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The Sero Project Justice Institute Launches as the Inaugural Opportunity to Mentor and Build New Leaders

The Sero Project announces; *The Sero Project Justice Institute (SPJI)* which is a year long program designed to nurture leadership skills and self-empowerment to twelve participants annually. SPJI participants will gain advocacy skills to assist their confidence and participation in state coalition work; equipping them to strategically plan around legislative and community challenges that are unique in their state. SPJI will help deepen and enhance grassroots movements, especially those led by PLHIV, to end the wrongful use of one's HIV status in criminal prosecutions and address the racism, homophobia, transphobia and overcriminalization that disenfranchises communities. Participants will increase skills and tools for strategic planning, gather support, and mentorship. The curriculum is developed and taught in coordination with experts across our network over a variety of justice advocacy fields.

“The Sero Project Justice Institute (SPJI) will play a critical role in shaping the future of our movement. This innovative program will not only change laws, but save lives.” states Charles Stephens, Executive Director of the Counter Narrative Project and partner organization to the Health Not Prison Collective.

Participants will be guided by Sero staff and community experts to help with documentation, understanding bill language, community mobilization strategies, message framing, and other topics through eight modules after their orientation session. Each session will provide participants an opportunity to put skills to practice in real-time and through scenarios created by expert facilitators. “This interactive year-long opportunity will lend itself to informing and equipping advocates that desire to step into, or take their first steps into policy advocacy”, shares Sero’s Southern Engagement Community Coordinator, Kamaria Laffrey. “This is being considered an extension of the bi-annual HIV Is Not A Crime Training Academy hosted by The Sero Project and partner organizations, with a more concentrated focus on foundational steps in coalition building, strengthening and transforming leadership.”

At the closing of the institute each year, participants will have been guided in creating a community toolkit, have the opportunity to lead a teach-back workshop to their peers and will earn a certificate indicating their completion of the institute.

The Sero Project will be hosting an introductory webinar describing the Institute and explaining the application process on November 30th at 6 pm ET. You must [register](#) in advance for the informational webinar. [Register here for the Sero Project Justice Institute Introductory webinar.](#) The application link will be shared after the webinar and the recording link can be added to the google form.

The Sero Project Justice Institute is made possible with the generous funding of Gilead for the Health Not Prisons Collective and in partnership with the ViiV Positive Action Community grant.

If you have any questions about the Sero Project Justice Institute please contact: spjiinfo@seroproject.com.

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About the Sero Project: Sero centers PLHIV leadership to end HIV criminalization, mass incarceration, racism and social injustice by supporting inclusive PLHIV networks to improve policy outcomes, advance human rights and promote healing justice. Sero is focused on ending inappropriate criminal prosecutions of PLHIV, including for non-disclosure of their HIV status, potential or perceived HIV exposure or HIV transmission and on building and supporting PLHIV networks. For more information, please visit www.seroproject.com or email spjiinfo@seroproject.com.