

REPRO MUTUAL AID:



A TOOLKIT FOR THOSE WHO

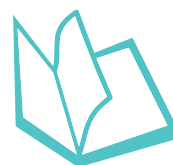
GIVE ^{AF}



ABORTION
ACCESS
FRONT

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Introduction

Abortion Access Front is dedicated to supporting independent abortion providers and the volunteers, clinic escorts, and funds that sustain them, and we are super excited to share some rewarding opportunities for you to join us!

Indie clinics provide most of the abortion care in the country and while doing so face relentless harassment from protesters and a barrage of bullshit laws from anti-abortion politicians.

The Coronavirus pandemic drove home just how hard it is to provide care because of these factors and just how little moral and practical support these amazing clinics actually get. As the nation honors medical professionals with 7pm claps and appreciative meal deliveries, abortion providers are experiencing escalated protests and threats. And to make matters worse, anti-abortion politicians have callously used COVID-19 as an excuse to try to shut them down. The result has been that abortion providers and the organizations helping patients seek care are experiencing overwhelming amounts of need, and we want to be able to mobilize our community to meet as many of these needs as we can.

That is why Abortion Access Front has expanded our [repro mutual aid project](#) to grow and sustain community support not only for clinics, but for abortion funds, escort groups, and other repro based organizations struggling to help patients right now.

Since March, we have supported more than 45 clinics and 6 non-clinic funds/justice groups with the help of dozens of AAF volunteers and some incredible partner organizations. We are doing everything from sewing and delivering masks, providing hot meals and sweets, and sending them messages of thanks and love to keep them going. We would love you to join us!

FIRST THINGS FIRST,

WHAT IS MUTUAL AID?

It is exactly what it sounds like: you help me, I help you, together we build a better society!

We love mutual aid projects because they depart from norms of charity, social services, or some nonprofits, which often don't have the capacity for direct hands-on, personalized support. AAF is all about being able to fill specific community needs, so we are really excited about this model! Below we'll give you the tools to make a direct connection with the communities and people who need our help. By listening to and learning directly from the folks who need aid, you are partnering, honoring and empowering—and that is the “mutual” part that makes this so rewarding.

SO LET'S UNPACK THE REPRO MUTUAL AID PROJECT, LOOK AT THE TYPES OF ORGS WE ARE HELPING, AND EXPLORE THE NEEDS WE ARE TRYING TO MEET.

Women, trans folks, and gender non-conforming people face many barriers to accessing reproductive care, especially during a pandemic, and the clinics and funds that serve them are stretched more than ever before. Clinics may need masks for staff and patients or abortion funds may need Uber/Lyft gift cards to help patients get where they need to be. Abortion AF is about breaking down the barriers that prevent people from exercising their right to an abortion. And that means you have to think about what people in your community MIGHT need and also LISTEN to what they do need.

That is why our mutual aid projects support abortion clinics, practical funds, and escort groups and folks in your community with anything they need to assert their reproductive autonomy. Think expansively!

BIG THING TO REMEMBER WHEN ESTABLISHING YOUR MUTUAL AID RELATIONSHIPS

Mutual aid is a partnership!

A Conversation! A harmony! A beautiful duet! Never ASSume you know someone else's needs (you know what they say). We can't say it enough, there is nothing more rewarding than having someone trust you with their needs and being able to fulfill them.

READY!

SET!

MUTUAL AID!

(YES, IT'S A VERB)

Here are some helpful questions tailored to the various groups we are mutual aiding. They will help you get a gage of needs!

We often have to remind ourselves of one important fact. Sometimes people doing this work are so overwhelmed that they can't name exactly what they need, so it can be helpful to share some examples to get them thinking about what's possible...

QUESTIONS FOR A CLINIC:

- Do clinics have personal protective equipment? Do patients need masks?
- Do essential workers need anything in order to do their jobs?
- What has your staff expressed to you that they need to feel appreciated and supported?
- How does your staff relax? Treats? Wine? Spa treatments? A hot meal?
- Do folks in your community need condoms? Emergency contraception? Do they know about abortion funds?

QUESTIONS FOR A CLINIC ESCORT GROUP:

- Is there a need for more escorts at this time? Is there a preference for folks who are multilingual?
- Do escort groups have masks, or personal protective equipment, or anything else in order to do their job?
- In addition to escorting onsite, are there ways for folks to support escort groups at a safe distance or remotely?

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL FUNDS:

- Do folks in your community need condoms? Emergency contraception? Menstrual products?
- Do local people know about abortion funds? Self-managed abortion?
- Do folks need travel support to get to their clinic appointments?

