



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **New Planning Structure for HIV is Not a Crime Training Academy**

The Sero Project, a U.S.-based national network of people living with HIV (PLHIV), has announced that the fourth HIV is Not a Crime Training Academy (HINAC4) will be produced in partnership with four other national PLHIV networks. They are: Positive Women's Network-USA (also a partner with HINAC2 and HINAC3), Positively Trans, Thrive SS and U.S. PLHIV Caucus.

Venita Ray, Deputy Director of Positive Women's Network-USA states "Our goal going into our third year as partners for HINAC4 is to continue to develop leaders to be equipped with the right tools and networking resources to win against unjust and antiquated laws impacting our most marginalized communities. We are proud of continuing efforts like Black United Leadership Institute (BULI) featured at HINAC3. BULI was an all-day pre-institute hosted for Black leaders in the movement. The time is now and our communities need us."

HIV is Not a Crime (HINAC) is a biennial gathering of people living with HIV (PLHIV), HIV policy leaders and other stakeholders, primarily from the U.S., that educates and trains advocates to mobilize communities to end HIV criminalization, support PLHIV empowerment, and facilitate building coalition and common cause with other social justice movements.

The gathering particularly focuses on uplifting the work of PLHIV and PLHIV networks, as well as grassroots activists engaged in intersecting issues (racial and economic justice, LGBT, drug policy, mass incarceration, sex work, immigration, etc.) Positively Trans representative Kayla Gore expresses, "The ability to direct our individual organizational objectives into a collaborative program that focuses on the intersectionalities of HIV criminalization, the fight for racial justice and empowering individuals to participate in policy advocacy is something we are proud to be a part of."

The first HIV is Not a Crime event was held in 2014 at Grinnell College, in Grinnell, Iowa; subsequent events were at the University of Alabama/Huntsville in 2016 and at IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) in Indianapolis in 2018. After each HINAC gathering,

community representatives and organizers review what was accomplished and strategize to make the next HINAC better, stronger and more effective for our movement.

The four networks participating in HINAC4--Positively Trans, Positive Women's Network-USA. THRIVESS, and the U.S. PLHIV Caucus--have each designated representatives to serve on the HINAC Executive Committee, which is responsible for oversight of the production of the meeting, including making major decisions such as the host venue and date for the training academy. "This is what embodies network empowerment when leaders come together to not just be the catalysts of change, but to guide and design how the change is implemented in various communities," Malcolm Reid describing the partnering organization strategy, "THRIVESS was created for just that reason, create and drive the change we want to see. We are excited to work with such a powerful group of leaders."

Just as our PLHIV self-empowerment movement advocates for government agencies, service providers, policy organizations and others to respect, support and elevate the voices of PLHIV and the networks we have created to represent us; Sero seeks to do the same within our movement. The changes for HINAC4 include moving much of the scholarship selection process to the partner organizations for them to each manage as they choose and to more closely engage the most affected communities in the program development processes.

Each of the partner organizations will also co-chair, along with a Sero staff member, one of six Work Groups: Fundraising, Hospitality & Culture, Program, Outreach & Media, Scholarship, and Venue & Logistics.

Ronald Johnson, US PLHIV Caucus Chair states, "Returning from previous HINAC training academies has built leaders determined to change outdated policy, build effective statewide coalitions and push against accepting the status quo. This is one of the premier spaces for skills building in legislative and social justice action. Our organization is proud to add our support to these efforts."

The new partnership for HINAC4 reflects the growing cooperation and mutual support between PLHIV networks in the U.S. representing various constituencies. Strengthening the structure of PLHIV networks across the country is a core part of Sero's mission.

An Introduction and Engagement Webinar was hosted on May 23rd, which can be watched here: [HINAC4 Introduction and Engagement Webinar](#). Anyone party interested in joining a work group can complete this [google form](#) and will then be invited to join a Google Group: [HINAC4 Training Academy Work Groups Volunteers](#).

For further information about Sero Project or HIV is Not a Crime Training Academy, please contact Tami Haught, HINAC Director at [tami.haught@seroproject.com](mailto:tami.haught@seroproject.com).