

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

A  
Force *for*  
Change

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Everyone can be a force for change in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Bringing together diverse communities and individuals, and harnessing that collective power, is at the core of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago's (AFC) work. This strategic plan builds on AFC's strengths and recent accomplishments to address the current and future challenges posed by the epidemic.

**MISSION:** AFC's mission is to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS and improve the lives of people affected by the epidemic. We pursue our mission through:

Advocacy  
Funding  
Collaboration

**HISTORY:** Founded by community activists and physicians in 1985, AFC is a catalyst for local, national, and international action on HIV/AIDS. We collaborate with government and community partners to pursue comprehensive strategies against HIV/AIDS; fund and coordinate prevention, care, and advocacy projects; and champion effective, compassionate policy and human rights to bring an end to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

**MANDATE:** AFC endeavors to inspire and unite individuals and institutions to achieve systemic changes. Our work is therefore multi-pronged and designed to impact:

- ▼ **Individuals** affected by and concerned about HIV/AIDS
- ▼ **Agencies** serving people with and at risk for HIV
- ▼ **Service Systems**, including the HIV service delivery sector
- ▼ **Decision-makers and Opinion Leaders**, including press and government officials

**VALUES:** Central to our unique model and approach are the guiding principles of **inclusion, diversity, accountability, transparency, accuracy, efficiency, collaboration,** and **high performance**. In addition, we rely on **community input**—especially from people living with HIV/AIDS and direct service providers—to guide and inform our work. The AFC Board of Directors and staff pursue these core values through each of our programs, services, and general operations.

## STRATEGIC PLAN, 2005-2007

In 2005-2007, AFC pursued an ambitious plan to deepen ties with at-risk communities toward stemming the spread of new infections and improving the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, AFC worked to maximize scarce HIV prevention and care resources; promote high-quality service provision through our collaborations and funded projects; and expand effective local, state, and federal HIV/AIDS advocacy efforts.

**RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** AFC made tremendous progress toward established goals in the past three-year period, including:

- ▼ Helped safeguard federal funding for Illinois communities in the congressional reauthorization of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act
- ▼ Led efforts to restore public funding for needle exchange services proven to prevent HIV without increasing drug use
- ▼ Launched the Faith Responds to AIDS Committee to train and support faith-based HIV education and organizing efforts
- ▼ Secured new and diverse funding sources for housing and support services
- ▼ Launched a five-year crystal methamphetamine and HIV prevention collaborative with funding from the Chicago Department of Public Health
- ▼ Re-established the HIV post-corrections continuity of care program with new funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health
- ▼ Advocated for and secured \$2.5 million in new state funds for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program
- ▼ Created community-wide fundraising events benefiting scores of AIDS service organizations
- ▼ Through grants and contracts, awarded more than \$35 million to area HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and advocacy projects

**ONGOING EFFORTS:** In the next three-year period, AFC will strive to continue many of the initiatives begun in 2005-2007 and pursue new goals and strategies as identified below. In particular, AFC will continue to address persistent health disparities resulting in a disproportionate number of cases among African Americans, Latinos, women, youth, and men who have sex with other men.

## STRATEGIC VENTURES, 2008 – 2010

From 2008 to 2010, AFC will pursue **three broad objectives** designed to reduce HIV transmission and improve the lives of people with and at risk for HIV through advocacy, funding, and collaboration. Each activity will strive to serve, engage, and empower those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS—including women, youth, and men who have sex with other men. As in previous years, we will focus our work in African-American and Latino communities where HIV/AIDS cases are most concentrated.

1

**Leadership & Advocacy**

2

**Prevention & Care**

3

**Preparing for the Future**

## STRATEGIC VENTURES, 2008 – 2010

# 1

**INVESTING IN LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY:** AFC will invigorate activities to train new HIV/AIDS advocates, support agency leaders, and inspire future leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Planned initiatives include:

- ▼ **Illinois Alliance for Sound AIDS Policy (Illinois ASAP)**—AFC will develop a new coalition to better plan, prioritize, and implement effective statewide HIV/AIDS policy and advocacy activities.
- ▼ **Leadership Development Institute**—AFC will develop a series of training activities designed to motivate, engage, and prepare current and future HIV/AIDS leaders and advocates, especially among those living with HIV/AIDS.
- ▼ **Community Advisory Board**—Inspired by the AIDS Housing Advisory Council, which has informed the development of AFC’s housing systems advocacy, AFC will develop an agency-wide Community Advisory Board to better engage service consumers and people living with HIV/AIDS in the organization’s work.

