How $10M From Drugmaker Gilead Sciences Promotes Racial Equity

These 20 groups received grants from Gilead's Racial Equity Community Impact Fund.

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It's no secret that African Americans are at higher risk of contracting HIV. In fact, as the last year has shown, they experience more health inequities in general, including those related to COVID-19. A series of new grants totaling $10 million aims to address this challenge by supporting organizations that promote racial equity and social justice.

Gilead Sciences, perhaps best known for its line of HIV drugs, awarded a total of $10 million in grants to 20 organizations as part of its newly launched Racial Equity Community Impact Fund, according to an announcement by Gilead.

"This is, for many of them, the largest donation that they have received for their organization. So we are happy, and they are thrilled to be part of this community impact fund," Shanell McGoy, director of corporate social responsibility at Gilead, told Fierce Pharma.

As Fierce Pharma points out, the fund is part of a growing trend among drugmakers to support health equity and advocate for racial equality. Johnson & Johnson and AbbVie, for example, have pledged over $100 million and $50 million, respectively, to similar efforts.

Groups receiving grants are based in the United States and focus on three areas, as spelled out by Gilead:

- Community Advocacy and Mobilization: Groups that organize and mobilize communities to join the quest for racial equity and social justice, working toward an equitable distribution of resources for Black communities.

- Social Justice: Organizations and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) training the next generation of leaders.

- Educational Innovation: Institutions focused on providing educational advancement and career development services for Black students, young professionals and families from cradle to career.

The 20 organizations receiving Gilead funding include:

1. 100 Black Men of Metropolitan Houston
2. Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub
3. Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity (BOLD)
4. Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)
5. Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington
6. Center for Racial Justice in Education
7. Claflin University
8. East Oakland Youth Development Center
9. The Equity Alliance
10. Grantmakers for Girls of Color
11. Harlem Children’s Zone
12. Horatio Williams Foundation
13. The Marsha P. Johnson Institute
14. Morehouse College
15. Shaw University
16. Southerners on New Ground (SONG)
17. Spelman College
18. Tougaloo College
19. Ubuntu Inc.
20. Xavier University of Louisiana.

“Gilead is committed to creating equitable opportunities for the patients we serve, our employees and the communities in which we live and work,” Daniel O’Day, the chairman and chief executive officer of Gilead Sciences, said in the press statement. “The Racial Equity Community Impact Fund will provide resources to groups that are working on the front lines to combat social inequities directly impacting the health and wellness of the Black community. This program is one of the ways that we are delivering on our commitment to promote racial equity and social justice.”

The fund builds on other Gilead programs, notably the COMPASS (Commitment to Partnership in Addressing HIV/AIDS in Southern States) Initiative, through which the pharmaceutical manufacturer has pledged to invest $100 million over 10 years in the fight against HIV in the South, the epicenter of today’s epidemic. For more on that, see “40 Group Fighting HIV int eh South Awarded Total of $2.3M in Grants.”

Similarly, GLAAD, an advocacy group that focuses on LGBTQ representations in the media, received a $9 million grant from Gilead for two of its programs. Funding from the grants helped GLAAD spearhead a national survey titled the State of HIV Stigma Study. Survey results were released last summer. For more, see the POZ article “How Comfortable Are Americans Around People With HIV? [VIDEO]” and watch the video above (it features Michelle Visage, Peppermint, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Tatiana Maslany and more).

To learn more about the intersection of race and the HIV epidemic, see the POZ Basics on HIV and African Americans. And for a collection of articles about COVID-19 and the Black community, click Real Health’s tag #COVID-19.

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