilize data: We use data to inform decision making to address health disparities, and the RWHAP legislation requires the same of our recipients.



Support Continuous Quality Improvement: We help our recipients set goals, monitor performance measures, and oversee quality improvement projects.



Employ Implementation Science: We use implementation science in practice, program, and policy. This includes:

- ✓ Collating and disseminating evidence-informed interventions
- ✓ Building capacity of community-based organizations



Service Delivery: The RWHAP addresses Social Determinants of Health such as housing, food, and transportation, as well as clinical services.

Community Engagement and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program



HIV/AIDS Timeline



Why Is Community Engagement Important?

- The voices of people with HIV, their communities, and the greater communities that support people with HIV have been the cornerstone of the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) since its passage by Congress in 1990.
- While the RWHAP has successfully provided care, support, and treatment for more than 561,000 people in 2020, there remains hundreds of thousands of people who have HIV but are not diagnosed or are inconsistently in care.
- With a renewed focus on community engagement to meet the goals for Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) initiative, HRSA's RWHAP understands our collective success depends on how well communities are involved in the planning, development, and implementation of HIV care and treatment strategies.



Community Engagement and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program 1

- **Community engagement is part of the existing fabric of the RWHAP. RWHAP recipients funded through Parts A, B, D, D, and the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) initiative are encouraged and/or required to support activities that**
 - Facilitate collaboration with community members
 - Work with their communities and public health partners to improve health outcomes across the HIV care continuum
- **In addition, community engagement is a key element of RWHAP Part A and Part B Planning Councils and Planning Bodies, integrated planning efforts, and clinical quality management activities.**



Community Engagement and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (cont.)

- HRSA's RWHAP continues to invest in programs supporting community engagement and building leadership among people with lived experience. This includes:
 - Building Leaders of Color 2.0
 - ELEVATE for All People with HIV
 - ESCALATE: Ending Stigma through Collaboration and Lifting All to Empowerment
 - EHE Systems Coordinating Provider (SCP)
 - EHE Technical Assistance Provider (TAP)



HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau's Community Engagement Guiding Principles



HAB Community Engagement Strategic Workgroup

In February 2021, HAB launched a community engagement strategic workgroup with the purpose to develop a framework on community engagement. As part of this effort, the workgroup:

- Conducted a literature review on research and studies that document the impact of ensuring community voices
- Developed the HAB Community Engagement Framework with Guiding Principles
- Developed tools for project officers and other HAB staff to support technical assistance on community engagement
- Created a Community Engagement Action Guide



Background and Guiding Principles

HRSA HAB believes that our collective success depends on how well communities are involved in the ***planning, development, and implementation*** of HIV care and treatment strategies and supports the following guiding principles for community engagement: ***intentional, committed, sustainable, flexible and tailored, and transformational.***



