LOI Form

LOI

If you would like to complete this Letter of Intent in Word first and copy your answers over later, use the following link: Download LOI

The rubric that will be used to score your Letter of Intent can be found here: Download LOI Rubric

Please pay attention to character limits while working on your draft. These limits include spaces.

Organization Name*

AIDS Service Association of Pinellas Inc. dba EPIC

Project Name*

Create a brief name for this large capital project. This is how it will appear throughout the PCF grant portal.

Increased Housing for People Living with HIV/AIDS

EIN*

592862537

Incorporation Year*

What year did your organization incorporate? This will be the year listed on your determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service.

1987

Organizational Mission Statement*

What is your organization's mission statement? This should be no longer than one or two sentences.

Through every step of the journey, the mission of Empath Health integrated network of care is to offer compassion through extraordinary care, hope through innovative services, and care is to offer compassion through endless encouragement.

Unique Entity ID (SAM)

Please provide your organization's Unique Entity ID number. This is a specific number used by the federal government to identify your organization.**This is different from a DUNS number, which the federal government no longer uses.**
If you do not have a Unique Entity ID number, you can create an account on SAM.gov and apply for one here (it is

free and may take 3-4 days for approval): https://sam.gov/content/home

This field is optional as to not stop a qualifying organization from applying. HOWEVER, a Unique Entity ID number will be required if your organization is approved for a grant. Your organization should apply for a number now if it does not yet have one.

Character Limit: 12

J2BXENUBJSE5

Annual Operating Budget Size*
Please provide the amount of your annual operating budget (expenditures only) for your entire organization.

$8,627,805.00

Amount Requested*
The maximum grant amount is $5 million. You may request up to 5% for grant administration, project management, and other indirect costs. Please be sure your indirect cost rate is represented in the figure you put below.

Note: You will be required to upload a more detailed budget if you are approved for the full application stage. You will need to also attach any bids, estimates, and agreements with contractors or other vendors in relation to the proposed project.

$5,000,000.00

Does the total project cost exceed the amount your organization is requesting?*
Please note: Answering "Yes" will cause additional questions to load later in this application.

Examples
ABC Childcare is seeking funding for a new playground. ABC Childcare is asking PCF to fund $150,000 for certain equipment, and will seek other funding and donations for the remaining $20,000 of the playground. ABC Childcare would select "Yes" for this question.

Better Tomorrow, a mental health provider, is looking to expand their counseling center by two rooms to meet increased service demand arising from the pandemic. Better Tomorrow has secured $25,000 in private contributions, and wants to request the remaining $125,000 in this grant. Better Tomorrow would select "Yes" for this question.

DBE Food Pantry is seeking funding for a new HVAC unit for their pantry, and is requesting $40,000 from PCF to cover the entire cost. DBE Food Pantry would select "No" for this question.

Yes

Parent Non-Profit/Subsidiaries*

If your organization has a parent non-profit that has multiple subsidiaries, will multiple subsidiaries be applying in this process?

Example
Better Tomorrow is the parent non-profit of three organizations. Two of those organizations want to apply in this process. Both would select "Yes" on this question.

No

Request Specifics

Organization Programming Background*

Please describe the programming your organization offers to the community and the length of time it has been doing so. That is, what does your organization **do** and **how long** has it been doing it?

EPIC is a member of Empath Health, a nonprofit integrated network of care supporting those challenged by chronic and advanced illness in the Tampa Bay region and has provided HIV education, testing, prevention, treatment and support services in Pinellas County for over 30 years.

Our purpose is to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities regardless of HIV status, gender or sexual identity, by addressing the social determinants of health. As a member of Empath Health, we are committed to providing life-changing care that meets the needs of all in our community, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or the ability to pay. We provide a continuum of care that includes medical and housing case management, mental health counseling, primary care, HIV and psychiatric medication management, HIV and STI prevention and testing, emergency support, TBRA, STRMU, nutritional services, food pantry, transportation assistance, and recreational therapy.

