

# Women Informing Now: A Two-Year Retrospective Reducing Isolation and Stigma Among HIV+ Women of Color

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Ivy Turnbull and Michelle Scavnicky have no relevant financial interests to disclose.  
Ivy Turnbull is a member of the Office of AIDS Research Advisory Council

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At the conclusion of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Identify new models that expand supportive networks of cis and trans gender women of color with HIV, improve knowledge of HIV prevention, care and treatment and enhance leaderships skills among cis and trans gender women of color with HIV.
2. Describe social networks of support, engagement, and trust among cis and trans gender women of color living with HIV
3. Discuss innovative approaches implemented to reduce isolation and stigma among cis and trans gender women of color living with HIV engaged or not currently engaged in care.

# Women Informing Now (WIN) Micro-Grant Initiative Overview



THE WIN PROJECT  
WOMEN INFORMING NOW

# Positive Action



- Funding for the Women Informing Now-Micro Grant Project is Provided by ViiV Healthcare-Positive Action AMP Grant

# WIN Micro-Grant Initiative

- A two-year micro-grant initiative designed to support community-based organizations and leaders conducting innovative approaches that breakdown isolation and stigma experienced by women of color living with HIV across the gender spectrum.
  - **Year 1-** Funding amounts ranged from \$3,000-\$4,000.
  - **Year 2** – Funding amounts ranged from \$3,000-\$5,000.



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# WIN Micro-Grants Goals

- Design innovative strategies to engage cis and trans women of color with HIV.
- Expand supportive networks of cis and trans gender women of color with HIV to reduce isolation and stigma.
- Engage cis and trans gender women of color with HIV to address barriers to care.
- Increase the engagement of cis and trans women of color with HIV across the HIV prevention and care continuum.
- Develop leadership among cis and trans gender women of color with HIV to ensure engagement and retention in quality primary care and supportive services.

# Micro-Grant Review and Scoring

- Priority given to areas across the country with the highest burden of HIV as highlighted in the [Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America](#).
- Review Committee: Expertise in programs designed to provide HIV prevention, care and treatment services for women with HIV
- Key Scoring Criteria: Innovation, Replication, & Impact
- Twenty-nine (29) micro-grants funded
  - **Year 1:** Thirteen (13) projects funded.
  - **Year 2:** Sixteen(16) projects funded.



# EHE High HIV Regions/States

- **Northeast:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.
- **Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.
- **South:** Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, DC, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia
- **West:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

# WIN Funded Regions

## Year 1

Micro-Grants geographic region: Midwest (2), West (2), South (9). Total (13)

**NOTE:** No applicant proposal submitted from the Northeast in Year 1

## Year 2

Micro-Grants geographic region: Northeast (2), Midwest (2), West (2), South (10). Total (16)



# WIN Micro Grantees-Year 1

- Chicago Women's AIDS Project- Chicago, IL
- Christie's Place-San Diego, CA
- Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies-New Orleans, LA
- Legacy Counseling Center-Dallas, TX
- Let's Beehive!-Orlando, FL
- LoveMeUnlimited4life-Jackson, MS
- Midland Cares-Oakland Park, FL
- Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services-Columbia, SC
- Positive Efforts-Houston, TX
- Radiant Health Centers-Irvine, CA
- Transfusion-Dallas, TX
- UNIFIED-HIV Health and Beyond- Detroit, MI
- Unspoken Treasure Society-Brooker, FL

# WIN Micro Grantees-Year 2

- A Family Affair Living Our Best Life, Orangeburg, SC
- AIDS Service Center of Lower Manhattan- Alliance for Positive Change, New York, NY
- Chicago Women's AIDS Project, Chicago, IL
- Columbus Wellness Center Outreach & Prevention Project, Inc, Columbus, GA
- H.Y.P.E. to Empower, Inc, Atlanta, GA
- Hawai'i Island HIV/AIDS Foundation, Hilo, HI
- Legacy Counseling Center, Dallas, TX
- Orixia Healing Arts Wellness and Spiritual Centre, Memphis, TN
- Partnership to End AIDS Status Inc, Memphis, TN
- Radiant Health Centers, Irvine, CA
- Shaping Health Equity, Inc., Baltimore, MD

# Grantee Profiles WIN Micro Grantees-Year 2- Cont'd

- Sojourner House, Providence, RI
- The Positive Experience, Memphis TN
- TranSocial, Miami, FL
- Unspoken Treasure Society, Gainesville, FL
- We Think 4 A Change, Cleveland, OH

