



AIDSWatch@Home

2026-2027 Request for Applications

Application Due Date: October 30, 2026 at 6 p.m. ET

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Executive Summary

Through this application, AIDS United seeks to select approximately eight locally rooted organizations or coalitions for grants of up to \$15,000 to participate in a nine-month organizing and advocacy capacity-building program running December 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027. This is a policy-driven program: each grantee will select a primary policy focus tied to a defined policy or administrative issue, identify the decision-making system, agency, office, or other body relevant to that issue, and develop an organizing plan, coalition map, outreach and list-building strategy, and activation timeline. Awards will support leadership development, coalition building, public education, nonpartisan policy engagement, meaningful involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS (MIPA), and sustained organizing at the state or local level. Each grantee must complete a public-facing activation by May 31, 2027; conduct documented 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up organizing within the grant period; and complete all grant-funded work, final reporting, and a sustainability plan by August 31, 2027.

Background

The need for state, local, Tribal, and territorial advocacy has become more urgent as policymakers have advanced proposals that restrict LGBTQ+ rights, reduce access to health care, and threaten progress toward ending the HIV epidemic. AIDSWatch@Home responds by moving beyond one-time event support and investing in the organizing infrastructure required to recruit leaders, strengthen coalitions, engage decision-makers, and sustain action after each public activation.

Purpose

AIDSWatch@Home is a nine-month organizing and advocacy capacity-building program for organizations and coalitions working in states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, Tribal Nations, and Tribal communities.

AIDS United expects to make approximately eight (8) awards of up to \$15,000 for the period December 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027. Each grantee must complete a primary public-facing advocacy activation, policy training, or community advocacy institute no later than May 31, 2027. The activation is a milestone in a broader organizing strategy that includes leadership development, coalition building, engagement with identified decision-makers,

evaluation, and documented follow-up organizing at approximately 30, 60, and 90 days. All grant-funded organizing, evaluation, follow-up, sustainability activities, and reporting must be completed by August 31, 2027.

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding for AIDSWatch@Home, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Nonprofit Status** - Eligible lead applicants include organizations recognized as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) and locally rooted organizations or coalitions applying through an eligible 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor will serve as the legal grantee, receive and administer funds, maintain financial records, and support reporting. Applicants using a fiscal sponsor must have a fully executed fiscal sponsorship agreement in place and submit it with the application.
- **Geographic Location** - Applicants must be rooted in and perform the proposed work within an eligible jurisdiction, including a state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory, a Tribal Nation, or a Tribal community. National and regional organizations must identify a local co-lead with meaningful decision-making authority and a defined share of project resources.
- **Financial Capacity** - Applicants or their fiscal sponsors must demonstrate systems appropriate to the size of the award to receive, safeguard, track, and report grant funds.
- **Good Standing** - Current and previous AIDS United grantees must have no materially overdue reports, unresolved questioned costs, or uncompleted corrective actions when awards are made. AIDS United will notify applicants of minor administrative issues and provide a reasonable opportunity to correct them before eligibility decisions are final.
- **Grant Period and Q1 Readiness** - Applicants must be prepared to begin program activities on December 1, 2026. By February 28, 2027, grantees will finalize an organizing plan identifying the policy focus, policy or administrative target, decision-maker target, coalition map, engagement and list-building plan, outreach strategy, activation timeline, and follow-up strategy with AIDS United. The primary public-facing activation must be completed no later than May 31, 2027, allowing documented 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up to be completed by August 31, 2027.
- **New and Returning Applicants** - Both first-time applicants and previous AIDSWatch@Home grantees may apply. Returning applicants must describe what the prior award built, what continued after the funded event, lessons learned, and the material next step proposed for continued investment. Prior funding does not guarantee renewal, and first-time applicants will not be disadvantaged for lacking prior AIDS United funding.

Approach

AIDSWatch@Home is grounded in two complementary approaches: intersectionality and the Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MIPA). Intersectionality helps grantees understand how HIV-related inequities are shaped by overlapping systems of power and exclusion. MIPA ensures that people living with HIV, particularly those most affected by these inequities, have meaningful decision-making power in shaping the response. Together, these approaches should guide project planning, leadership, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up.

