



# Living Room

Jerry Henderson  
President  
Joining Hearts  
P.O. Box 54808  
Atlanta, GA 30308

June 1~~5~~<sup>9</sup>, 2017

Dear Jerry and the Joining Hearts Board of Directors,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request for funding to support our Emergency Lodging program at Living Room. Joining Heart's support over the past years of our organization has been invaluable in allowing Living Room to build our capacity to serve community members in need and ensure that no one living with HIV/AIDS is forced to spend a night sleeping on the streets. We hope to continue to grow to meet the increasing demand for our services.

Gratefully,

Angela Susten

Executive Director  
Living Room, Inc.

Joining Hearts Support Proposal  
~~June~~April 2017

**Request Amount:** \$50,000

**Funding Focus:** *Emergency Lodging* for those living with HIV/AIDS and facing homelessness in Atlanta

**Organizational Overview:**

Living Room's mission is to ensure stable housing and improved health through housing support for people living with HIV/AIDS. Housing for individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS is critical, not just because stable housing is a tenant of basic human dignity, but also because it is the proven foundation of effective HIV medical treatment and the springboard for lasting life transformations. In Atlanta, Living Room is the leading agency providing assistance to PLWHA who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Since our inception in 1995, we have been serving the community by helping thousands of clients every year find much-needed services and sustainable, affordable housing, as well as equipping clients with the tools and skills they need to be self-sufficient and never have to experience homelessness again.

**Program Overview:**

The *Emergency Lodging* program provides shelter for homeless families and individuals who are medically fragile or transgender. Living Room is the only agency in the state who guarantees that any individual or family facing sleeping on the streets can come into our office and will be offered an immediate housing option. All clients are provided assistance with developing a housing plan that focuses on obtaining stable housing.

**Need:**

Homelessness and the current epidemic state of HIV/AIDS are two major interrelated issues plaguing our community. According to the CDC, the state of Georgia has the third highest rate of HIV diagnosis in the country as well as the third highest lifetime risk of diagnosis, with one in every 51 residents being diagnosed in their lifetimes. Like these staggering state rates, the city of Atlanta fares even worse. The HIV diagnosis rate in the Atlanta area is twice that of the state diagnosis rate, and amongst other large metropolitan areas, Atlanta has the fifth highest rate of new diagnoses yearly. Further, it has the third highest rate of new diagnoses amongst males, second highest rates amongst African American males, highest in Hispanic/Latino men, and second highest in Hispanic/Latino females. Directly correlated with the disease, it is estimated that 30-40% of PLWHA are categorized as unstably housed, with 30-50% of PLWHA experiencing homelessness since being diagnosed with HIV. The cyclical nature of the relationship between HIV/AIDS and homelessness demonstrates the need for stable housing for PLWHA—living with HIV increases the risk of becoming homeless and being without a home increases the risk of acquiring and spreading HIV. According to the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, as much as 10% of the country's homeless population is living with HIV/AIDS. Further, in Atlanta it is estimated that there are 17,000 people and families living with HIV/AIDS who are housing insecure. Having stable housing is a proven intervention that can disrupt this cycle, significantly improving health outcomes for PLWHA and decreasing overall spread of the virus.

From 2015 to 2016, we saw a 91% increase in clients utilizing our Emergency Lodging program, going from 101 clients to 193 respectively. Of the clients utilizing these services, many have families that we are providing these emergency housing services to also. In 2016, we served 134 families in Emergency Lodging, which makes up 69% of the clients served in this program. Of these 132 were families with children and in 2016, we served 229 children through our Emergency Lodging services, in addition to their adult head of household.

We anticipate a continued increase in demand for these services and therefore, Living Room needs to be able to increase capacity. It costs \$35 per night to provide a single client with emergency lodging, and more for families. The average tenure in Emergency Lodging is between four and six weeks, but some people require additional time until they can move into stable housing. The majority of our program funding comes from the city of Atlanta Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA), which has recently changed its guidelines to only permitting funding for a maximum of 30 days in a hotel or residential facility. From their first interaction with Living Room, clients in the Emergency Lodging program are creating a long-term housing and stability plan, and meeting weekly with a case manager to discuss progress towards these goals. While the Emergency Lodging program is intended to provide clients with a temporary home while working towards finding a more permanent residency, for many of our clients, it is not feasible to [acquire housing](#) get applications, [compile necessary](#) ~~and~~ documents [together](#), apply for housing programs, and be accepted and have a home ready for move-in within four weeks. Funding from Joining Hearts would provide flexibility for those clients who desperately need more time in the program as well as help give Living Room the resources to make sure we are never forced to turn away someone in need.

### **Impact and Outcomes:**

Last year, over 190 individuals and families that were literally homeless came to Living Room to get off the streets that same day through our Emergency Lodging program. This program represents one of the most important ways we fulfill our mission and serve those in our community who are living with HIV/AIDS and experiencing homelessness. According to a large and growing body of research, housing status has a direct, powerful impact on HIV incidence, and is a stronger predictor of health outcomes than demographics, mental health, substance misuse, or use of other services. When our clients have a stable home, they don't have to worry about where they will be sleeping each [night](#), and are able to turn their attention to taking care of their health. Compared to those that are housed and HIV positive, homeless people living with HIV are more likely to delay HIV care, have less access to adequate care and HIV/AIDS treatment, and are less likely to adhere to therapy. As our organization grows, we are able to offer more services to more clients. From 2015 to 2016, our Emergency Lodging clients grew significantly in size, and we expect this trend to continue in the coming years. As of April 2017, we have already served 99 clients, and are on track to serve over 75% more clients in 2017 from the previous year. We aim to serve at least 220 clients in Emergency Lodging in 2018.

As gaining self-sufficiency of clients is a priority, another central goal is to help clients retain housing through our supportive case-management services. We track the outcomes of these services by evaluating and [monitoring](#) the number of emergency housing placements that obtain and maintain permanent, stable housing. Our goal is to have at least 80% of Emergency Lodging clients remain in stable housing after six months. Through follow-up with clients at intervals of three, six, nine, and twelve months following program exit, we identified that 88% of Emergency Lodging clients were able to discharge from the program into stable housing and 73% maintained stable housing after six months.