Community Engagement Framework: Where We Began

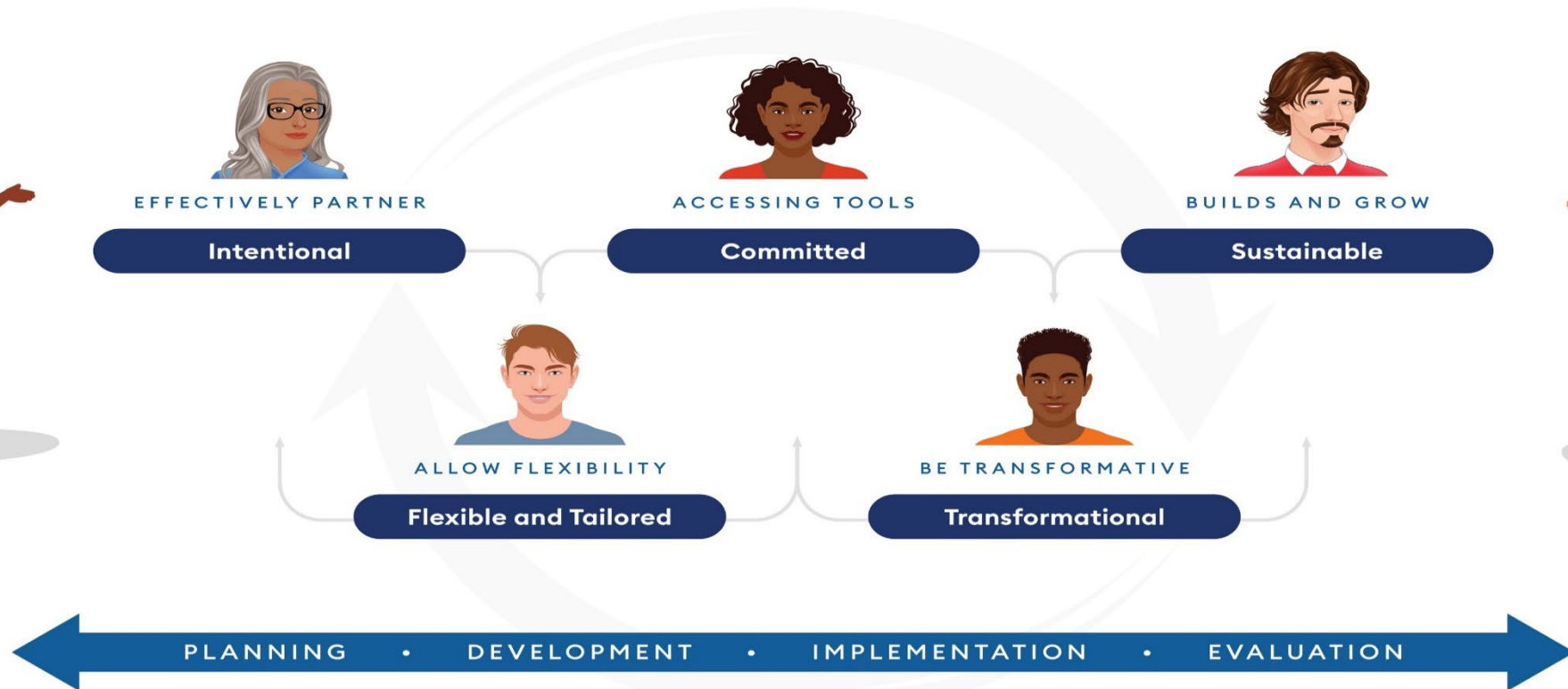


Community Engagement Framework: Where We Are Today



Community Engagement Guiding Principles

“voices of the community from beginning to end”



HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau's Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy



HRSA HAB Conducts Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy to Support EHE in FY 2019-FY 2020

- Visited 23 EHE Jurisdictions to conduct in-person listening sessions (2019)
- Addressed national conference plenary sessions and hosted EHE Listening Sessions (2019-present)
- Supported CDC/HRSA Advisory Committee on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STD Prevention and Treatment (CHAC) National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS)/EHE Community Engagement Workgroup (2019-2021)
- Conducted national media outreach through Radio Media Tours (4-8 times per year/2019-present)
- Direct outreach to RWHAP recipients and stakeholders through HAB You Heard Webinars (monthly/March 2020-present)



2019 HRSA EHE Listening Sessions – Key Themes

- Addressing **mental health, substance use, incarceration, and homelessness** is critical to reach people not in care
- Planning for EHE needs to **include community based organizations, people with HIV, and new partners**
- Supporting **training for clinic staff** to ensure that **culturally responsive** and supportive experiences happen for clients (for care and PrEP)
- Addressing **stigma and criminalization laws**
- Addressing **workforce shortages** for medical providers, and mental health and substance use providers
- Leveraging **community strengths** by hiring community health workers, peer navigators, peer specialists, etc.
- Assessing **eligibility** and **intake** processes and forms for testing and care
- Allowing jurisdictions to **be innovative** and allowed to adapt and adjust as they learn