EPIC has considerable experience managing housing assistance and related supportive services. We have been implementing HOPWA programs for over 15 years. We are currently implementing 4 HOWPA programs: Supportive Services in Hillsborough and Pinellas, STRMU in Hillsborough, and TBRA in Pinellas and Pasco. We have a new expanded TBRA initiative through EHE (Ending the HIV Epidemic) that will allow us to house an additional 30 families. We also have supportive services projects funded by Pinellas County Human Services and the City of St. Petersburg. Funding from the Tampa Hillsborough Homelessness Initiative to provide rapid rehousing for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). In 2020, we were awarded a 3-year HOME TBRA grant from the City of Tampa to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, regardless of HIV status. Over the past 10 years, we have also provided nearly $300,000 in emergency assistance to help clients cover rent, utilities and other basic needs.

Community Need*

Please describe the community need that exists for your programming. If you are able to cite quantitative, local data, that will strengthen your proposal.

Pinellas County has struggled with an AIDS diagnoses (8.1) rate that surpass the state average (7.3) for multiple years. Health and social factors increase HIV transmission rates drive the need for our programming.

For many who are living with HIV/AIDS, social determinants of health create inequities that make it difficult to stay undetected and healthy. For example, the Florida Department of Health has identified housing as "one of the main determinants affecting HIV health outcomes."

According to the University of Florida's Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse, approximately 78% of Pinellas households (both rentals and owners) that made 30% of less of the Annual Median Income (AMI) experienced a housing burden (the amount of a household's monthly income that goes toward housing expenses) of over 50%. For those living with disabilities (like HIV/AIDS), their housing burden is higher than those without disabilities. According to the Shimberg Center, the average SSI benefit for those living with disabilities in Pinellas County is $783 despite the need for 125% income for a one-bedroom apartment. In 2019, median gross rent was $1,112. However, according to a Tampa Bay Times article, a 750-square foot apartment cost $1,223 in 2021 for area residents. The development of affordable housing is critical to meet the needs of residents. The Surplus/Deficit of affordable/available units by income in the Tampa Bay region is -86,007 for those 0-50% AMI for the region.

Stable housing can help people living with HIV. People that are homeless or lack stable housing are less likely to initiate HIV care, engage in consistent HIV treatment, and be medically adherent. While there are many support programs in the Tampa Bay Area they are limited and many have waitlists. Additionally, the challenges created by COVID-19 highlighted the need for housing to improve health, mitigate exposure to infectious disease, and provide shelter for those needing medical treatment and recovery.

Negative Economic Impact*

The following question is the keystone of a strong application in this process. If your organization cannot demonstrate a negative economic impact from the pandemic, your application will not qualify for committee review. If you are uncertain about what constitutes negative economic impact or how to demonstrate it, please contact PCF staff for technical assistance.

Describe your organization's negative economic impact arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples could include:

- A reduction in revenue from 2019 to 2020

- Inflationary pressures

- Increases in demand for services that have not been compensated for through new revenue

- The use of reserves for unbudgeted expenses since the onset of the pandemic, and such use of reserves has prevented the purchase of capital assets

- A need for capital assets to offset community need for which your organization does not have the resources to purchase due to the negative economic harm from the pandemic

- A need for additional capital assets to adapt operations to accommodate health and safety guidelines by the CDC

- Growth in restricted pandemic-related revenue that does not permit capital asset acquisition

Note: If you are applying for both a Small Purchase and Large Project, you may reuse the answer for this question PROVIDED THAT the negative economic impact is relevant to both requests.

As the pandemic and its effects continue, we are seeing persistent and emerging needs and gaps in affordable housing options, and increased demand for services have not been compensated for through new revenue. Currently, we have 410 individuals on a Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) waiting list, 9 have received EHE financial assistance, 11 have received motel assistance, many more are on a wait list for the motel assistance (funding is not available).