# WIN Grantee Profile(s)

- Leadership
  - Majority of the WIN projects are led by a cis or trans gender woman of color
- Organization
  - Community-based organization with 501C (3) status
  - Community-based organization without 501C (3) status using a Fiscal sponsor
  - Cis and Trans women focused projects
  - Urban and Rural service areas
  - First-time funding received
  - Ability to leverage WIN micro-grant funding to secure new funding

# Six Innovative Project Strategies

- A therapeutic storytelling intervention “The Red Chair Diaries” that chronicles the personal experiences of cis and trans women living with HIV.
- A radio platform used to breakdown silos among trans populations and educate about the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- An initiative "Out of the Shadows (OOS)," that addressed issues of isolation and stigma among cis and trans women living.
- A virtual community utilizing elements of the evidence-based SISTAH project.
- A virtual listening tour, sexual health needs assessment surveys, and curating and distributing sexual health “SHE” boxes.
- A trauma-informed wellness and advocacy coach to evaluate and stabilize provider/patient relationships.

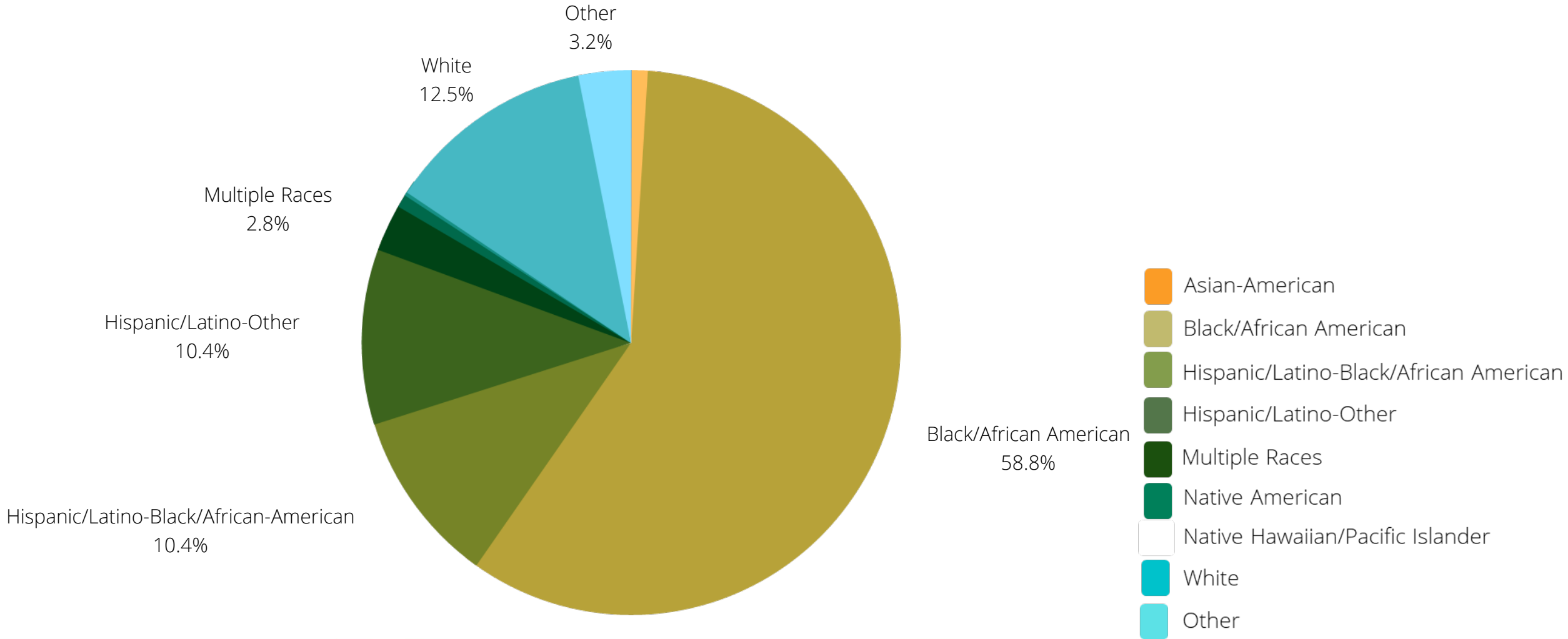
# Women Informing Now (WIN) Micro-Grant Initiative Program Data



