

Out for Change

Racial and Economic Justice
Issues in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
and Transgender Communities



A report from Funders
for Lesbian and Gay Issues

Table of Contents

- 3 Introduction
- 5 Overview: Poverty and Economic Reality in LGBT Communities
- 10 Homelessness and LGBT People
- 11 LGBT People and the Criminal Justice System
- 13 Violence and Discrimination Against LGBT People
- 15 Immigrants' Rights and the LGBT Community
- 16 Philanthropic Support and Recommendations
- 18 Conclusion
- 19 Examples of Organizations Working on Racial and Economic Justice Issues
- 21 References

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Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues is an association of individual donors and grantmakers from private, public, community, family and corporate foundations committed to increasing philanthropic resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations, programs and projects. The work is focused around the following areas: increasing the philanthropic community's knowledge, understanding and support of critical funding needs in LGBT communities; educating individuals and organizations about philanthropy and how to access philanthropic resources for LGBT issues; encouraging increased visible representation of LGBT people within the foundation community at the staff and trustee levels; supporting the development and capacity of LGBT-identified foundations and promoting the growth of this sector within the field of philanthropy.

We can agitate the right questions by probing at the contradictions...

~Bayard Rustin'

RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE WORK IN THE U.S. has a long and rich history. Community organizing on these issues spans centuries and includes many demands for change—from civil rights to fair wages, immigrants' rights to education reform, environmental justice to native sovereignty. Considerable infrastructure for progressive social action in relation to racial and economic justice is in place. Along with resource organizations, communications tools and other supportive apparatus, the experience and ongoing commitment of seasoned activists and organizations have been, and continue to be, key assets for movement building.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have long been involved in efforts for racial and economic justice. Today, LGBT organizers and groups are increasingly drawing connections between the movement for LGBT rights and the movement for economic and racial justice, noting that people have multiple, layered identities and are members of more than one community at the same time, simultaneously experiencing oppression and privilege.

Progressive organizers have aimed to address the manner in which racism, sexism, class oppression and other systems of discrimination create inequalities that structure the relative positions of LGBT people. Many of them are incorporating into their work the specific historical, social and political contexts that create unique and multifaceted individual experiences.

In addition to homophobia, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people confront racism and poverty on a daily basis. Low-income and LGBT people of color are particularly marginalized and vulnerable within both the LGBT community and the broader society. They face multiple oppressions and a range of issues including the erosion of public benefits and the dismantling of welfare; lack of affordable housing and homelessness; employment discrimination; immigration restrictions; labor issues and workers' rights; violence; incarceration and involvement with the criminal justice system; and environmental racism.

Many LGBT organizations have primarily focused—often out of necessity—on securing non-discrimination protections, basic inclusion in civil rights measures, and remedies for discriminatory acts. Many of these efforts have met with great success. For example, in 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Lawrence v. Texas*, overturned

Increasingly, national, regional and local grassroots organizations are operating within a racial and economic justice framework.

existing sodomy laws and spoke of affording dignity and respect to same-sex couples. Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, the state Supreme Court ruled the banning of gay marriage unconstitutional. In neighboring Canada, same-sex marriage was legalized. Despite these gains, which surely contribute to reducing discrimination, there remain many major legal, social, economic and racial barriers to

achieving full equality for all LGBT people.

In addressing the range of issues affecting LGBT lives, several LGBT organizations are systematically studying, analyzing, acknowledging and addressing economic and racial disparities within the LGBT community. There is, however, much research and public education to be done to continue to address how these inequalities affect LGBT people.

Increasingly, national, regional and local grassroots LGBT and allied organizations are operating within a racial and economic justice framework. They are making important connections that address issues of economic class and racial justice as they affect both the power structure of U.S. society and the civil rights movement. This publication will spotlight many of these organizations and their critical work to achieve social justice for all people.

Neither a comprehensive history nor a complete survey of organizing efforts, the aim of this report is threefold:

- to identify the range and complexity of issues faced by low-income LGBT people and LGBT people of color;
- to identify LGBT organizations that are working primarily on racial and economic justice issues;
- and to identify foundations that are supporting this work and make recommendations to expand that funding base.

