



Sample Focus Group Recruitment Plan and Criteria

Focus Groups for People with HIV Who Are or Have Been Out of Care

Purpose of Focus Groups:

- To obtain information about structural and personal barriers that keep some people with HIV (PWH) in the service area from accessing or remaining in HIV-related primary medical care
- To identify the factors that encourage and support PWH to enter, re-enter, or remain in care

Scheduled Length of Focus Group: Total 2 hours, including time for participants to arrive and be greeted, have a break in the middle of the discussion, and receive their incentives afterwards; actual discussion time of about 1½ hours [1½ hours total if online]

Time Frame for Focus Groups: June and July, 2021

Number/Types of Focus Groups to be Conducted: Four focus groups with PWH who recently entered care after being out of care for at least 12 months, are not in care, or were diagnosed in the past 3 years and were not linked to care until at least 6 months after diagnosis; each focus group will feature a different population of PWH who meet these criteria:

1. Young African American men who have sex with men (MSM) – age 25 and under
2. Young Spanish-speaking Latino MSM – age 25 and under (conducted in Spanish)
3. Transgender PWH (both M to F and F to M)
4. Recently incarcerated PWH

Assurance of Confidentiality:

- Individual participants will not be identified by name or other characteristics in any transcripts or notes.
- Information collected will be reported in the aggregate and/or generalized to avoid identification of specific persons and organizations.



Documentation:

- Audio recording
- Notes taken on a laptop during the session by the note taker, plus some handwritten notes from the moderator/facilitator
- Participant profile based on a short demographics questionnaire to be completed by each participant before the focus group

Personnel (Focus Group Team): 1 Moderator/facilitator, 1 observer/note taker and 1 logistics coordinator

Overall recruitment approach

To assure an adequate number of participants for each focus group (e.g., 8-12), 15-18 individuals will be recruited for each group. The Planning Council's past experience is that about one-third of those who agree to participate will be no-shows, so it is important to "over-recruit." The appropriate size for a focus group varies by purpose, topic, and target group. Face-to-face focus groups are costly to arrange and conduct, and it is important to obtain diverse perspectives, so it is usually not cost-efficient to conduct a needs assessment focus group with less than 5-6 participants.

Because this set of focus groups is for people who are now or were recently out of care for at least 12 months, they will be recruited primarily from the following groups, in coordination with the noted recruitment partners (such as medical and case management subrecipients, other community-based organizations, etc.):

- 1. RWHAP-eligible clients entering medical care or medical or non-medical case management during the past six months** – either new clients or re-entering former clients who (according to intake data from subrecipients) were out of care for 12 months or more but are now receiving HIV-related primary medical care, whether funded through RWHAP Outpatient Ambulatory Health Services (OAHS), the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) directly or through Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance, or Medicaid. Medical and case management subrecipients have agreed to review recent intakes and contact individuals to determine their willingness to have their names shared with the focus group screeners (staff who will reach out to individuals to discuss their possible participation in a focus group).
- 2. Clients of RWHAP-funded providers who are receiving non-medical services and are believed not to be receiving HIV-related primary medical care,** recruited through fliers in food baskets and through the efforts of peer and other staff of these subrecipients, again with clients indicating their willingness to have their names and contact information shared with the focus group screeners.
- 3. Individuals with HIV who are not in care but are known to Consumer Committee members** or other RWHAP Planning Council members and have been contacted and indicated their interest in being considered for a focus group.



4. **Individuals associated with several non-Part A programs and groups**, such as a privately funded program for formerly incarcerated PWH, several transgender support groups and social organizations, and a Children's Hospital Program that does follow up to support young PWH who recently transitioned out of Part D services, who have agreed to disseminate fliers targeting PWH not in care and make announcements at their meetings to identify people who may be willing to be part of a focus group.
5. **Individuals who can be reached through an announcement on the PC/PB's webpage or other social media sites** or through use of an existing PC/PB distribution list.

