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Incorporation of Participant Input and Data Collection in successful RFA development for HIV prevention services in Northern Manhattan.

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Introduction: In early 2008, the AIDS Institute prepared to issue an RFA for prevention to replace an existing agency which had been unsuccessful in resolicitation. The HIV prevention activities under the RFA will serve neighborhoods in Northern Manhattan, the epicenter of the epidemic in New York City.

Objectives: The aims of this project were threefold: to prepare an epidemiological profile for use in the RFA application, create an environment where underserved communities could provide input to be used in the RFA process and lastly, access, analyze and interpret data sources for use in an epidemiological profile.

Methods: Community forums took place in January 2008 in Central Harlem and Washington Heights, key neighborhoods in Northern Manhattan. Presentations were simultaneously translated from Spanish to English in Washington Heights and the reverse in Central Harlem. The materials were tailored to education and literacy levels of the forum participants and speed of delivery dictated by simultaneous translation.

Results: The input solicited and gathered was incorporated into a needs assessment profile which informed the success and direction of the RFA process and structure.

Conclusion: These government/community forums modeled a successful collaborative effort to identify and collect input on services. The tools developed for presentation at the community forums were well delivered and immediately utilized by community members to support their own statements and testimony. This model is particularly suited to underserved communities where resident buy-in is vital to successful prevention activities