HRSA's EHE Community Engagement in FY 2021

- **HRSA hosted 16 virtual EHE listening sessions by region in FY 2021**
 - More than 1,900 people participated in the sessions, which engaged state and local health departments, community health centers, community organizations serving people with HIV, primary care offices, AIDS Education and Training Centers, and people with lived experience
- **HRSA HAB is developing needed tools and providing leadership training to people with HIV**
 - Efforts support ways for people from the community to provide services within their community to engage people into care and treatment
- **HRSA HAB is supporting organizations to hire people with HIV**
- **HRSA HAB supported community engagement efforts of our national partners and CHAC workgroup**



Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. FY 2021 Virtual Listening Sessions: What We Learned



HRSA FY 2021 Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) Virtual Listening Sessions At-A-Glance

The FY 2021 HRSA Virtual Public Health Leader Roundtable and Community Listening Sessions were an opportunity for participants to share their open and honest feedback on challenges, successes, and barriers in achieving the goals of the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) initiative.

16

listening
sessions
between
March-Sept.
2021

1,900

total
attendees
across all
sessions

2

Sessions
offered with
Spanish
translation



Criteria for Inclusion As A Key Theme

- 1. Subject was discussed in a minimum of three jurisdictions**
- 2. Subject was discussed at great detail through both the moderator-led discussion as well as in the chat room**
- 3. Subject has depth of content and inspires new ideas or debate.**

Cross-Jurisdictional Themes and Trends

- 1. Build Peer Navigators and Community Health Workers (CHW) Capacity**
- 2. Breakdown Federal Funding Stream Silos and Improve Collaboration**
- 3. Feedback on Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) Initiative**
- 4. Social Determinants of Health**
- 5. Stigma as a Barrier to Accessing Care**



Theme #1: Build Peer Navigators and Community Health Workers Capacity

- Builds strong connection with clients and the HIV community
- Need for certification, competitive compensation, and pipeline programs to enable CHWs and Peer Navigators to enter the public health workforce

“[Being a Peer Navigator] is a full-time career track – not a part-time pit stop on the way to something else”

-New England

Theme #2: Breakdown Federal Funding Stream Silos and Improve Collaboration

- Disparate, insular funding streams across Federal government
- Need for improved coordination among the RWHAP and housing worlds (i.e., HUD/HOPWA)

“Clients belong to an agency rather than a system. Everyone has their piece of the pie.”

- South Central

Theme #3: Feedback on EHE Initiative

- Too biomedically focused and does not take into account the well-being of the person
- Need for a Quality of Life indicator
- COVID-19 resulted in EHE implementation setbacks

“What’s missing is heart. . . how do we engage communities? Make sure people see themselves in these approaches.”
-Mountain West

Theme #4: Social Determinants of Health

- **Detrimental effect of COVID-19 on Social Determinants of Health (SDH)**
 - Worsening of affordable housing crisis
 - Food insecurity
- **Syndemics that impact people with HIV**
 - Access to mental health care
 - Comprehensive sexual health education



Theme #5: Stigma as a Barrier to Accessing Care

- Universal barrier to HIV prevention, care, and treatment
- Systemic racism experienced by underserved communities
- Repeal HIV criminalization laws
- End tokenization of people with HIV

“Listen to me - don't just use me to check off the box. End tokenization. Get rid of the ivory tower effect in agencies managing funding for HIV, and get more people with lived experience in.”

