

The HIV Planning Group

Applicant Quick Guide

This guide offers a quick overview of member roles and responsibilities for people interested in applying to the Pennsylvania HPG.

What is the HPG?

The HIV Planning Group: (HPG): The Pennsylvania HPG’s work falls under the Department of Health, Division of HIV Disease (the Division). The HPG is guided by the Vision Statement of the Division of HIV Disease and the National HIV/AIDS Strategy: *Pennsylvania will become a place where new HIV infections are rare and when they do occur, every person, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic circumstance, will have unfettered access to high quality, life extending care, free from stigma and discrimination.* Using the Continuum of Care Model (Prevent, Test, Link, Treat and Retain/Re-engage), the HPG supports integrated HIV Planning to further the development and improvement of integrated HIV prevention and care services throughout Pennsylvania. For this group, “Planning activities” include Needs Assessment (including reviewing the epidemiological profile and state of the epidemic in PA to identify gaps, resources, and intersectional issues) and Priority Setting (recommending specific prioritization of all Ryan White services in the commonwealth). Most importantly, though, “Planning” means developing, revising, and monitoring the Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan (IHPCP) for Pennsylvania. The HPG does *not* have any direct role in Division of HIV Disease funding allocations.

The IHPCP: *The Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2017-2021* (the IHPCP, or the Plan) is the formal roadmap and justification for the Division of HIV Disease for all HIV-related activities throughout the state and across the HIV Care Continuum. It’s primarily comprised of PA’s epidemiological profile, HIV prevention and care activities and processes, and monitoring and evaluation components. The Plan is divided into 42 specific activities as well as various descriptions of how key stakeholder groups influence and contribute to the planning process. The HPG is a partner in accomplishing some of the plan’s goals, is responsible for both evaluating and monitoring progress on *all* IHPCP goals, and works to assess the ongoing relevance and accuracy of this critical document.

Who is eligible?

HPG Members:

1. Anyone applying for membership on the HPG will be considered a *Community Member*:
 - a. Description: Community Members apply to serve on the HPG through a rolling application process. They are chosen by current members of the HPG for their ability to represent voices and perspectives of a wide range of key stakeholders—people impacted by, and representative of, the HIV epidemic throughout Pennsylvania.
 - b. Responsibilities: Community Members sit at the HPG table and fully participate in all HPG activities, lunches, and subcommittees and/or workgroups. Community Members vote on all recommended changes to the IHPCP, to elect a Community Co-Chair that helps lead the meetings and HPG processes, and on other matters for which votes are called. It is also expected that HPG Community Members will help bring information into the HPG and take HPG info back out to their communities. That information sharing may include disseminating updates, approved plans, and HPG surveys to their stakeholder networks, while also bringing feedback to the HPG/Division around critical issues occurring in the Commonwealth.
 - c. Attendance and reimbursement: Because these members were selected based on their knowledge, experience and perspectives on HIV-related issues in Pennsylvania, attendance is carefully recorded for each member. Community Members volunteer for a three-year (3) term, and those who do not attend 75% of the yearly meeting days may forfeit their spot at the decision of the HPG Co-Chairs. **All Community Member qualifying travel costs, including food, lodging, and travel, are reimbursed by the DOH.**
 - d. There are approximately 25 Community member positions. People invited to apply include (but are not limited to) those identifying as: LGBTQ; MSM; African or African American; Latinx; Native American; current or former IDU; Ryan White Parts B-D; Minority AIDS Initiative, EIS, CBOs, and health care providers; state grantees; people of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds, residency statuses within PA, and geographic locations within PA.
2. Community Members will also work with HPG *Planning Partners*, who serve on the HPG at the invitation of the Division and represent key agencies and partner organizations working on key issues related to HIV. There are 18 Planning Partners: STD Program; TB Program; Viral Hepatitis Program; HIV Epidemiology; Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS program (HOPWA); the Office of Health Equity; the MidAtlantic AIDS Education and Training Center (MAAETC);

Office of Medical Assistance (Medicaid); Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS); Dept. of Drug and Alcohol; Dept. of Education; Dept. of Corrections; Philadelphia RW Part A; Philadelphia HIV Prevention Planning; SPBP Advisory Council; PA Association of Health Centers; Dept. of Aging, and a statewide organization representing people with disabilities.

What will we do?

The Tasks of the HPG: The HPG is convened by the Department of Health, Division of HIV Disease to engage in and support the planning activities of: Needs Assessment (including the epidemiological profile and identifying gaps, resources, and intersectional issues); Priority Setting; Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan development and revision; IHPCP Assessment/Revision and IHPCP Evaluation/Monitoring. The HPG accomplishes these tasks through its regularly scheduled meetings and subcommittees, and in all these ways creates recommendations and advice for the Division of HIV Disease on issues and plans that impact people at risk and those living with HIV (PLWH) throughout all of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania excluding Philadelphia county (which is funded separately to best care for its residents).

When & Where will we meet?

The HPG holds 6 two-day meetings per year, and members serve three-year terms. The HPG meets 4 times in Harrisburg, and twice in different regional locations throughout the Commonwealth. These regional 2-day sessions are joint planning meetings and Townhall forums that allow for greater stakeholder participation and inform regional concerns and additional perspectives for all involved. While the specific dates have not been set for 2021, these meetings are generally held in February, May, June, August, September, and November of each year. It is important to note, however, that due to the current pandemic, all HPG meetings are being conducted virtually until further notice.

Why do we do this work?

The membership of the HPG strives to be reflective of and responsive to communities impacted by the epidemic. The group is committed to continually improving planning systems like the IHPCP that impact these communities. The IHPCP indirectly but powerfully impacts people living with HIV and who are at risk for HIV throughout the state because it directs all the activities of the Division of HIV Disease and its partners across the state. Their efforts, in turn, work to improve outcomes in all stages of the HIV Care Continuum for people across PA.

Join us!

Structural Diagram of the HPG