Additionally, the outcomes and stressors created by COVID-19 shown a bright light on the need for housing and a determinant of health. For example, homelessness and the spread of COVID-19 were a particularly challenge intersection of issues. According to a 2021 NACCHO report, "In March 2020, Pinellas identified the need for a process for non-congregate sheltering of homeless individuals and families to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A collaborative project was developed for hospitals and test sites to refer positive cases, contacts, and those pending results to hotels for isolation and quarantine with central intake by the Homeless Leadership Alliance, transportation, case management and behavioral health by Directions for Living, monitoring, medical care, investigations and surveillance by DOH-Pinellas and overall coordination and funding (via FEMA, HRSA, and food pantry donations) by Pinellas County Human Services." While the focus of the project was specifically on those experiencing homelessness during COVID-19, it highlights the need for housing to improve health, mitigate exposure to infectious disease, and provide shelter for those needing medical treatment and recovery. However, with rising housing costs and limited housing stock on a peninsular county, affording housing option development are needed now more than ever.

Proposal Description*

The American Rescue Plan Act requires a request that is reasonable and proportional to the level of economic impact your organization experienced. This means the request you describe below should not be greater than the economic harm your organization has suffered.

Please describe your project proposal and address the following:

- What project will be undertaken with these funds?
- What is the estimated lifespan of the project/property improvement?
- How does it address the negative economic harm you described in the previous question?

What project will be undertaken?

We are requesting funds to purchase land and design/build a 24-unit apartment building for property located on 407 South Saturn Ave., Clearwater. Our experience has taught us that for some people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH) it takes significant time and engagement to help them come to a place where they are ready, willing and able to enter and sustain a stable, long-term housing situation. Our strategy brings together intensive case management, transitional housing, wrap-around support services, and tenant-based rental assistance in an innovative, integrated approach to care that is designed to both enable PLWH to make the shift to stable housing and expand the housing space available to PLWH.

What is the estimated lifespan? The average lifespan of an apartment building is 35-45 years.

How will it address the negative economic harm you described in the previous question?

Through this project, we will be taking steps to address the long wait lists for affordable housing options for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA) and their families. The addition of 24 apartments in Pinellas County accepting housing vouchers and fair market rent for long-term annual leases directly impacts the negative economic harm that our clients are facing. This new housing option will create a stable environment for this high-risk population and will be an important way to help people living with HIV access healthcare, continue their HIV treatment, and access support services. We follow HUD's "Housing First" approach with coordinated entry, wrap around services and diversion strategies. We have experience determining client eligibility, assessing housing units and lease agreements, issuing assistance payments, developing individual housing plans, and providing supportive services to help clients maintain stable housing. Our team has many years of experience working with low-income PLWA and housing related programs. Case managers and

counselors work hand-in-hand to identify and assist clients to ensure that they don't fall through the gaps in the safety net.

Number Served*

How many people will directly benefit from this capital project annually?

24

Unduplicated vs. Duplicated*

Is the number indicated above duplicated or unduplicated?
Duplicated: A client is counted each time they access services
Unduplicated: A client is counted once, regardless of the number of times they access services

Example: ABC Food Bank operates two mobile food pantries, one in Clearwater and one in St. Petersburg. Taylor, a Pinellas County resident, goes to both food pantries. If ABC Food Bank counts Taylor's visit TWICE, it is **duplicated**. If ABC Food Bank counts Taylor's visit ONCE, it is **unduplicated**.

Unduplicated

Other (Explanation Required)

If you selected "Other" in the previous question, please explain how your organization determined the number of clients that will benefit from the proposed capital project.

Rent vs. Own*

Does your organization rent or own the property for which you are proposing modifications?
Note: Selecting "Rent" will cause more questions to load below.

Own

Guiding Principles - Client Impact*

The American Rescue Plan Act, which provides the funding for this grant program, aims to ensure an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The term "equity" is defined as:

The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

One of the guiding principles of this fund is that it will apply a lens of equity to ensure the needs of specified priority populations are met.

Will this project benefit the community members defined above that have experienced disproportionate negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how?