Southeast

Additional Noteworthy Themes

1. Better data integration for EHE
2. Enhanced support for PrEP and nPEP
3. Increased utilization of social media platforms



Recommendations for Community Partners

1. Barbershops and hair salons
2. Churches, pastors, religious/spiritual organizations
3. Families of people with HIV
4. Food pantries
5. Housing organizations
6. Politicians and media influencers
7. Public school systems
8. Recovery houses/halfway houses for substance use disorder
9. Restaurants and nightclubs
10. Sororities and fraternities



HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau Moving Forward Following the FY 2021 EHE Listening Sessions



HRSA HAB Moving Forward

- Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program community members provided substantial ideas and suggestions throughout the EHE listening sessions.
- Many suggestions touched on activities already underway.
- HRSA HAB has implemented policies, projects, and initiatives to address many of these key themes.



HRSA HAB Released New Policy Notices

- Released policy clarification notices (PCNs) to reduce the administrative burden on RWHAP recipients.
- PN 21-01 reduces the documentation that must be submitted to HRSA HAB when RWHAP recipients request core medical service waivers.
- PCN 21-02 allows RWHAP recipients and subrecipients to conduct timely eligibility confirmation in accordance with their policies and procedures.



Gender Affirming Care in the RWHAP Program Letter

- Reaffirms the importance of providing culturally-affirming health care and social services to the transgender community.
- Letter is *not* new policy or approach to the services delivered by the RWHAP.
- Guidance supports HRSA's efforts to reduce health disparities and improve access to HIV care, medication, and support services for transgender and gender diverse people with HIV.
- Accessible via:
<https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/grants/program-letters>



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources and Services
Administration

Rockville, MD 20857
HIV/AIDS Bureau

December 16, 2021

Dear Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Colleagues,

Ensuring that transgender people with HIV have access to care, treatment and support services that improve their health and decrease risk of morbidity and mortality related to HIV is a priority for the Health Resources Services Administration's (HRSA) HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB). Of the more than half a million people served by the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) 2.1 percent, approximately 11,600, are transgender.¹ Providing gender-affirming care is an important strategy to effectively address the health and medical needs of transgender people with HIV. HRSA HAB strongly encourages RWHAP service providers to harness and mobilize the existing RWHAP infrastructure and services to support gender-affirming services within allowable RWHAP parameters.

Gender-affirming care and treatment services are described in the *HHS Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents Living with HIV* (Guidelines).² According to the Guidelines, gender affirmation describes processes whereby a person receives social recognition, value, and support for their gender identity and expression. Gender affirmation is often described across several dimensions, including: social (e.g., social support and acceptance, use of pronouns, names, or clothing that align with their gender identity); medical (e.g., use of hormones or surgery); legal (e.g., legal name change or changing gender markers on identity documents); and psychological (e.g., the degree of self-acceptance and comfort with their gender identity).

RWHAP funds may be used to support gender affirming care across various HRSA RWHAP core medical and support service categories as outlined in *Policy Clarification Notice #16-02 Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds*.³ Many RWHAP AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) provide access to gender-affirming [hormone therapy](#).⁴ RWHAP ADAP funds, along with RWHAP funds allocated under the service



FY 2022 Funding Opportunities Addressing Social Determinants of Health

- In FY 2022, HRSA HAB released several notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) announcements to address social determinants of health and quality of life for people with HIV.
- These include:
 - Improving health outcomes for people aging with HIV.
 - Implementing and evaluating housing-related interventions and strategies for people with HIV experiencing unstable housing.
 - Identifying and maximizing telehealth strategies that improve health outcomes for people with HIV.



Continued Collaborations with Federal Partners

- **HRSA HAB continues to enhance collaborative efforts with:**
 - **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**
 - **Administration for Community Living**



