DIFFA
DESIGN INDUSTRIES FOUNDATION
CHICAGO

June 8, 2026

Dear Grant Applicant:

DIFFA/Chicago is pleased to announce the opening of applications for our 2026 *Excellence In Care* Awards. Through these unrestricted grants, DIFFA Chicago seeks to support nonprofit 501(c)3 community-based organizations serving the Chicagoland area whose work creates a meaningful impact for individuals who are HIV positive, living with AIDS, or at risk of infection. These grants are intended to provide flexible funding that allows organizations to respond to evolving community needs, strengthen existing services, expand outreach efforts, and advance innovative approaches in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

DIFFA Chicago's mission statement is to champion the fight to end HIV/AIDS through awareness, prevention, and the pursuit of a cure. If you are an organization in the Chicagoland area whose mission aligns not only with DIFFA Chicago's but also with that of Get To Zero Illinois (https://gtzillinois.hiv/), we welcome your organization to apply for an Excellence In Care award.

DIFFA Chicago awards grants to support targeted programs and collaborative projects that create a meaningful and direct impact in the fight against HIV/AIDS. These specific programs/projects should ideally focus entirely on HIV/AIDS and populations most in need. They could be related to new programs or innovative delivery models, programs related to shifts in government funding or reductions due to the Affordable Care Act, PrEP, culturally specific education projects, or new data analytics/trend tracking.

Organizations seeking funding must submit the following information, which will be scored at the percentages noted:

Funding Categories (Select all that apply)

Advocacy/Education	Wellness Management	Research
Prevent/Diagnose, Legal Services, Training, Awareness	Support, Counseling, Clinical Services, Testing	Pursuit of Cure, Continuum of Care, Workfor Development

1. Organization Information (0%):
    a. Contact information for the primary person in your organization who will lead the project/program for which funds are being requested (name, title, email, phone number)
    b. A listing of the organization's officers and titles

c. If you are a separate group within a larger organization, please provide information on how your parent organization is or is not providing support to your organization and specifically for the program request.
d. Please confirm whether your organization has received an Excellence in Care award in the past three years.

2. Organization Mission (10%):
    a. Submit your organization's mission statement.
    b. Explain how the program aligns with your organization's mission and the program's core client base.
    c. Describe how your organization aligns with the DIFFA Chicago Mission, the goals of Get to Zero Illinois, and specifically the priority populations noted within the Get to Zero Illinois plan.

3. Project/Program Information (75%):
    a. FOCUS (35%): The general description of the project/program, including its specific focus on Get To Zero and whether this is an ongoing program that DIFFA Chicago has previously supported.
        i. Describe the project/program and how it aligns with the Get To Zero Initiative.
        ii. If you have received an *Excellence In Care* award over the past three years, please indicate if this year's funding request is for a new program or the continuation of the existing one.
        iii. Include statistics on your program's served population (i.e., the number of actual HIV/AIDS-related cases and those specifically related to service provided to one or more of our core constituencies).
        iv. Describe any unique elements of this program or how its implementation differs from other programs within your organization.
        v. If your project/program is not entirely dedicated to HIV/AIDS, please identify the reasons why
        vi. Explain why and how your program/project's focus/priority population fits within the funding category.

    b. IMPACT (30%): The impact you intend to make with the project/program and the ways in which you will evaluate the success of the project/program. *Please be aware that a part of our grant process includes a request for a mid-year update on the impact our grant is making on your program.*
        i. Describe your project/program's objectives and activities.
        ii. Share your expected impact/outcomes for both short and long-term goals.

iii. Explain the evaluation process your organization will use to determine the program's success. (Include the process goals, outcome goals, how you will track the planning and implementation of activities, the person/s responsible for monitoring, and how the activities and outcomes will be monitored.)
iv. If it is for an existing program, share specifics on the impact this program has made over the past year/s.

c. TIMING (10%): The project/program's timeline. *Please note that this does not need to be a one-year project.*
    i. Provide the timeline for the project/program. (Include key deliverables, key activities, person/team/agency responsible, and target dates.)
    ii. If applicable, provide any pertinent past/ongoing timeline data.
    iii. If applicable, provide any information on how the program has changed and/or improved over time.

d. COST (5%): While DIFFA Chicago grants are unrestricted, we are interested in your intentions for the use of the grant.
    i. Submit a detailed budget outline for up to $50K maximum and define specifically how the DIFFA Chicago award will be used for the project/program.

4. Required Attachments (0%):
    a. Submit audited financial statements for the organization for the past two (2) fiscal years.
    b. Submit a list of the top ten (10) funding sources and the amounts given to your organization for the previous two (2) years.
    c. Submit information demonstrating the ratio of the organization's operating expenses to direct client care.
    d. Submit the organization's IRS 501(c) (3) designation notification letter
    e. W-9
    f. Submit the organization's most recent operating budget
    g. If applicable, submit any Memorandums of Understanding if applying as a collaborative or a partnership

5. Interview and potential site visit (10%):
    a. If your organization is being considered for one of our Excellence In Care grants, an interview and possible site visit will be scheduled with an appropriate representative/team from our

organization/program. You can expect that during this interview/site visit, you will be expected to clarify questions regarding your proposal, your team's experience, the impact of your program, and other information as needed.

Please visit our website to get more information and access the application portal. www.diffachicago.org/grants/

Your application must be electronically submitted by 4:00 p.m. CST on Friday, July 17, 2026. No exceptions will be made.

DIFFA Chicago grants are awarded based on excellence in care, proof of impact from our award (if previously awarded), efficiency of service, and overall operation of the organization. Each organization will also have an interview with a team of volunteers from DIFFA Chicago. No organization is judged based solely on its proposal (application, financials & letters of recommendation), and if deemed appropriate, a site visit would occur. Grants may not be awarded if deadlines are not met or if the submission packet is incomplete.

Please submit any questions in writing to admin@diffachicago.org, and allow 3-4 days for a response. The DIFFA Chicago Grants Committee and Board of Directors will contact the award recipients in the fall of 2026 with their decision. The *Excellence in Care* awards will be presented on December 1, 2026.

Sincerely,

Excellence In Care Grant Committee