

# Syringe Access Fund



## The Largest Collaborative Fund in the U.S Focusing on Syringe Exchange Policy & Programs

Contaminated needles result in 3,000 to 5,000 new cases of HIV and approximately 10,000 new cases of hepatitis C in the United States each year. Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs) are a proven and cost-effective approach for preventing transmission of HIV and viral hepatitis among people who inject drugs (PWID), reducing risk of “accidental sticks” to sanitation workers and police, and engaging PWID in treatment programs for substance uses.

The Syringe Access Fund is a national grantmaking collaborative that supports initiatives that reduce use of shared syringes and ensure their safe disposal. In more than ten years of grantmaking, the SAF has made remarkable impact on public policy and public health, providing 289 grants to 146 organizations in 32 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To date, the SAF has awarded more than \$15.1 million.

## Improving Public Health, Increasing Public Safety, and Saving Public Dollars

Syringe exchange programs (SEPs) increase access to health care, drug treatment, and opioid overdose prevention **without increasing drug use**. In addition, SEPs have proven to create future cost-savings by reducing new HIV and Hep C infections. Despite the public benefit and associated cost-savings of SEPs, the vast majority of SEPs operate with little investment or support. Even worse, in some states, SEPs are not allowed to operate due to misguided and often outdated laws.

In 2015, Indiana’s ban on SEPs played a key role in the unprecedented outbreak of HIV in the state. In Scott County, home to just over 24,000 people, 142 people became newly infected with HIV in less than six months due to shared needles. To put that in context, the number of infections linked to shared needles in Scott County where SEPs had been outlawed far exceeded the number of infections linked to shared needles in New York City, a city of over 8 million citizens, but that supports SEPs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health agencies quickly moved to address the outbreak, but by then it was no longer an issue of prevention, as much as one of mitigation. The lifetime treatment costs of the 142 new HIV infections in Scott County will exceed \$50 million according to CDC estimates. **These new infections, the associated sorrow and fear, and the high cost to society could have been prevented through SEPs.**

10TH ANNIVERSARY

**\$15.1** million

**66** million clean syringes distributed

**150** grantees

**350,000+** clients

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

**\$2.4** million in grants

**15.4** million clean syringes exchanged

**54** grantees

**135,000** clients not un-duplicated

## Public Benefit – Individual Impact

“Joseph’s” story is one of change. Of promise. Of hope.

And of second chances.

In 2010, Joseph was using heroin and resistant to accessing medical care. Enter SAF grantee, Family Health Centers of San Diego. Staff knew Joseph from their Safe Point, San Diego program—the only city-sanctioned syringe exchange program. By 2013, staff began to meet Joseph on a weekly basis to create short-term, achievable goals using proven harm reduction techniques. Within three months, Joseph re-engaged in HIV and mental health care.



In 2014, Joseph decided to stop using drugs and enter a detoxification facility. Thanks to strong working relationships between Safe Point staff and local treatment facilities, Joseph was able to enroll into a detox program within a week. Joseph not only graduated from his detox program but subsequently from an outpatient treatment program too. Then Joseph set his sight on a different kind of graduation altogether: college.

Today, Joseph is enrolled at a local community college, has a steady job, and stable housing. Joseph has even reconnected with his family.

## The Work Continues... We Need Your Help

In 2016 and beyond, the work must continue to ensure safe and dignified access to sterile syringes through a combination of:

- Direct investment in services that provide sterile syringes
- Grants to support the promotion of state and local policies that increase access to sterile syringes
- Technical assistance to advance the field

The Syringe Access Fund seeks new partners to expand our impact. Corporations, foundations, and others seeking to make a meaningful impact on infectious diseases, public health and safety, and saving of public dollars can learn more by contacting:

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*If syringe access policies are to be advanced and if Syringe Exchange Programs are to remain viable and expand, the private philanthropic community must be an essential partner.*

### SAF Partners Include:



Irene Diamond Fund