Screening Process to See Whether Individuals Meet Focus Group Participation Criteria

- PC/PB staff or consultants will serve as focus group screeners, beginning their outreach about 7-8 weeks before the focus groups.
- Recruitment partner contacts will be part of an online group or individual meeting about the focus groups and their roles, and will receive fliers in both English and Spanish to help them support recruitment.
- These partner contacts will provide focus group screeners with names and contact information, usually a cell phone number, email, or both.
- Once the focus group locations and potential dates have been determined – generally 4-5 weeks before the focus groups are scheduled, focus group screeners will begin to contact the individuals, describe the focus groups, determine potential interest, and screen the individuals to see if they meet participation criteria.
- If the individuals are interested and meet participation criteria, the screeners will provide more information about the dates, times, and locations of the focus groups and explain the incentives.
- If the focus groups will be conducted online, the screener will determine whether the potential participant has the connectivity and data plan required to participate in a video focus group using a computer, tablet, or smartphone. If there are connectivity issues, the screener will work with planning council support staff to resolve them by providing a data card or other assistance.
- If the individual agrees to participate in a focus group, the screener will confirm participation, explain exactly what assistance or reimbursement will be provided (e.g., local travel to and from the focus group, connectivity assistance) and how the incentive will be provided. Participation will be confirmed by text or email as feasible, including details about the focus group date, time, and location; reimbursements and incentives; and how to contact the screener or a member of the focus group team.



- The screener will ensure that participants have the recruiter's contact information and will re-contact all participants one week before the focus group to ensure they are still able to attend and to address any issues that may have arisen.
- If there is significant attrition, additional recruitment may be required to increase the number of participants.
- Several days before the focus group, the screener will text or email provide each confirmed participant with information on how to contact the team member managing logistics.
- The screeners will keep recruitment partners informed about plans for the focus groups, without giving the names of confirmed participants, so they can respond to questions or concerns if asked.

Participation Criteria

All Focus Group Members:

OUT OF CARE DEFINITION:	Not currently receiving HIV-related medical care
CARE EXPERIENCE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of care currently and for at least the past 12 months (which could include a period of incarceration), or • Recently entered or re-entered care – in care for 6 months or less after being out of care for at least 12 months, or • Recently diagnosed and recently entered care – diagnosed in past 3 years and either out of care or waited at least 6 months after diagnosis before first entering care
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:	To the extent possible, recruit a cross-section of people with different levels of education
PLACE OF RESIDENCE:	<p>Live within the EMA or TGA service area; ideally from several different neighborhoods, communities, or counties</p> <p><i>[Note: The PC/PB will need to arrange or reimburse for costs of transportation and this should be explained during recruitment and screening]</i></p>



Additional Criteria for Specific Focus Groups:

YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM)

<i>Age</i>	17-25
<i>Gender</i>	Male
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	African American; any ethnicity
<i>Sexual Behavior</i>	Self-identification as MSM; no requirement for a specific sexual orientation; may be initially identified by a recruitment partner based on stated risk factor

YOUNG LATINO MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

<i>Age</i>	17-25
<i>Gender</i>	Male
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Latino; any race
<i>Sexual Behavior</i>	Self-identification as msm; no requirement for a specific sexual orientation; may be initially identified by a recruitment partner based on stated risk factor
<i>Language</i>	Spanish-dominant or bilingual (focus group to be conducted in Spanish)

TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WITH HIV (PWH)

<i>Age</i>	18 or older
<i>Gender Identity</i>	Transgender, both male-to-female and female-to-male
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Mix of African American, Latinx, White non-Latinx, and Other

RECENTLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE WITH HIV

<i>Age</i>	18 or older
<i>Gender</i>	Mix of male, female, and transgender
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Mix of African American, Latinx, White non-Latinx, and Other
<i>Incarceration</i>	Individuals who were in jail or prison for at least 3 months and were released within the past 2 years