## STRATEGIC VENTURES, 2008 – 2010

# 2

**DEVELOPING NEW PREVENTION & CARE MODELS:** To reduce the number of new HIV infections and meet the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, AFC will actively pursue new service models that promote dignity, independence, and empowerment. Planned initiatives include:

- ▼ **Center for Housing & Health Partnerships**—Recognizing the health benefits of supportive housing, AFC will create a new subsidiary designed to foster expanded supportive housing options for low-income people with HIV and other chronic health conditions through aggressive fundraising, coalition-building, and service coordination.
- ▼ **Partnerships for Prevention**—In order to bring to scale proven HIV prevention strategies, AFC will redouble efforts to expand condom distribution, sterile syringe availability, social marketing campaigns, and risk-reduction services tailored for HIV-negative and -positive populations. Recognizing the severe health disparities among some HIV-affected populations, AFC will focus its prevention activities among substance users and sexually active gay/bisexual men, youth, and women—especially in communities of color. AFC will aggressively pursue public policy and greater research investments to address the contributions of biological, social, and structural factors in HIV transmission and acquisition. We will also develop new partnerships within and beyond the HIV/AIDS sector and enhance existing ones including the Women’s Collaborative of Greater Chicago, Chicago Women’s & Girls’ HIV Prevention Coalition, Project Crystal Meth Prevention, International Rectal Microbicide Advocates, the Sexual Health Xchange, and the Service Providers Council committees on Aging, Prevention/Education, and Faith Responds to AIDS.
- ▼ **Case Management**—Already a national model of systems integration, AFC’s case management program will strengthen its capacity to monitor medical outcomes and innovate new ways to serve vulnerable populations.

## STRATEGIC VENTURES, 2008 – 2010

# 3

**PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE:** Nearing 30 years since HIV/AIDS first emerged, the epidemic has sadly proved enduring and extremely difficult to eradicate. Without a cure or vaccine in the foreseeable future, AFC and other AIDS organizations must now prepare for the long haul and devise strategies to sustain momentum in the face of mounting financial uncertainty, growing numbers of HIV/AIDS cases, and increased complexity. Planned initiatives include:

- ▼ **CommunityDirect Fundraising**—Working with community partners, AFC will continue to create opportunities to empower agencies to fundraise for themselves through the annual *AIDS Run & Walk Chicago* and other community-wide fundraising opportunities to be developed. In addition, AFC will help increase fundraising skills and capacity among participant organizations to help them seize available fundraising opportunities.
- ▼ **Strategic Grantmaking**—Renewing our commitment to grantmaking, AFC will restructure the grants application process, require grantees to establish and meet a modest fundraising match, and seek new sources of support to offer larger and more targeted grant awards, especially in HIV prevention.
- ▼ **Sector Sustainability & Restructuring Initiative**—Working through AFC’s Service Providers Council, we will facilitate discussions with and among agency and community leaders on the current and future challenges facing the HIV/AIDS service sector. Facilitated discussions will explore new income-generating strategies; opportunities to integrate services into systems that do not focus exclusively on HIV; and alternative organizational models such as mergers, consolidations, and strategic partnerships—all aimed at promoting a rational and equitable care and prevention system in an era of decreased resources. By actively engaging stakeholders in provocative discussions, AFC hopes to promote service delivery changes that ensure high-quality services, cultural/linguistic competency, and innovations to better meet the needs of people with and at risk for HIV/AIDS.

# Thanks

AFC thanks the hundreds of community members who informed and helped develop our 2008-2010 Strategic Plan. Learn more about the process and findings of the year-long strategic planning process online at [aidschicago.org/about\\_afc/strategic\\_vision.php](http://aidschicago.org/about_afc/strategic_vision.php).

## AIDS Foundation OF CHICAGO

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