

## iAspire

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### Project Description

The purpose of this project is to evaluate an existing HIV prevention intervention, the Employment Services Program, a vocational rehabilitation program for HIV+ persons at the Positive Resource Center (PRC) in San Francisco. The Employment Services Program is an innovative and comprehensive program that helps clients overcome structural barriers (poverty, homelessness) to HIV prevention and care. This outcome evaluation will examine the effects of vocational rehabilitation on improved ART adherence and reduced HIV transmission risk.

Our team will recruit 200 HIV+ persons who are newly initiating services at the PRC. Participants will complete a baseline assessment and 6-month and 12-month follow-up assessments to examine changes in HIV-related health behaviors as well as evaluate plausible mechanisms (enhanced psychological adjustment and increased socio-economic status) whereby the PRC achieves beneficial outcomes.

We also plan to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews at baseline and 12-month follow-up with a subset of 20 participants. Qualitative interviews will examine the perceptions of PRC clients regarding important components of the Employment Services Program as well as barriers to continuing to receive services at the PRC.

### Significance

In order to optimize HIV prevention efforts, innovative interventions that empower individuals to surmount structural barriers like poverty that affect vulnerability and risk could substantially impact the course of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. If the PRC vocational rehabilitation program is effective in improving ART adherence and reducing HIV transmission risk behavior, then this vocational rehabilitation approach could be disseminated widely to mitigate the effects of poverty as a structural barrier to prevention with HIV+ persons.