

ESCALATE

Ending Stigma through Collaboration And Lifting All To Empowerment

"ESCALATE" (Ending Stigma through Collaboration And Lifting All To Empowerment) trains and empowers participants to recognize and address HIV stigma across the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP). ESCALATE will engage RWHAP recipients and subrecipients in Parts A, B, C, and D, which includes community-based organizations, federally-qualified health centers, health departments, planning councils, and planning bodies. While ESCALATE will have a strong focus on recruiting participants from the 57 jurisdictions identified in the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) initiative, ESCALATE is open to all RWHAP recipients and subrecipients regardless of jurisdiction. The ESCALATE program has a particular focus on reducing stigma towards transgender/gender nonconforming individuals, men who have sex with men, and members of the Black/African American, Latinx, and American Indian/Alaska Native communities. NMAC is working in partnership with Abt Associates, NORC at the University of Chicago, and TRX Development Solutions to offer the ESCALATE program.

Central to the focus of ESCALATE are community involvement and cultural competency. Because HIV stigma is a multi-dimensional social issue with complexities and nuances, it is critical to understand the needs of affected communities. To this end, ESCALATE engages subject matter experts from impacted communities on every aspect of the project, including the design and content of the training curriculum. This ensures cultural competency and also guarantees the Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS (or MIPA), which promotes the importance of creating services or programs for people with HIV (PWH) with the intentional inclusion, advice, and buy-in of the communities most affected by HIV.



The Challenge

Stigma remains a major obstacle to efforts to end the HIV epidemic by hindering specific communities from accessing HIV testing, prevention, and care and therefore contributes to continued high rates of new HIV cases.



Focus Population

ESCALATE's populations of focus include:

- PWH in urban, rural, and tribal communities;
- Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) care providers and planning councils; and
- Communities most affected by HIV, including transgender/gender non-conforming individuals, men who have sex with men, and members of the Black/African American, Latinx, and American Indian/Alaskan Native communities.



The Model

The ESCALATE program includes three "tracks" that support individuals and organizations in mitigating and eliminating stigma in HIV-related service provision in the United States:

1. New and Innovative Training. ESCALATE focuses on training to reduce HIV-related stigma through evidence-informed interventions and strategies with an emphasis on cultural humility for HIV service systems, organizations, and individuals. The trainings are designed to reach up to 1,170 individuals in total over the four years of the program.

2. Targeted, Time-limited Technical Assistance (TA). Abt Associates has partnered with NMAC to provide targeted, time-limited TA for up to 125 organizational entities over the four years of the cooperative agreement. Abt Associates will tailor technical assistance to the needs of each organization. TA is best suited for organizations looking to tackle a specific concern related to HIV-stigma on a one-to-one basis (meaning, one organization working with one TA provider).

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3. Learning Collaboratives (LCs). NORC at the University of Chicago has partnered with NMAC to facilitate two LCs during the cooperative agreement, using the Learning Collaborative Model developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). NORC will develop curricula and activities with input from the ESCALATE Implementation Science Advisory Team (ISAT) and other subject matter experts, including people with lived experience. LCs are best suited for organizations that have all the resources and preparations in place to begin (or have already started) implementing a stigma-reduction initiative.

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