



## **RYAN WHITE PLANNING COUNCILS**

The [Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program](#) works with cities, states, and local community-based organization to provide HIV-related services. The program serves those who do not have sufficient health care coverage or financial resources for coping with HIV, and fills gaps in care not covered by other sources, including Medicaid and Medicare. Local and state planning councils determine how resources are allocated and used. Because of the planning councils' mission and make-up, they can be a good target for advocacy to broaden support for you HIV criminalization modernization campaign.

- **Ryan White Planning Council Make-up:** Under federal law, areas that have reported at least 2,000 HIV cases in the most recent five years and have a population of at least 50,000 are considered Eligible Metropolitan Areas (EMA), which may create bylaws that govern their own planning council.

Each EMA's planning council is different, but all planning councils must reflect local demographics, and include consumers – that is, people living with HIV who use Ryan White-funded services – and providers with expertise in serving consumers. At a minimum, 33% of planning council members must be consumers, but an EMA's bylaws may increase this percentage.

- **Ryan White Planning Council Tasks:** Each planning council's tasks are determined by its bylaws. In general, a planning council is charged with setting priorities for services to fund and allocating specific dollar amounts to particular services. This work is informed by local demographics and needs.

A planning council jointly develops a plan for the provision of services with grantees (this is usually an elected official and the agency providing health care services; for example, in New York City, the grantee is the mayor, and the agency is the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene).

- **Ryan White Planning Councils and PJP State Advocacy:** Generally, planning councils may not engage in lobbying or take a position on specific legislation. Planning councils interpret lobbying restrictions differently. Since planning councils may take different positions, endorsements and support for measures may vary. For example, in New York City, the planning council endorsed the [Positive Justice Project's Consensus Statement on HIV Criminalization in the United States](#), but would not endorse a similar statement condemning a New York State HIV-specific bill.

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## **RYAN WHITE PLANNING COUNCIL ADVOCACY MODEL**

*This advocacy model is designed to help advocates approach Ryan White planning councils that may be interested in supporting the [Positive Justice Project's Consensus Statement on HIV Criminalization in the United States](#). This plan may not work in every city but it has proven to be effective in New York City.*

- As you engage in advocacy with your local Ryan White planning council, please remember that planning councils may interpret lobbying restrictions differently. Each planning council may, therefore, have different positions on legislative advocacy. A particular planning council's position on legislative advocacy may also vary as membership changes.
- Visit your local planning council's website to review its bylaws.
- Contact planning council staff to determine which committee is most relevant to discuss HIV criminalization. Most planning councils have a policy committee, which keeps members abreast of current law and policy issues related to HIV.
- Contact the policy committee, and request to present on HIV criminalization.
- Present on HIV criminalization. Make sure to include a particular "ask" or a list of specific requests. For example, you can ask for:
  - the planning council's formal endorsement of the PJP [Consensus Statement](#);
  - the release of a planning council-specific statement or resolution on HIV criminalization; and/or
  - a letter to the mayor's office and the health department recommending HIV-specific local or state legislation, etc.
- Research the planning council's procedures for presenting an issue for planning council approval by majority vote. For example, in New York City, a quorum of the policy committee must have a majority vote to send a recommendation to the executive committee, which, in turn, must do the same to allow an issue to be presented for full planning council vote.
- If a resolution is passed, make sure the planning council carries out the approved action as promised.

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