Here are some ways to support clinics:

1. **Build or join a group of folks** that are passionate and dedicated to fulfilling the needs of abortion providers. You can grow a network of existing allies, over Slack or Facebook groups, flyering in your community, or building interest over an existing local mutual aid group before creating your spin-off Repro Mutual Aid project.
2. **Contact your local abortion provider** ([independent clinics](#) especially need support right now!) Ask them what they need and how you can support them and/or the community they serve. Beyond masks and emergency contraception, make sure to ask about what might make their work easier in this time – including lunches for staff and volunteers, notes of encouragement for providers, etc. People know what they need, but with all the stress of the moment they might have a hard time asking for it. So make sure to show that mutual aid is not just about bare bones essentials, but about quality of life too.
3. **Mobilize your group** according to the clinic/fund's needs.
 - a. **Monetary Donations:** set up a crowdfunding campaign on a platform like [GoFundMe](#).
 - b. **Mask Making:** Pull together a team of crafters to sew homemade masks using tutorials like [this](#).
 - c. **Notes Of Appreciation:** You can use Abortion AF's [#ThankBank instructions](#) and designs to send postcards of support.
 - d. **Meal support:** Put out a call for volunteers who can pay for or deliver lunches.

Remember:

- ✓ **DO** build open and honest relationships with clinic staff.
- ✗ **DON'T** just show up to a clinic without being in touch with folks who work there!

Here are some ways to support practical funds

1. **Contact your local** [abortion fund](#) or [practical support fund](#). Abortion funds help pay for people's abortions, and practical support funds help patients get everything else they need to access their procedures
2. **Mobilize your group** according to the clinic/fund's needs.
 - a. **Monetary Donations:** set up a crowdfunding campaign on a platform like [GoFundMe](#), or raise money by asking friends and family to match donations.
 - b. **Travel support:** some funds may request Uber/Lyft gift cards or volunteers with cars to provide transportation to appointments.
 - c. **Lodging:** research and arrange for overnight lodging for patients who traveled far to a clinic

Remember:

- ✓ **DO** read up on reproductive justice to learn how to support the autonomy of all patients and all of their choices.
- ✗ **DON'T** make judgments or assumptions about what a patient should do.

Here are some ways to support clinic escort groups:



1. **Find your local clinic escort group!** Clinic escort groups work to protect and support patients from harassment by anti-choice protestors. A good way to find a group is to get in touch with your [local abortion provider](#), and ask for information on the escort group(s) they work with.
2. Once you get in touch with your local group, here are some of the things you might be asked to help out with:
 - a. **Escorting:** the tried-and-true mechanism of public safety at abortion clinics. If you need to maintain social distance, ask if there's a way to participate in escorting while accommodating your needs!
 - b. **Supplies:** masks, hand sanitizers, and snacks for both escorts and patients
 - c. **Additional support:** assorted administrative tasks as needed

Remember:

- ✓ **DO** center the safety and well-being of the patient.
- ✓ **DO** follow the lead of the lead escort and the handbook.
- ✗ **DON'T** physically or verbally attack antis, even though they're assholes.

Everyone brings something to the table, so use the power of your community to figure out what you have capacity to provide.

Here are some ways to support existing mutual aid projects with repro aid:

1. Check to see if your community has an existing [mutual aid project](#). If they do:
 - a. Ask them if their constituency has any sexual and reproductive health needs. This can include the need for condoms, dental dams, pregnancy tests, emergency contraception – and can extend to needs for diapers, baby formula, resources around intimate partner violence, etc.
 - b. Some communities won't necessarily have a sense about what is needed until it is offered. It may be helpful to source some available resources, drop them off at your local community outpost, and see if they are being used by the community in order to assess the need.
2. As always, supply according to the demand. If folks need contraception, investigate local organizations that may have products to donate – many sexual health clinics/organizations and abortion funds do! Similarly, for baby supplies, investigate what local organizations may be able to provide them. This may include clinics/hospitals, maternal health organizations, and even government offices like the Women, Infant, and Children programs (WIC). If there is more need than what those organizations can donate, consider a crowdfunding campaign to purchase and/or deliver these essentials. People want to help and there are so many amazing resources out there that have been untapped or underutilized!

Additional Resources

This toolkit is just the beginning! It's a starting point to get things going, but it is by no means an exhaustive list of things you can do. Again, THINK EXPANSIVELY! The most important thing to remember is that mutual aid is a mutual process! It requires a good understanding of your community's needs and team of people to mobilize effectively. This structure thrives off of intention and accountability, so build relationships with the people around you, and then get to work!

Other resources:

- AirTable is offering free plans for anyone doing mutual aid work! It is a great organizational resource to keep track of multiple pieces of information. If you're a student, they're also offering free plans for you regardless. Check it out here:
<https://blog.airtable.com/airtables-support-for-covid-19-response-efforts/>
- A comprehensive guide to mutual aid (beyond the time of crisis!) by Mariame Kaba and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez:
https://gdoc.pub/doc/e/2PACX-1vRMxV09kdojzMdyOfapJUOB6Ko2_1iAflm8ELelgma21wlt5HoTqP1QXadF01eZc0ySrPW6VtU_vey
- Big Door Brigade: <https://bigdoorbrigade.com/mutual-aid-toolbox/>
- Mutual Aid Disaster Relief Network: <https://mutualaiddisasterrelief.org/>
- Reproductive Justice Access Coalition's Plan B Healthline:
<https://www.rejacnola.org/>
- National Network of Abortion Funds list of local funds:
<https://abortionfunds.org/need-abortion/#funds-list>



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