Stable housing has long been recognized as an important way to help people living with HIV access healthcare, continue their HIV treatment, and access support services. People that are homeless or lack stable housing are less likely to initiate HIV care, engage in consistent HIV treatment and care, and be medically adherent. While there are many programs in the Tampa Bay Area that provide housing (ex. Housing Opportunities for People with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA)) and support services, they are limited and many have waitlists. Affordable housing for high-risk groups (those living with or at risk for HIV) has the potential to be a catalyst for addressing social and health equity in our community. As a social determinant of health, housing is a powerful driver of health equity for systemic change. As mentioned in a previous section, the challenges created by COVID-19 highlighted the need for housing to improve health, mitigate exposure to infectious disease, and provide shelter for those needing medical treatment and recovery

Community Connection

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) prioritizes organizations that either have headquarters or carry out the majority of their operations inside Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs). QCTs are a standard method of identifying communities with a large proportion of low-income residents. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determines what areas qualify as QCT.

To assess if your organization serves or is headquartered in a QCT, use the following link:
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html

In the top right-hand corner, choose the state of Florida and Pinellas County. Then on the left-hand side of the screen, click the box next to "Color QCT Qualified Tracts." The QCT zones are denoted in purple. You can also map your address by adding it into the address box at the top to see if your location is inside the zones.

Below, please provide the location of your operations and the location of your headquarters, if different.

Headquarters Location*

Please provide your organization's headquarters address as it appears on your Sunbiz account. To check your Sunbiz registration, you may search here: https://dos.myflorida.com/sunbiz/search/

5771 Roosevelt Blvd, Clearwater, FL 33760

QCT Determination - Headquarters*

Is this organization headquartered in a QCT?

No

Project Location*

Please provide the address or intersection where the property being modified is.

407 South Saturn Ave, Clearwater, FL 33755

QCT Determination - Project*

Is this organization's project in a QCT?

No

QCT Impact*

PCF understands that just because a project may not be located in a Qualified Census Tract, those who reside in one may access your services and may come to the location where your organization's project will take place.

- If applicable, please describe if you have clients that reside in a QCT as indicated on the map linked above, and the proportion of your clients that come from these areas.
- If your organization does not serve clients from a QCT, you can write "Not Applicable" below.

Our project is not in a Qualified Census Track (QCT) but in close proximity (1.7 miles) to a QCT. This location is on a main bus route, and we anticipate serving clients who reside in a QCT, the bus line provides easy access. EPIC accepts clients from anywhere within Pinellas County and many of our other services are located within a QCT across Pinellas County.

QCT Determination - Clients*

Does this organization's project benefit residents of QCTs?

No

This section aims to capture general demographic data about your organization and to see how you engage with and represent the community you serve. PCF has generalized the demographic data questions more than it has in other processes because of the public nature of this process. PCF understands that identity disclosure can be a sensitive matter and wants to respect your organization's board and staff. If your organization feels comfortable sharing more detailed demographic information, it may do so in the "Community Representation and Connection" section.

Community Representation and Connection*

Describe how your organization is representative of, or has authentic connections to, the community your proposal seeks to serve. You can list other community-based organizations that work on programming with you and/or list examples of your work within this community.

We have been serving PLWHA in the Tampa Bay area for over 30 years. AIDS Service Association of Pinellas and Francis House merged in 2016 to create EPIC. Our purpose is to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities, regardless of HIV status, gender or sexual identity, by addressing the social determinants of health. As a member of Empath Health, we are committed to providing life-changing care that meets the needs of all in our community, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or ability to pay. We provide a continuum of care that includes medical and housing case management, mental health counseling, primary care, HIV and psychiatric medication management, HIV and STI prevention and testing, emergency support, TBRA, STRMU, nutritional services, food pantry, transportation assistance, and recreational therapy.