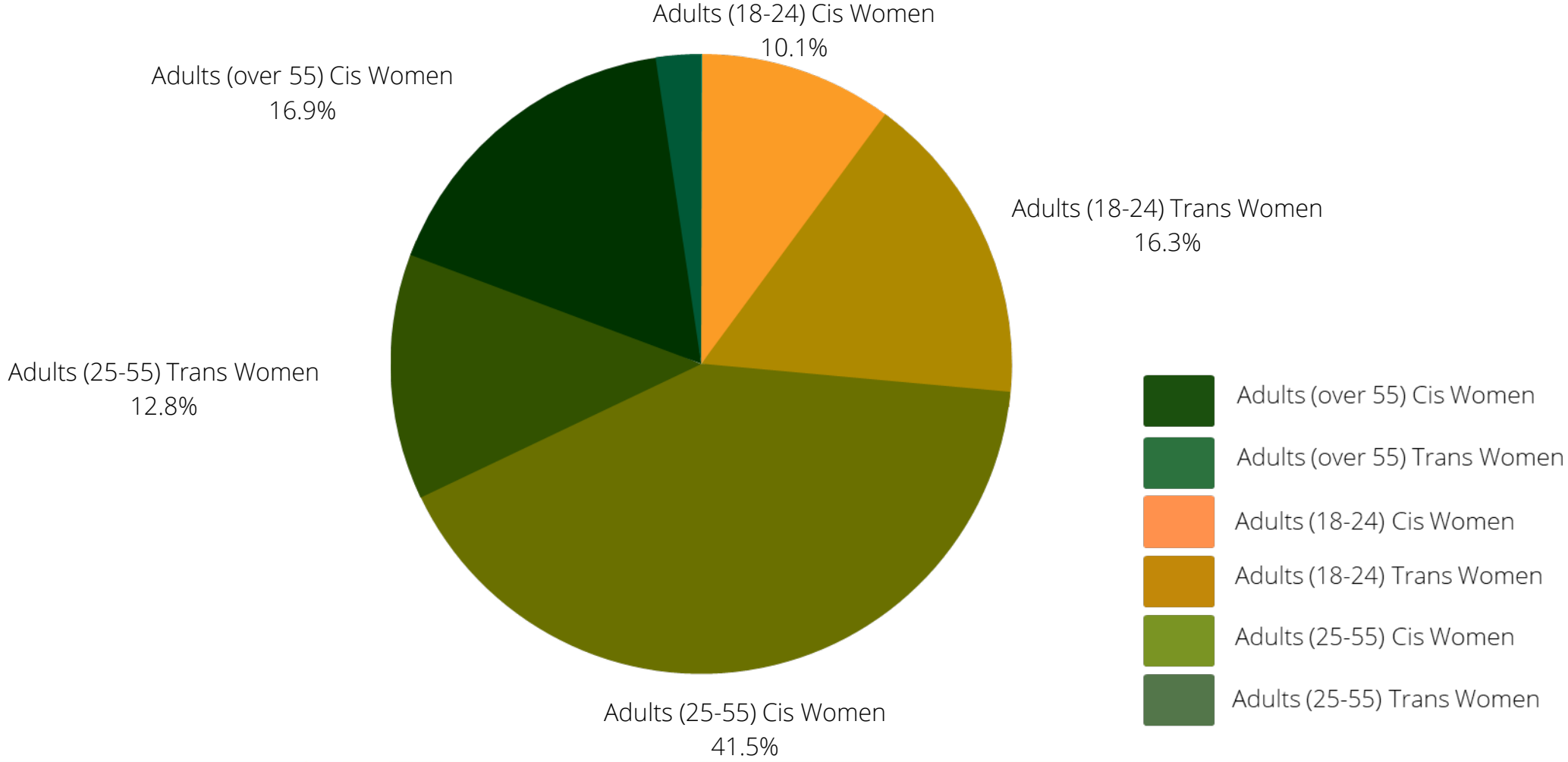
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# WIN Micro Grantees- Race/Ethnicity



# Women Served by Age



# Women of Color with HIV Served by WIN

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
Women of Color Living With HIV	1330	1415	2745
Newly Diagnosed Cis Women	40	29	69
Newly Diagnosed Trans Women	41	23	64