- **Intersectionality and Social Justice** - Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how interrelated systems of oppression support discrimination among people who share overlapping social identities. For example, a person living with HIV may face racism and homophobia, in addition to HIV stigma, all of which may present barriers to that individual's access to care and their achievement of optimal health. Systemically, all must be addressed if we are to see an end to HIV in the United States and create real change for people living with and affected by HIV. AIDSWatch@Home grantees are expected to address HIV-related disparities through an intersectional framework through their organization's ongoing work and proposed project.

Applicants can leverage the following resources to deepen their understanding of this approach:

- [We the People Report \(Black AIDS Institute, 2020\)](#)
- [A Declaration of Liberation: Building a Racially Just and Strategic Domestic HIV Movement \(HIV Racial Justice Now!, 2017\)](#)
- **Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MIPA)** - People living with HIV, particularly people most affected by inequities, must have real decision-making power throughout project design, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. Applicants must describe the specific roles people living with HIV will hold, how their

expertise will be compensated and supported, and how privacy and safety will be protected. Applicants must not identify any individual or require disclosure of HIV status. Organizational demographics may provide context, but they are not a substitute for shared power.

Requirements

- **Participation in Evaluation** - Grantees must submit brief reports using aggregate, de-identified data. Required measures will include advocates recruited and retained; leaders developed; people living with HIV in planning and decision-making roles; coalition partners engaged; meetings or contacts with decision-makers; commitments and follow-up actions; participant accessibility and usefulness; and progress toward a policy or campaign milestone. Demographic questions must be voluntary and include “Prefer not to answer.” AIDS United will not require names, HIV status, or other sensitive individual-level data, and grantees will not be expected to attribute a policy change solely to one event.
- **Participation in Technical Assistance and Deliverables** - During the nine-month grant period, grantees must complete a cohort orientation; a baseline organizing-capacity assessment; an early-cycle technical-assistance session focused on community engagement, list-building, advocate recruitment, turnout, follow-up, and retention; a written organizing plan by February 28, 2027; monthly coaching; peer-learning sessions; an event-readiness review; a primary public-facing activation by May 31, 2027; a debrief within 15 business days; documented follow-up organizing at approximately 30, 60, and 90 days; and a final sustainability plan. The organizing plan must include the policy focus, policy or administrative target, decision-maker target, coalition map, engagement and list-building plan, outreach strategy, activation timeline, and follow-up strategy. All follow-up, reporting, sustainability planning, and other grant-funded work must be completed by August 31, 2027. Flexible scheduling, disability accommodations, language access, and equivalent written or asynchronous participation will be available.

Submission Instructions

The 2026-2027 AIDSWatch@Home application will be available [here](#). Applications open October 5, 2026 and must be submitted by 6 p.m. ET on October 30, 2026.

Applicants must complete all required application fields and submit the required attachments by the deadline. Each narrative question includes a maximum word count, but responses may be shorter. Writing polish and access to professional grant-writing support will not be considered in scoring.

Applicants may request disability accommodations, interpretation or translation, accessible materials, or an alternate submission format without affecting eligibility or funding decisions. Applicants should request accommodations as early as possible; requests will be accepted throughout the application period when feasible. Program questions may be directed to Joseph White (jwhite@aidsunited.org). Technical questions about the application form may be directed to grants@aidsunited.org.

Review and Decision-Making

AIDS United will use a three-stage process: (1) eligibility and completeness screening; (2) if application volume requires it, a documented preliminary programmatic screen; and (3) full review and scoring by AIDS United staff and/or community reviewers using the following 100-point rubric. Any preliminary screening criteria will be documented, applied consistently, and retained for grant records. Technology, if used, will serve only as an administrative aid to organize or summarize application information; staff will verify that information and remain responsible for all screening and award decisions.

