

**African Services  
Committee, Inc**  
Harlem, New York City

**A community-based organization in  
New York City dedicated to improving  
the health and self-sufficiency of the  
African community**

# Background

- Established in 1981 & based in Harlem
- Serving 7,000 African immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers each year
- A staff of 40, representing 20 countries with more than 20 languages spoken including:
  - *Amharic, Bemba, Bambara, Haitian Creole, Diula, French, English, Kiswahili, Lingala, Mandinga, Pulaar, Soninke, Spanish, Tiggriggna, Twi, Wolof*
- Providing health, housing, legal & social services with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support
- Culturally-appropriate services for newcomers & resources for independent and healthy living

# **Our Programs and Services**

- **Multilingual HIV prevention street outreach**
- **HIV/AIDS awareness workshops for African community leaders**
- **Free onsite STI, TB, Hepatitis B/C COVID-19 and HIV Testing**
- **COVID-19 Vaccination/Navigation Assistance**
- **Care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS**
- **Access to care, hospital escort, medical interpretation & patient advocacy**
- **Housing assistance, legal advocacy**
- **Food pantry & nutrition assistance**
- **ESL classes**

# **Care and Support Services For People Living with HIV/AIDS**

- **Testing (HIV, STI's, Hepatitis, TB, COVID-19) and Navigation to Access and Retention in Care**
- **Partner notification, disclosure & risk reduction counseling**
- **Case management**
- **Legal Services- advocacy, representation**
- **Housing assistance (HOPWA)**
- **Nutrition education pantry and vitamin supplements**
- **Anti-Stigma Initiative, addressing stigma and discrimination against Africans living with HIV/AIDS**

# Supportive Case Management, Housing and Legal Programs

- Both single and family focused CM
- Culturally and Linguistically appropriate services
- Health Education, Individual and Group Counseling, Treatment Adherence, Escort and Medical Interpretation
- Access to Medical Care, Housing Benefits and Legal Services

# Barriers to Health Care

- Uninsured
  - Self-employed
  - Small business
  - Legal status- ability to work
- Language
  - Navigating complex health care system
- Preventive Health Care
  - Prioritize urgent issues- shelter, food, clothing

# Barriers to Behavioral Health

- Identifying and accepting mental health issues
- Stigma around Mental Health Services
  - Engaging in mental health counseling
- Finding culturally competent mental health providers eg.- French speaking counselors

# Current Issues

- Anti-Immigrant environment (Pre-Biden Administration)
  - News coverage
  - Personal encounters with ICE
  - Confusion about what is Public Charge?
    - Eligibility for public benefits



# What can you do?

- Advocate for the less fortunate
  - Empathy: “if I was in their shoes, what would I do?”
- Get involved in pro-immigrant advocacy groups