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**Subject:** HOPWA In Focus: 40 Years with HIV

## **HOPWA In Focus: 40 Years with HIV**

This June 5<sup>th</sup>, the world will mark 40 years since the first five cases of what later became known as AIDS were officially reported. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) (MMWR) described the five cases. Annually, June 5<sup>th</sup> is also observed as HIV Long-Term Survivors Day. To commemorate the 40th anniversary, the U.S. government is focusing on the *Four for Forty* themes: **1) Reflect, 2) Recommit, 3) Reenergize, and 4) Reengage.**

HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, which administers the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program, is recognizing these themes through the role housing plays in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We know housing remains an important structural intervention to end the HIV epidemic, and to continue building on the progress we have seen over the past decades, we must continue to uphold the importance of housing.

- 1) Reflect:** We honor the more than 32 million people who have died from AIDS-related illness globally, including 700,000 in the U.S., since the start of the HIV epidemic. We remember the livelihoods so suddenly lost when HIV emerged and the use of housing to provide a place for people to die in dignity from AIDS-related illness. In their memory, we will not stop until we end the HIV epidemic.
- 2) Recommit:** The U.S. government is fully committed to continued work with a diverse group of partners to help end the HIV epidemic, especially in communities of people with and at risk for HIV, while ensuring an effective response to COVID-19 and preparing for future pandemics. The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing commits to continuing to uphold housing as an important and effective intervention in ending the HIV epidemic. We will continue to work closely with HOPWA grantees and project sponsors to ensure there is adequate support and resources to deliver the needed housing and services to people living with HIV across the country. We also understand the importance of lived experience when considering policies and want to ensure folks receiving HOPWA assistance are heard and supported. HOPWA grantees are encouraged to submit requests for technical assistance as needed through the [HUD Exchange website](#).
- 3) Reenergize:** Forty years into the HIV epidemic, we need to reenergize a whole-of-society mobilization effort in order to end it. This requires reinvigorating and diversifying the HIV response to ensure equitable access to prevention, care, and treatment services, especially for those disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. We have made remarkable progress in preventing and treating HIV and our work is not finished. Stigma remains a significant barrier and the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed and threatened hard-won gains. The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing is reenergizing its partnership with the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity within HUD to ensure fair housing protections are known and made available to people living with HIV. Recently a poster explaining that housing discrimination because of HIV is illegal was published and is now [available for download here](#). We will continue to share the message that barriers to housing due to

stigma and discrimination must be properly addressed. To learn more about our HIV housing discrimination work, see our [recent listserv message](#).

- 4) Reengage:** The U.S. government cannot end the HIV epidemic alone. We need continued contributions and innovation from all sectors of society. Together we must reengage, continue to empower, and strengthen coordination with our partners across the U.S. for maximum and enduring impact. We are thankful for the work of HOPWA grantees and project sponsors to bring housing and supportive services to our neighbors in communities across the country, and we hope to reengage efforts through a new HOPWA funding opportunity. The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing recently released the HOPWA: Housing as an Intervention to Fight AIDS funding opportunity which makes \$41 million in competitive funding available to states, local governments, and non-profits. Selected communities will implement new projects that elevate housing as an effective structural intervention and align with initiatives aimed at ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This HOPWA funding opportunity is seeking projects with exemplary and innovative qualities, including community-level coordination, data collection with emphasis on stable housing and positive health outcomes, culturally competent approaches to providing housing and services, and a systemic approach to advance equity in underserved communities that can serve as a national place-based model. Applications are due July 6, 2021. [Read HUD's Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#).

We hope you will also join us in reflecting, recommitting, reenergizing, and reengaging as we recognize 40 years with HIV and the progress we have made to end the HIV epidemic. [Click here for more information on federal activities for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.](#)

We also want to recognize and encourage HOPWA grantees and project sponsors to honor other June observances including [National HIV Testing Day](#) on June 27<sup>th</sup> and LGBTQ+ Pride Month. LGBTQ+ Pride was birthed out of social injustice within the LGBTQ+ community and commemorates the Stonewall Riots that occurred in June 1969. We reflect on the disproportionate impact HIV/AIDS has had on segments of the LGBTQ+ population and the discrimination that spurred the HIV epidemic. We want to acknowledge the significant contributions from the LGBTQ+ community in advocating and demanding HIV/AIDS funding and research in the early years of the epidemic.

In observance of LGBTQ+ Pride Month, the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing is making available a special edition HOPWA Pride logo for HOPWA grantees and project sponsors this year. [Download the HOPWA Pride Logo here.](#)

Thank you for your continued work and dedication to the HOPWA program and ending the HIV epidemic. We are looking forward to celebrating decades of HOPWA work on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HOPWA program being funded by Congress in 2022. More information will be coming soon on this big HOPWA milestone.

Respectfully,  
Rita Harcrow  
Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Housing



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*Housing is a structural intervention in ending the AIDS epidemic in the United States. Each year, HOPWA ensures housing stability for more than 100,000 American households that are low-income and living with HIV.*

*Want to know more about HOPWA? Go to [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/hopwa](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/hopwa)*

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