- Community leadership and MIPA: 20 points
- Policy focus, opportunity, and decision-maker target: 20 points
- Organizing strategy and Q1 planning readiness: 20 points
- Coalition strength: 10 points
- Equity and accessibility: 10 points
- Feasibility and work plan: 10 points
- Measurement and sustainability: 5 points
- Budget alignment: 5 points

Reviewer conflicts of interest and recusals will be documented. After applications are scored, AIDS United may consider published portfolio factors, including geographic diversity, the range of communities represented, the distribution of proposed policy opportunities, and a balance of first-time and returning grantees.

Applicants selected for funding will receive conditional award notifications by November 20, 2026. A conditional award is not a final grant agreement. Final awards will depend on the successful completion of due diligence from November 20-30, 2026, resolution of any outstanding eligibility or financial questions, and execution of a grant agreement.

Timeline

Activity	Date
Application opens	October 5, 2026
Application closes	October 30, 2026 at 6 p.m. ET
Eligibility and completeness screening	November 2-4, 2026
Application review	November 5-13, 2026
Final selection	November 16-18, 2026
Conditional award notifications	By November 20, 2026
Due diligence and contracting	November 20-30, 2026
Nine-month grant period	December 1, 2026-August 31, 2027
Orientation and early technical assistance	December 2026-January 2027
Q1 organizing plan due	February 28, 2027
Primary public-facing activation deadline	May 31, 2027
30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up organizing	June-August 2027
Final sustainability plan, final program reporting, and all grant-funded work completed	August 31, 2027

May 31, 2027 is the deadline for the primary public-facing activation. The remaining June-August period is reserved for documented 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up organizing, evaluation, and sustainability planning. August 31, 2027 is the end of the grant period and the deadline for all grant-funded work and final program reporting.

Restrictions

No matching funds are required. Budgets may include organizer time, compensation or stipends for community leaders, transportation, food, childcare or dependent care, disability accommodations, interpretation and translation, meeting space, coalition convenings, communications, technology, evaluation, fiscal-sponsor fees, and reasonable indirect costs included in the approved budget.

Grant funds may not be used for medications; direct medical expenses, including lab expenses; existing deficits of Grantee; basic biomedical research, clinical research, or clinical trials; projects that directly influence or advance pharmaceutical business, including purchase, utilization, prescribing, formulary position, pricing, reimbursement, referral, recommendation or payment for pharmaceutical products; individuals with prescribing authority, individual health care providers, or physician group practices; events or programs that have already occurred; indirect expenses outside of the percentage noted in grantees' approved budgets; and/or activities that constitute direct or grassroots lobbying under applicable federal tax law. This restriction does not prohibit nonpartisan research, public education, policy analysis, training, coalition building, technical assistance, administrative or regulatory advocacy, or communications that do not refer to and express a view on specific legislation. If an activation includes lobbying supported by other funds, the applicant must describe how restricted grant funds and related costs will be segregated and documented.

AIDS United will not fund organizations that unlawfully discriminate in employment or program participation on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, actual or perceived HIV status, pregnancy, marital or family status, veteran status, or any other status

protected by applicable law. This provision does not prohibit lawful programs designed to serve communities experiencing inequity. Grant-funded activities conducted by faith-based organizations must be nonsectarian and may not condition participation on religious belief or practice.

Application

Organizational Overview

1. Organization name
2. Organization Employer Identification Number (EIN)
3. Organization address
4. Does organization have multiple locations? If so, please list.
5. Organization city
6. Organization state
7. Organization zip code
8. Organization website
9. Organization Type (CBO/ASO/faith-based/human rights/clinic or medical provider/legal aid/health department/nonprofit organization not specified/other _____).
10. Summarize the organization's mission (two to three sentences)
11. Year organization founded (Calendar Year)
12. Year organization began working in HIV (Calendar Year)
13. Staff Size (0-10 / 11-25 / 26-50 / 51+)

Primary Contact Information

1. Primary contact name
2. Primary contact title
3. Primary contact phone
4. Primary contact email

Fiscal Sponsor Information, if applicable

1. Name
2. Address, City, State, Zip Code
3. Employer Identification Number (EIN)
4. Website
5. Contact person name
6. Contact person title
7. Contact person email
8. Contact person phone number

Organizational Leadership and Community Representation

AIDS United seeks to understand the leadership and staff of the organizations we fund, the communities they serve, and the extent to which people most affected by HIV hold meaningful roles in organizational and project decision-making. These questions help AIDS United understand how an organization's leadership, staffing, governance, and community relationships reflect its mission and the populations involved in the proposed work.