# Behavioral and Health Changes

<b>BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH CHANGES</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increased engagement in women living with HIV support groups	380
Increased collaboration with other women living with HIV	349
Reduced feelings of isolation due to status	290
Improved ability to communicate/advocate for themselves with health providers	239
Improved ability to navigate care systems	259
Reduced internalized stigma	394

# The Impact of COVID-19 on Micro-Grantees Program Implementation



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# The Impact of COVID-19 on Micro-Grantees

## Program Implementation continued

- Shifted from in-person programming to virtual programming
  - All activities conducted video conferencing platforms (Zoom, Webex, Microsoft Teams, etc.)
- Ensure participants have technology needed, as well as a safe space to engage in program activities
- Participants who have not revealed their HIV status to family members decline services
- Use of technology often leads to further feelings of isolation
- Unforeseen barriers to engaging in virtual activities
  - Lack of privacy at home
  - Restricted communication access
  - Limited cell-phone minutes
  - Limited internet connections

# Innovative Strategies and Impact of Micro-Grant Projects Receiving Two Years of Funding



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# Chicago Women's AIDS Project



*Women Thriving and Surviving*



# Innovative Strategies and Impact

- Innovative Strategy
  - Developed an online virtual support network, which expanded the project's ability to reach isolated, under-served cisgender and transgender women of color living with HIV across the entire Cook County region.
- Impact
  - Conducted over 100 virtual support groups, conducted 250 outreach calls, and distributed safety supplies
  - Retained HIV positive women in care, identified resources, and educated women about COVID-19 and vaccine resources.
  - Collaborated with the Women's Interagency HIV Study to encourage women of color living with HIV on the Southside to enrolled in this long-running longitudinal trial study.

legacy  cares  
positive starts here.

legacy  graceproject

# Innovative Strategies and Impact

- Innovative Strategies
  - Launched its anti-stigma campaign, #IamRED, to fosters community conversations about HIV, the realities of women of color living with HIV.
  - Prompted wellness, mental health and self care through its virtual one-day Mental Health Marathon conference.
- Impact
  - Participants recorded #IamRED videos, uploaded toolkit available on #IamRED website: @ iamredproject.org/home.
  - Participants gained skills to bolster their mental health through discussion groups, workshops and team building activities and demonstrated increased engagement in care.

# Radiant Health Centers



**Radiant**  
**Health Centers**  
*Compassionate Care for All*

# Innovative Strategies and Impact 1

- Innovative Strategies

- Implemented *Juntas Podemos-(Together We Can)* a culturally appropriate transwomen of color support group, facilitated by a transwoman therapist of color.
- Provided psychological services needed to improve quality of life and reduce stigma and isolation.

- Impact

- Enhanced participants' personal and in-group identity, encouraged positive self-appraisal, and affirmed their experiences as transgender individuals.
- Empowered participants who suffered from anxiety and depression to seek care.
- Decreased depression and anxiety in 90% of support group members as measured by the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventory.

# Unspoken Treasure Society



# Innovative Strategies and Impact 2

- Innovative Strategies
  - Formalized a network of trans service providers in north central Florida to conduct virtual learning groups and social media campaigns to confront stigma.
  - Launched 'Unifying Women of Color' to unify cisgender and transgender women of color living with HIV through healing spaces, educational panels, and fellowship to break down isolation and stigma.
- Impact
  - Information disseminated on safety and self-preservation, COVID-19, and nPep and PrEP, enabled trans women of color not connected in care to engage with medical providers.
  - Participants developed skills necessary to forge sustaining positive relationships among cis and trans women of color living with HIV.

# Thank you

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

For more information about the WIN Micro-Grant Program, please visit:

<https://www.theaidsinstitute.org/women-informing-now>

-or-

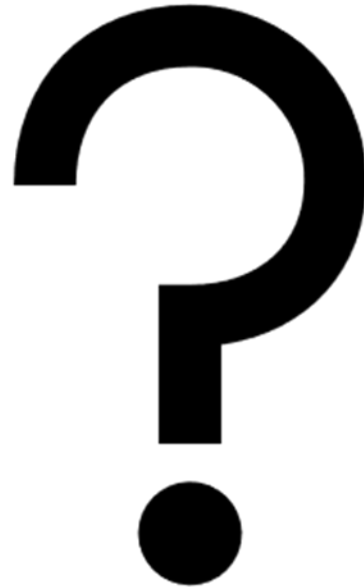
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