

# EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE FUNDING: MOBILIZING COLLABORATIONS

## AIDS United and the Access to Care (A2C) Initiative

*In November 2010 National AIDS Fund and AIDS Action announced their merger to create a new national organization in the fight against HIV/AIDS: AIDS United. Through its unique Community Partnerships program and targeted special grantmaking initiatives, AIDS United supports more than 400 grassroots organizations annually that provide HIV prevention, care and support services to underserved individuals and populations most impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic including communities of color, women and people living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S. South.*

There are over a million PLWHA in the U.S., and two-thirds of those, an estimated 640,000, are either undiagnosed, not in medical care, or not receiving the HIV-specific treatment they need. AIDS United's **Access to Care (A2C)** Initiative was launched on World AIDS Day 2009 with a multi-year, multi-million dollar commitment from Bristol-Myers Squibb's (BMS) Positive Charge Initiative to help increase the access and retention of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in HIV

care and support services, particularly PLWHA living in poverty who know their HIV status but are not receiving HIV-specific care or support. In May 2010 five major grant awards were provided to help break down barriers to care for PLWHA

in geographically diverse communities representing major epicenters of the epidemic, including: Chicago, New York City, Oakland/San Francisco, and the states of North Carolina and Louisiana. In June 2010 the Wal-Mart Foundation provided new funding for additional collaborations in San Diego and Boston, both with a focus on linking women living with HIV/AIDS to care and treatment.

Emphasis on hard-to-reach populations is integral to AIDS United's A2C work, which has two main goals: first, to identify the systemic and/or personal barriers to care that PLWHA may experience; and second, to support the development of systems and interventions to alleviate

those barriers and implement innovative approaches to ensuring access to and consistent engagement in care. A2C is designed to target the most difficult populations with refined outreach strategies, and with appropriate resources that otherwise would not be available. All funded projects within the A2C portfolio have developed a team of collaborating organizations to help reduce barriers to care, provide innovative solutions to long-standing access problems, and to change the way that systems operate in their community. AIDS United is committed to supporting projects that not only focus on individual level solutions to barriers to care, but also systemic change that will last long after AIDS United support is gone. As just one example, A2C features The Bay Area Network for Positive Health, the first ever collaboration between organizations from San Francisco and Oakland to address the unique barriers to care that each of their communities face.

In July 2010 the Obama Administration's Social Innovation Fund (SIF) awarded a \$3.6 million grant to AIDS United to expand A2C. This innovative grant was one of 11 total grants and one of three awarded by SIF in the "healthy futures" area—and the only specific to HIV/AIDS, representing the "single largest award for HIV/AIDS made in decades by the federal government from new money and non-AID-specific funds." As SIF requires a 3:1 public-private funding match, all grantees will be required to provide a local 1:1 dollar match toward their grant awards, offering new opportunities for investment among the broader philanthropic sector, as well as the chance to engage in the successful implementation of the "Increasing Access to Care" pillar of National HIV/AIDS Strategy. In February 2011 AIDS United announced the first round of 10 A2C sub-grantees through the SIF grant, and in August, AIDS United and their funding partners announced that they met their required SIF federal 1:1 match, raising \$2.5 million new dollars for the A2C program.

*"The AIDS community has been offered a golden opportunity to serve thousands of people with HIV/AIDS and bring us one step closer to ending the AIDS epidemic... it is one we cannot miss."*

*— Mark Ishaug, President and CEO, AIDS United*