This section is not assigned a separate score. Reviewers will not award or deduct points based solely on an organization's demographic percentages or its ability to provide complete demographic data. However, responses may provide context for evaluating the applicant's approach to community leadership, MIPA, accountability, and equitable decision-making. This information may also inform final portfolio-level decisions, including representation across communities, geographies, and organizational types, particularly when applications are otherwise similarly competitive.

AIDS United recognizes that identity categories are imperfect and that organizations have different levels of capacity to collect demographic information. Please provide your best available aggregate estimates. Applicants may select “Not collected,” “Insufficient data,” or “Prefer not to answer” without penalty. Do not identify individual staff members, board members, volunteers, participants, or community members. Do not disclose or infer any individual’s HIV status.

For purposes of this section:

- Organizational leadership may include the executive director, chief executive officer, co-directors, senior staff, governing board members, or others with formal authority over organizational or project decisions.
- Staff may include paid staff and, when volunteers conduct a significant portion of the organization’s work, core volunteers.
- Communities served includes people who participate in, receive services from, organize with, or are otherwise directly engaged through the organization’s work.
- Nonbinary people may include people who identify as agender, genderfluid, gender nonconforming, or another gender outside the woman/man binary.
- People may hold multiple identities. Percentages are estimates, categories may overlap, and totals do not need to equal 100 percent.

Leadership Representation

Approximately what percentage of the people with formal decision-making authority in your organization voluntarily self-identify with each of the groups listed below?

Staff and Core Volunteer Representation

Approximately what percentage of your staff voluntarily self-identify with each of the groups listed below? If core volunteers conduct a significant portion of your organization’s activities, you may include them in your estimate.

Representation Among Communities Served

Based on voluntary demographic information, program records, or your organization’s best available estimates, approximately what percentage of the people engaged through your organization’s work identify with each of the groups listed below?

The same demographic categories and response ranges will be provided for each question, as shown below:

Community group	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76%+	Not collected	Insufficient data	Prefer not to answer
People living with HIV							
People of color							
Asian, Asian American, East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Southwest Asian, and Central Asian people							
American Indian, Native American, or Alaska Native people							
Black/African American/African/Afro Caribbean people							
Latino/Latina/Latinx/Latine/Hispanic people							
Native Hawaiian people or other Pacific Islanders							
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, aromantic, and same-gender-loving people							
Heterosexual people							
Women of trans experience							
Men of trans experience							
Cisgender women							
Cisgender men							
Nonbinary people							
People who use drugs							
Sex workers							
People who are or have been unhoused / unstably housed							

Community group	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76%+	Not collected	Insufficient data	Prefer not to answer
People with a history of incarceration							
People aged 24 and under							
Dandelions/Lifetime Survivors							
People with other relevant lived experience (specify below)							

Leadership, Accountability, and Meaningful Involvement

In no more than 250 words, describe how your organization's leadership and project decision-making reflect the communities involved in the proposed work. Include:

- The roles that people living with HIV and other directly affected community members hold in project planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up.
- How community members influence decisions, priorities, resources, and strategy.
- How lived expertise is recognized, compensated, and supported.
- The structures used to gather community input, communicate how that input was used, and hold the organization accountable.

Representation Gaps and Organizational Development

In no more than 200 words, identify any significant differences between the composition of your organization's leadership or staff and the communities involved in the proposed work. Describe any current or planned steps to address those differences, including responsible parties and anticipated timelines.

Acknowledging a representation gap will not automatically disadvantage an applicant. AIDS United is interested in the organization's awareness of the gap, its accountability to affected communities, and the credibility of its plan for strengthening meaningful involvement.

