Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) is requesting $300,000 per year for five years to serve as a model demonstration site to better engage and retain youth and adult transgender women of color in Chicago in quality HIV care. With funding, HBHC will achieve the following goals: 1) to implement a comprehensive program which identifies, engages and retains transgender women of color, ages 16 and older, in quality HIV care to improve health outcomes and decrease HIV/STI transmission rates; 2) to provide community outreach and education resulting in 133,200 contacts with transgender women of color over the project period; 3) to provide 3,000 HIV tests to transgender women of color over the project period driving increased awareness of HIV status and engaging those who test positive into care; 4) to engage 120 transgender women of color into HIV care and 1,600 transgender women into HBHC’s THInC Program over the project period; and 5) to retain 100% transgender women of color in HIV primary care to reduce transmission rates and improve health outcomes.

Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) is one of the nation’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations serving over 36,000 adults and youth annually providing primary medical care, behavioral health services, research, HIV/STD prevention and testing, and youth and elder services. We have one of the largest community-based HIV practices in the Midwest. Our mission is to eliminate the disparities in health care experienced by LGBT individuals through research, education and the provision of services that promote health and wellness. HBHC is an experienced provider of medical care, HIV care, and hormone therapy to the transgender population. Between 2006 and 2011, HBHC was funded by the Centers for Disease Control to provide HIV prevention and referral services to young transgender persons of color and their partners; and engaged over 700 participants over the project period. From 2010 to 2012, HBHC provided care to over 1,014 transgender individuals, of which 44% were trans women of color.

HBHC, in collaboration with two community partners – VIDA/SIDA and Taskforce Prevention and Community Services – proposes to implement an innovative intervention to identify, engage and retain HIV positive youth and adult Hispanic and African American transgender women on the north, west, and northwest sides of Chicago. The proposed intervention consists of four components: 1) street-level outreach and engagement; 2) “Rest Stop” social nights, which include a variety of services to engage the target population; 3) access to affordable, safe hormone therapy for gender transition through HBHC’s Trans Informed Consent program (THInC); and 4) provision of culturally sensitive HIV and primary medical care in a gender affirming environment.