



PROGRAM SUMMARY REPORT

Los Angeles County, CA

PROGRAM:**Innovation Awards and Mini-Grants**

INTRODUCTION:

As part of the Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Initiative, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC Public Health), Division of HIV and STD Programs (DHSP), developed the Innovation Awards and Mini-Grants program. This initiative was designed to support innovative projects and partnerships that align with EHE goals, focusing on preventing new HIV transmissions, early detection of HIV cases, improving the quality of life and health for people living with HIV.

Over a period of one year, the program funded 25 unique interventions across the county, ranging from art-based workshops, a 24-hour hotline to connect community members to an infectious disease provider, HIV and syphilis co-infection simulation modeling, transgender, gender-nonconforming, and intersex (TGI) EHE ambassadors, promoting health in the House and Ball community, and additional interventions aimed at addressing community needs to progress towards EHE objectives.

TARGET POPULATION:

The program serves diverse and key populations, ensuring that high-risk and underserved groups receive targeted interventions.

- Men who have sex with men (MSM)
 - Black/African American
 - Hispanic/Latinx
 - People who inject drugs
 - People living with HIV (PLWH)
 - Spanish Speakers
 - Women, youth, and aging population
 - Transgender and nonbinary individuals
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KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND COLLABORATORS:

The program was made possible through collaborations with several key stakeholders, including:

- Local Health Departments
 - Community- Based Organizations (CBOs)
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PROGRAM DURATION:

The Innovation Awards and Mini-Grants program is currently implemented as a one-year initiative. Many of the projects and interventions have a duration of less than six months.

PROGRAM GOALS AND KEY ACTIVITIES:

The primary goal of the program is to support and implement innovative interventions aimed at preventing HIV transmission, diagnosing cases as quickly as possible, and improving overall health and quality of life for people impacted by HIV. Larger scale projects under the Innovation Awards receive up to \$250,000 per year, and smaller Mini-Grant projects are awarded up to \$50,000 per year.

Innovation Awards:

1. APLA Health: Workshops for MSM aged 50+ living with HIV, focused on managing health.
 2. Bartz-Altadonna Community Health Center: 24-hour anonymous hotline (1-844-4 END STD) to connect callers to HIV/Infectious Disease providers.
 3. California State University Long Beach: Art workshops creating LGBTQ+ influenced art pieces with a sexual health and PrEP education component.
 4. LA Family Housing: Substance use counselors providing HIV services, including testing, education, and harm reduction services.
 5. The Los Angeles LGBT Center: Intimate partner violence training for HIV providers.
 6. REACH LA: Leadership development for Ball House community leaders to increase access to health services.
 7. The Wall Las Memorias Project: Stigma reduction activities targeting Black and Latinx MSM and transgender people.
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8. TransLatin@ Coalition: EHE Ambassador training for transgender, gender-nonconforming, and intersex community members to encourage TGI individuals to access HIV care.
9. The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Hub for Health Intervention, Policy and Practice (HHIPP): Syphilis/HIV simulation modeling to develop recommendations to share with DHSP and community-based organizations providing syphilis and HIV-related services.

Mini-Grant Programs (Current Program from Year 2):

1. The Banjee Ball Foundation: Harm reduction, recovery, and conflict resolution workshops, culminating in a ballroom performance.
2. Charles Drew University: Peer/student PrEP Educator program.
3. California State University Long Beach: PrEP Intervention, a peer-led intervention to increase engagement in PrEP care continuum.
4. Decrim Sex Work CA: A storytelling film project to address HIV stigma by capturing experiences of sex workers, particularly elders, affected by HIV.
5. Kavich Reynolds: A podcast called 'Confessions' to be a docuseries podcast where each episode focuses on the journey of ciswomen with HIV.
6. Kavich Reynolds: A health education/entertainment film for the second episode of 'Chasing', a series focused on methamphetamine relapse and relapse prevention.
7. Men's Health Foundation: Latinx Health & PrEP Conference, Juneteenth Kiki Ball for the House and Ball Community, and Long Beach Pride.
8. REACH LA: Training, professional development workshops, and two kiki mini balls.
9. REACH LA: Address mental health needs in the House/Ball community.
10. The Wall Las Memorias: Implement 340B Program & Telehealth PrEP, enhance existing HIV testing, counseling & referral program, and PrEP expansion.
11. Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Education: Engage 200 youth and adults returning from incarceration on topics related to HIV.
12. LA Family Housing: Empowering people experiencing homelessness to know their status and improve staff training on harm reduction.
13. Mercy Health: Community outreach & education to provide health education on HIV transmission and STIs, and community resources.
14. Core Response: Community empowerment & outreach for PrEP education, delivery of naloxone and fentanyl test strips, stigma reduction, and U=U projects.
15. Venice Family Clinic: Incentivized integrated testing for people who use substances and people experiencing homelessness.

PROGRAM CHALLENGES:

A major challenge involved ensuring the participation of new community-based organizations that did not previously have contracts with DHSP. The use of a third-party administrator helped to streamline the application process, allowing for a more inclusive approach that attracted 10 new organizations. Since the program is still in its early stages, further challenges and lessons learned will be evaluated as implementation progresses.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:

Community engagement was a key priority for many of the funded agencies, with some using community input during the development of their proposals to ensure programs were community informed. For example, UCLA HHIPP held a community convening with CBOs to gather input on how best to implement their syphilis and HIV simulation modeling project. Additionally, many projects are focused on increasing community engagement as a direct outcome.

DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING:

Each agency involved in the program developed its own data collection methods. Common approaches include intake forms completed by clients at appointments, which collect demographic information, and pre and post questionnaires to measure outcomes. Agencies also rely on electronic communication methods, such as text messages and emails to follow-up with clients for post program evaluation.

KEY METRICS AND OUTCOMES:

The program tracks a range of key performance indicators to measure its success:

- Enrollment and Referrals into HIV prevention and care services
 - Level of outreach and community engagement
 - Social Media Impressions
 - HIV Testing and linkage to prevention or treatment services
 - At-Home HIV Tests kits and outcome of those tests
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CONCLUSION:

The Innovation Awards and Mini-Grants program has successfully fostered creative, community-driven interventions that support HIV prevention, early diagnosis, and improved care for those impacted by HIV in Los Angeles County. The program's wide range of activities, from art workshops to community mobilization, demonstrates its commitment to addressing the HIV epidemic through innovative and inclusive strategies. While still in its early stages, the program's diverse projects have already started making strides in community engagement and service delivery, with future data expected to demonstrate the full impact of these efforts in ending the HIV epidemic by 2030.