EPIC has considerable experience managing housing assistance and related supportive services and over the years, has developed deep connections with community-based organizations, municipalities and funders. They include City of St. Petersburg, Pinellas County Human Services, Ryan White case managers, the homeless continuum of care's coordinated entry and priority housing system (VI-SPDAT), HIV/AIDS medical or supportive services providers, Tampa housing Authority, and a host of other organizations and programs that work with the homeless or HIV/AIDS community. Additionally, EPIC's leadership team has over 100 years of working in this field and have developed a strong network among community organizations and partners.

Leadership Demographics - CEO/Executive Director*

Does your CEO/Executive Director consider themselves a member of one or more of the following populations? Check all that apply.

- BIPOC defined as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+)
- Neurodiverse/physically disabled

LGBTQ+

Leadership Demographics - Executive Level Leadership Team*

Does your executive leadership team consider themselves a member of one or more of the following populations? Check all that apply.

- BIPOC defined as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+)
- Neurodiverse/physically disabled

LGBTQ+

Leadership Demographics - Board Membership*

Do your board members consider themselves a member of one or more of the following populations? Check all that apply.

- BIPOC defined as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+)
- Neurodiverse/physically disabled

BIPOC
LGBTQ+

Cost Difference

Estimated Total Project Cost*

Please specify the total cost of this capital project.

Example: ABC Childcare is seeking funding for a new playground. ABC Childcare is asking PCF to fund $20,000 for certain equipment, and will seek other funding and donations for the remaining $150,000 of the playground, for a total project cost of $170,000. ABC Childcare would put $170,000 below.

$11,287,500.00

Cost Difference*

How does your organization plan to cover the cost of this project beyond the amount requested in this LOI? Please also specify if your organization can carry out the potential ARPA-funded portion of this project without other funding being secured.

EPIC is seeking $5 million for the purchase of land and design/build costs for a 24-unit apartment building ($2.75 million land purchase, $ 2 million design/build and indirect $300,000).

To cover the difference of this project beyond the ARPA grant, we will have to scale back the number of apartment units that will be built with the remaining funds from the land purchase. Our current estimate is for a 24-unit building and the design/build is scalable to meet the value of the grant award. We have not secured other funding for this project, so the scalability of apartment units is key to meeting the ARPA Grant. If we are awarded, we can begin to seek funding and donations from a wide range of private individuals, foundation, and corporations to support the expansion of additional apartment units. With the backing of our parent organization, Empath Health, we are confident that we can carry out the potential expansion of this project.

Financial Overview

Budget Summary*

Please provide a brief sketch of the categories of expenses and the costs needed for your project. If your organization is requesting compensation for indirect costs, be sure to note the percentage (up to 5%) and dollar amount below.

If you are invited to complete the full application, you will be asked to upload current verifiable bids, proposals, price lists [from your potential vendor(s)] from the past 60 days. If a contractor has already been selected for a construction project for which you are requesting funding, you will need to upload their bid. You are strongly encouraged to collect any remaining bids, proposals, and price lists shortly after submitting this LOI.

EPIC is seeking $5 million for the purchase of land and design/build costs for a 24-unit apartment building ($2.75 million land purchase, $ 2 million design/build and indirect $300,000).

Estimated Total Project Cost $11,287,500 million:
1) Purchase of land $2.75 million
2) Design/Build $8 million
3) Indirect Cost $537,500

To cover the difference of this project beyond the ARPA grant, we will have to scale back the number of apartment units that will be built with the remaining funds from the land purchase. Our current estimate is for a 24-unit building and the design/build is scalable to meet the value of the grant award. We have not secured other funding for this project, so the scalability of apartment units is key to meeting the ARPA Grant. If we are awarded, we can begin to seek funding and donations from a wide range of private individuals, foundation, and corporations to support the expansion of additional apartment units. With the backing of our parent organization, Empath Health, we are confident that we can carry out the potential expansion of this project.

Project Preparedness*

If your letter of intent is approved, you will have 30 days to submit a full proposal. This will require multiple estimates/bids for your project that detail the costs you've sketched out above from potential contractors that would do the actual work.

