

Frequently Asked Questions: Streamlined Testing

1. What is streamlined testing?

Streamlined testing is a process in which groups of people are tested at the same time. Streamlined testing is ideal for large events where there are likely to be large numbers (<200) of potential testers. It is ideal for large events because it alleviates wait times and allows CBOs to test as many people as possible.

2. What is the difference between traditional testing vs. streamlined testing?

Traditional testing requires that participants flow through the standard HIV testing protocol one at a time—each participant receives pre-test counseling, testing, post-test counseling, and receives referrals upon the return of results. Streamlined testing allows multiple participants to flow through an abbreviated testing protocol at the same time. Streamlined testing includes an abbreviated intake process in which informed consent is obtained, eligibility is established, and a risk assessment and demographic questionnaire are completed by the participant. The individual is then tested using a rapid HIV test. Results are returned privately, incorporating the information from the assessment form. Referrals are provided where necessary.

3. What does the process look like?

Streamlined testing works best when you set up stations that allow a participant or group of participants to understand and flow easily through the process. An intake station is the first stop for participants—this will be where they fill out informed consent and establish eligibility, complete an intake form that includes name (paper-based data collection), contact information (paper-based data collection), basic demographic questions, and fill out a risk assessment form. Once intake is completed, the client moves to the laboratory station, where a rapid HIV test is explained and administered. The individual then waits to be called to the counseling station.

Once the results are processed and recorded, individual participants are called to the counseling station for the return of results. They will be given their test results along with any necessary referrals, and the counselor can use the time to revisit the risk assessment form and answer any outstanding questions.

The streamlined testing process takes an average of 13-15 minutes per individual (not including the time needed to process the results). The process will be slightly longer for preliminary positive results since counselors will need to set up confirmatory testing, provide referrals for services, and revisit the risk assessment.

4. What if the individual tests preliminary positive?

If an individual tests preliminary positive, the CBO will follow their standard protocol for providing confirmatory testing. They will also follow standard protocol for follow-up appointments and referrals as needed.

5. Why does this process work better than the traditional testing process?

Streamlined testing is designed to be used in settings where there is a large pool of potential testers and traditional testing would be inefficient. The goal of streamlined testing is to allow participants or group of participants to move through the testing protocol as quickly as possible and cut down on the wait time. With the set-up of multiple stations that can service multiple participants at once, you will be able to consent and test more than one person at a time. This process cuts down on the amount of time spent with each person and ensures that anyone interested in testing can receive a test without having a long wait time.

6. What if my agency doesn't have any experience with this process?

Technical assistance will be provided to you by Emory University who has a wealth of experience with this process.