Data Limitations

Optional, maximum 150 words: Describe any limitations or challenges your organization experiences in collecting this information. Estimates are acceptable. Applicants will not be penalized for protecting individual privacy or declining to collect information that could expose a person's HIV status or another sensitive identity.

Organizational Budget

1. Total organizational budget, rounded to the nearest dollar (current fiscal year)
2. Current Budget Year Start Date
3. Current Budget Year End Date

Conflicts of Interest

- Are you or any member of your organization an employee of AIDS United, a member of AIDS United's Board of Trustees, or the Public Policy Council (PPC)?
 - If yes, provide the person's name(s) & role (Employee, Board of Trustees, Public Policy Council)
 - No
- If the answer was "yes" to the question above, do you attest that this person will recuse themselves from any involvement in the application process and/or financial decisions associated with this opportunity?
 - Yes
 - No

Geographic Reach and Scope of Work

1. Areas to be served by your organization. Check all that apply. (Urban, Suburban, Rural, Reservation)
2. Geographic scope of your organization. Check all that apply. (Local, Statewide, Regional, National)
3. Describe Location (e.g. "Baltimore, MD" or "Texas")

What services or programming will be supported by this grant? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Prevention
- ☐ Linkage to care services

- ☐ HIV care and treatment (directly provided by your organization)
- ☐ HIV care and treatment (referrals to other providers)
- ☐ Retention in care services
- ☐ Social services (directly provided by your organization)
- ☐ Social services (referrals to other providers)
- ☐ Digital campaigns and events
- ☐ Harm reduction
- ☐ Training and leadership development
- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Additional services or programming - Please specify

This standardized AIDS United question is included for consistent data collection and does not change AIDSWatch@Home's organizing and advocacy purpose.

Application Overview

Primary Policy Focus (select one)

- ☐ Medicaid access and coverage
- ☐ PrEP access and coverage
- ☐ HIV program funding
- ☐ ADAP access and programmatic preservation
- ☐ HIV decriminalization and modernization
- ☐ Other state, local, Tribal, territorial, or administrative HIV policy issue: _____

Secondary Policy Focus (optional; select one)

- ☐ Medicaid access and coverage
- ☐ PrEP access and coverage
- ☐ HIV program funding
- ☐ ADAP access and programmatic preservation
- ☐ HIV decriminalization and modernization
- ☐ Other state, local, Tribal, territorial, or administrative HIV policy issue: _____

The selected issue or issues will guide technical assistance, organizing strategy, reporting, and identification of policy or administrative targets. Selecting an issue does not authorize the use of restricted grant funds for lobbying; all grant-funded activities must comply with the Restrictions section.

1. Policy Focus Description, maximum 150 words: Briefly describe why the selected issue matters in your community, the administrative, regulatory, implementation, or public-education challenge or opportunity your organizing will address, and the decision-making system, agency, office, or other body relevant to that issue.
2. Relevant legislative, budget, regulatory, administrative, Tribal, territorial, or local decision-making calendar start date
3. Relevant decision-making calendar end date
4. Total funding amount requested, not to exceed \$15,000

5. Organizing Targets, maximum 150 words: Provide reasonable numeric estimates for the number of participants you expect to engage, first-time advocates you expect to recruit, community leaders you expect to develop, coalition partners you expect to activate, decision-maker offices or bodies you expect to reach, and participants you expect to complete a follow-up action. Estimates may be presented in a short narrative or simple list within one response field.
6. Have you received AIDSWatch@Home funding before? Yes (please list approximate year/s) / No / Unsure
7. Have you previously organized policy education or advocacy with local, Tribal, territorial, state, or federal decision-makers? Prior experience is not required. Yes / No
8. How will the proposed activation relate to your organization's existing work? Existing activation that this award will deepen or expand / New activation created through this program / Adaptation or hybrid of an existing and new effort

Application Narrative

1. Organizing Opportunity and Q1 Readiness, maximum 350 words: Using an organizing lens, describe the HIV-related issue your organizing will address. This may include administrative, regulatory, or implementation issues, or building public understanding of state and local decisions affecting people living with HIV. Describe the organizing plan, coalition development, outreach strategy, and activation timeline you will finalize by February 28, 2027, and explain how these steps will support a public-facing community education or organizing event by May 31, 2027.

