Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. It accepts, for better or worse, that licit and illicit drug use is part of our world and chooses to work to minimize its harmful effects rather than simply ignore or condemn them.

What is Harm Reduction?

- Harm Reduction was pioneered by people who use drugs. It is evidence-based, builds practice-informed evidence, meets people where they are at, and celebrates any positive change as defined by an individual.
- Harm reduction offers compassionate, dignified, client-centered care to people who use drugs who “fell through the cracks,” but were not caught by our safety net.

Alarmingly:
- HIV diagnoses among people who use drugs increased for the first time in 20 years from 2014-2018, and multiple HIV outbreaks have been detected since 2015.
- From Feb 2022-Feb 2023, a predicted 109,940 lost their lives to preventable fatal overdose.

People who use drugs are universally present in all of our communities, and deserve quality care and services without shame.

What is Philanthropy's role?

HIV-related philanthropy has historically provided the most support for syringe services and harm reduction approaches to serving people who use drugs, however only 5% of total U.S. philanthropy was dedicated to these communities in 2021. Of that funding, 36% went towards advocacy-related services.

Governmental funding often restricts purchases of critical supplies and have onerous application and reporting requirements. Despite increased recent attention, we risk losing the current Administration’s openness in 2024’s election.

Philanthropy can be more flexible, more accessible, and — critically — more bold in its investments.

How can you get involved?

- Join us & learn more with your colleagues at this Funder Roundtable!
- Contribute to the collaborative **Harm Reduction Futures Fund**, hosted by AIDS United &/or invest in your local syringe services program. Not sure who’s in your area? Contact us!
  - Email Christine Rodriguez, Senior Program Manager, Harm Reduction at crodriguez@aidsunited.org

Why do we need Harm Reduction?

**Courageous Philanthropic Leadership:**

- Provide multi-year unrestricted funding;
- Allow flexibility to purchase necessary supplies that are often outpaced by demand for services;
- Address health equity compassionately for some of our most marginalized neighbors;
- Support community-based services led by those with lived and living experience.