Recent and Ongoing RWHAP Special Projects of National Significance Initiatives

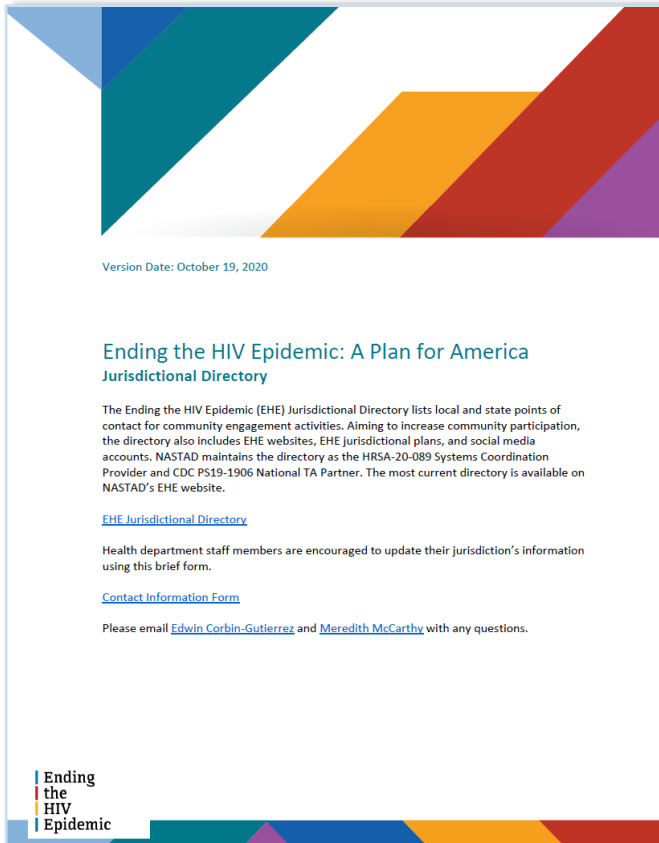
- RWHAP SPNS initiatives develop innovative models of HIV care and treatment that address the needs of RWHAP clients, especially for Black women, transgender women, and Black men who have sex with men (e.g., E2i and Black Women First).
- Other SPNS-funded initiatives aim to leverage CHWs to improve linkage to and retention in care, address HIV-related stigma, increase organizational capacity to hire people with HIV.
- Initiatives also design and implement interventions that coordinate HIV care and treatment with housing and employment services.



Resources and Technical Assistance Opportunities to Support RWHAP Recipients with Community Engagement



Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) Jurisdictional Directory



- Developed by NASTAD, the HRSA-funded RWHAP Parts A and B Systems Coordination Provider (SCP), and the CDC National TA Partner for EHE technical assistance
- Provides a list of local and state points of contact for EHE efforts
- Facilitates community participation on local engagement activities

Technical Assistance Resources for Community Engagement

- **Access Care and Engagement Technical Assistance (ACE TA) Center**
- **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part F AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC) Program**
- **Building Leaders of Color 2.0**
- **ELEVATE - Engage Leadership through Employment, Validation, and Advancing Transformation and Equity for people living with HIV**



Technical Assistance Resources for Community Engagement (cont.)

- **Planning Community HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance and Training (Planning CHATT)**
- **Integrated HIV/AIDS Planning (IHAP) Technical Assistance Center**
- **Ending the HIV Epidemic Systems Coordination Provider (SCP)**
- **Ending the HIV Epidemic Technical Assistance Provider (TAP)**



Integrating Community Engagement into Your Efforts



How Can RWHAP Recipients and EHE Recipients Integrate Community Engagement into Their Efforts?

- Remember there is no “one size fits all” approach to community engagement.
- Define who the RWHAP recipient’s community is and what populations make up that community.
- Leverage existing community engagement resources and technical assistance support.
- Utilize client-level data to determine which populations the RWHAP recipient is not currently reaching.



How Can RWHAP Recipients Integrate Community Engagement into Their Efforts?

- Consider how the RWHAP recipient is using and/or involving their local Planning Council.
- Use RWHAP funding for community engagement to convene groups, set up access, and build capacity.
- Convene a focus group to develop messaging and resources.
- Don't forget to monitor and assess community engagement activities.

Questions & Answers



Reminder: Continuing Education Credit

How to Claim CE Credit

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ryanwhite.cds.pesgce.com



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ryanwhite.hrsa.gov



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