PEPFAR stands firmly and unequivocally with and for key populations. These groups include gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, sex workers, transgender persons, and prisoners.

In almost every country in the world, members of these populations are at greater risk for HIV than the rest of the population. Globally, these key populations account for 35 percent of new HIV infections, according to UNAIDS, whereas they make up a much smaller proportion of the total population.

PEPFAR has several dedicated initiatives (see below and sidebar) for expanding access to and retention in HIV prevention, treatment, and care services by members of key populations, including a $100 million Key Populations Investment Fund. Since 2013, PEPFAR has invested more than $300 million in programs focusing on key populations.

Addressing Stigma and Discrimination
When any member of a community is stigmatized or unable to access services due to discrimination, the health and human dignity of everyone in the community are threatened. Laws, regulations, and policies that relate to HIV as well as stigma and discrimination on the part of health care workers and community leaders can deter members of vulnerable groups from seeking and obtaining health services.

PEPFAR’s programs support the creation of non-stigmatizing environments that enable all persons receiving services to have consistently safe access to quality clinical and community-based care and support.

The Key Populations Investment Fund
Demonstrating the depth of our commitment to key populations, PEPFAR has launched a $100 million Key Populations Investment Fund to increase access to quality HIV services for these groups. PEPFAR is consulting with civil society and stakeholders on the planning and implementation of the fund.

The aim of this fund is to identify, measure, and change the complex dynamics driving stigma, discrimination, and violence as well as to expand key populations’ access to and retention in HIV prevention, treatment, and care services. Bolstered by data, it will support multi-year and comprehensive approaches to directly fund community-based organizations serving key populations.

The Local Capacity Initiative
The $25.5 million Local Capacity Initiative provides funding to civil society organizations in 14 PEPFAR countries to support and build their capacity for addressing HIV/AIDS through legal and policy advocacy, stigma and discrimination reduction, and planning and implementation of country programs.

This initiative carries a strong focus on supporting civil society as an advocate for the health care needs in communities. Grantees lead and mobilize communities to encourage country ownership of and accountability for health services.