Lobbying restriction: Funds awarded under this opportunity may not be used for lobbying, including urging legislators or the public to support or oppose specific legislation, budget bills, or ballot measures. If your broader campaign includes lobbying, describe it separately. It must be funded from other sources.

2. Community Leadership and MIPA, maximum 300 words: Who is your organizing base? Describe how people living with HIV and other directly affected communities will share decision-making authority, lead the work, receive compensation or participation support, and have their privacy protected.
3. Power Analysis and Coalition Strategy, maximum 350 words: Identify the principal decision-makers, allies, confirmed and prospective partners, and likely obstacles. Describe each partner's role, how decisions and resources will be shared, and any coalition gaps for which you want support.
4. Organizing Strategy and Activation, maximum 500 words: Describe the broader organizing strategy before, during, and after the required activation. Explain recruitment, list-building, participant preparation, turnout, leadership development, decision-maker engagement, coalition roles, AIDSWatch@Home co-branding, the activation itself, and 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up. The activation is a milestone, not the end product, and must occur by May 31, 2027 so all follow-up and grant-funded work can be completed by August 31, 2027.
5. Results and Learning, maximum 250 words: Identify the outputs and near-term outcomes that will show progress at the primary activation and at approximately 30, 60, and 90 days. Include leadership development, coalition growth, decision-maker engagement, participant experience, completed follow-up actions, and the next scheduled action.
6. Accessibility and Participant Support, maximum 250 words: Describe how grant-funded activities and the primary activation will be accessible, safe, and welcoming, including disability access, language access, transportation, childcare or dependent care, digital access, and privacy for participants who may not wish to disclose HIV status.
7. Technical Assistance, maximum 200 words: Identify the two or three organizing capacities you most want to strengthen, who will participate in coaching and peer learning, your preferred support format, and any accessibility needs.
8. Returning Applicant Growth, maximum 300 words: Prior AIDSWatch@Home grantees should explain what the previous grant built; what continued after the funded activation; lessons learned; and the material next step proposed for the current funding cycle. First-time applicants may write Not applicable and will not be penalized.

Attachments

1. Budget: Attach a line-item project budget using the current [AIDSWatch@Home budget template](#). No matching funds are required. Include compensation and access supports, indirect costs, and fiscal-sponsor fees where applicable.

2. Financial documentation: Please upload your organization's most recent audited financial statements, including cover page and the auditor's notes/findings. If your organization has a fiscal sponsor, please send your fiscal sponsor's audit. If your organization does not have an audit or a fiscal sponsor, please submit your IRS Form 990 for last calendar year. If you do not have either document, you must provide a detailed letter of explanation. AIDS United may request additional due-diligence materials from finalists.
3. Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement (if applicable): If your organization has a fiscal sponsor for this grant application, please attach the fiscal sponsorship agreement signed by both your organization and your fiscal sponsor.

Technical Assistance During the Application Process

AIDS United will offer an optional applicant webinar during the first two weeks of the application period, office hours on October 8, 2-3 p.m. ET and October 20, 4-5 p.m. ET, and a written FAQ available to all applicants. Applicants may submit questions throughout the application period, and AIDS United will respond and share generally applicable answers when feasible. Applicants may request disability accommodations, interpretation or translation, accessible materials, or an alternate submission method as early as possible; requests will be accepted throughout the application period when feasible.

Requesting assistance will not affect review. Program questions may be directed to Joseph White, jwhite@aidsunited.org, and technical application questions may be directed to grants@aidsunited.org.

Publication details to confirm before release

- Application portal: [LINK](#)
- Applicant webinar date and registration link: [LINK](#)
- Public FAQ link: [LINK](#)

Thank you for your interest in AIDSWatch@Home and your commitment to people living with and affected by HIV!