Where are you in the planning process for the implementation of this project? Please describe your organization's readiness for this project including your ability to collect bids and select contractors and/or vendors. **If you have already selected a contractor for the project, you will need to describe how that contractor was chosen.**

Example
Better Tomorrow has spoken with contractors about their counseling center expansion project, but has only sought one proposal from a contractor. Better Tomorrow would describe so below, having sketched out the costs in the previous question. Better Tomorrow would indicate its plan to obtain more quotes/bids upon submitting this LOI.

Community Arts 'R Us has begun construction on its new arts center, as it had secured 75% of the funding for it before the pandemic. Therefore, a contractor has already been selected, and is looking to obtain the funding necessary to complete the project. Below, Community Arts 'R Us would explain it has a cost proposal ready to upload from their selected contractor, and is ready to carry out the rest of the project if funding is awarded.

In February 2022, a contractor/bid was selected through a formal RFP process from prospective developer/owners for a 24-unit build/design. If we are invited to move forward with the ARPA grant, this bid will have to be updated (due to increase in construction costs & availability of ARPA funds).

Additionally, conversations have taken place between the realtors and owners of the proposed project site regarding the sale of the property. The purchase of the property would be contingent upon this ARPA grant.

With the backing of our parent organization, we have staff dedicated to the construction and ongoing building maintenance. The VP of Mission Care and Support Centers has many years of experience with these types of construction projects and has been providing leadership for this project through the initial RFP. His department currently oversees 54 facilities in 19 towns in 11 counties totaling over 650,000 SF of properties and will continue to provide support through the entire process, including the sale of the property, managing the design/build and ongoing building maintenance of the property.

Other Funding Sources*

Please describe any other funding not already mentioned that your organization has applied for or obtained for this project. This includes but is not limited to Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), local government grants (including Tourist Development Council funding), foundation grants, and donors (you do not need to disclose donor identities, simply amount raised that is allocated to this project). This includes any matching grants or in-kind contributions you may have obtained.

If none, please write N/A.

N/A
As referenced in the Cost Difference section of this application, we have not applied for or obtained additional funding for this project.

Changes in Operating Costs*

Please answer this question based on the descriptions below:

- If this project **increases** ongoing operational costs (programmatic, operating maintenance or other costs), how will you compensate for the difference?

- If this project **decreases** ongoing operating costs, how will it do so?

- If this project **does not affect** operating costs, please note so below.

There will be minimal increases to ongoing operational costs to the organization for the apartment building and property (i.e., maintenance, repairs, insurance, landscaping, electric, water/sewer, etc.). We will factor in the costs for these ongoing expenses and they will be covered through the rental income that will be collected from tenants from voucher programs and fair market rent revenues.

Fund Management Capacity*

Please describe your organization's capacity to manage these potential ARPA funds in terms of fiscal management and financial infrastructure.

This includes, but is not limited to, the use of accounting software that can track a general ledger and multiple accounts and the ability to work on a reimbursement-basis.

The inability to handle a reimbursement-basis grant does not disqualify your organization from applying.

EPIC receives strong administration support from Empath Health, including finance, accounting, procurement, human resources, IT, regulatory compliance, and quality management. EPIC is a financially solvent organization that can operate for more than 90 days pending reimbursement without financial hardship. We rely on a robust diversity of funding sources, including public and private grant funding, corporate donors, and individual giving from the Tampa Bay community. We are adept at mobilizing in-kind donations and volunteer time to support programming.

EPIC/Empath Health is committed to being a good steward of the public resources with which we have been entrusted. Financial statements are accurately prepared and submitted timely to management and our Board of Directors on a monthly basis. Our accounting systems provide reasonable checks and balances on a cost/benefit basis, to assure the integrity of the financial management of our organization.

Additional Information

Additional Upload

If you have something else to share, you can upload it here in PDF format.

Please note: Due to limitation of this grants system, the upload field will not carry over to the full application if you are moved forward to the full application phase. You will need to upload this file again if you are moved forward in the process.

Anything else to share?

If you have any details to share regarding this grant request, you may do so below.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads
No files were uploaded