This report highlights a number of issues facing LGBT communities, as well as existing organizing efforts among LGBT groups that effectively address racial and economic justice matters. There is a pressing need for greater financial resources to support these important community organizing efforts.

Overview:

Poverty and Economic Reality in LGBT Communities

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people are found throughout the spectrum of income distribution: some are poor, a few are rich and most are somewhere in the middle, along with most heterosexual people.

IN ADDITION TO THE SAME POVERTY ISSUES THAT MAINSTREAM SOCIETY FACES, there are also numerous examples of poverty and economic crisis in LGBT communities that are directly related to race, ethnicity, sexual and gender identities.²

However, the struggles of marginalized LGBT people are overshadowed by the widespread notion that LGBT people form an economic elite, insulated from discrimination by their perceived personal wealth.³

Whether this myth is used to entice mainstream advertisers to support gay publications or used to raise funds from the homophobic right wing, the reality is that this imagined wealth is not reflective of the LGBT population as a whole.

In her 1998 report, *Income Inflation: The Myth of Affluence Among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Americans*, economist Lee Badgett notes that LGBT people do not earn more than heterosexual people. Badgett points to the diversity of economic life among LGBT populations, observing that in many cases, LGBT people earn less than their heterosexual counterparts.⁴

In her findings, Badgett specifically notes two studies that suggest that gay men earn less than similarly qualified heterosexual men, which strongly suggests the influence of workplace discrimination. Lesbian households often make much less than comparable gay male or heterosexual households.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual people are found throughout the spectrum of income distribution: some are poor, a few are rich and most are somewhere in the middle, along with most heterosexual people.⁵

Promising Practices

QUEERS FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE, New York, NY

www.queersforeconomicjustice.org

Queers for Economic Justice works to challenge and change the systems that create poverty and economic injustice and to promote an economic system that embraces sexual and gender diversity. QEJ is committed to the principle that access to social and economic resources is a fundamental right and works to create social and economic equity through grassroots organizing, public education, advocacy and research.

QEJ conducts trainings for LGBT homeless shelter residents, organizes for housing, employment, education and healthcare for homeless and low-income youths, and holds coalition meetings bringing together LGBT organizations with anti-poverty organizations.

The Open Society Institute has supported QEJ's organizing work.

Far from being concentrated at the high-income end, a significant number of LGBT people are clustered at the lower end of income distribution. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons are not, as a group, wealthier than heterosexuals and yet the myth prevails despite the fact that a number of LGBT groups are working to draw the connections between economic justice issues in the context of LGBT issues.⁶

Moreover, LGBT people of color are very likely to earn less than white LGBT people. Recent studies utilize data from the 2000 U.S. Census to provide crucial information on LGBT communities of color. The studies are noteworthy, despite the limitations of utilizing census data that only report same-sex households, because people of color in general, and LGBT people of color in particular, are often overlooked or ignored by researchers.

- African American female same-sex households reported a median income of \$18,000 less than their white female counterparts; African American male same-sex households reported a median income of \$20,000 less than white male same-sex couples.⁷
- A study analyzing census data for Latino/a same-sex households in Florida—where the largest population of Latino/a same-sex households is concentrated—showed that the male and female same-sex households in which both partners are Latino/a earn far less than their white same-sex counterparts: \$23,000 less for Latina same-sex households and \$17,500 for Latino same-sex partners.⁸
- Household income of less than \$25,000 a year was more common among Asian same-sex partners than among non-Asian gay and lesbian partners, reaching 17% in New York and Los Angeles.⁹

Promising Practices

SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT, New York, NY

www.srlp.org

Named after civil rights pioneer Sylvia Rivera, the Law Project works to increase the political presence of the transgender community. SRLP was founded on the understanding that gender self-determination is inextricably intertwined with racial, social and economic justice and it seeks to increase the political voice and visibility of low-income people of color who are transgender, intersex or gender non-conforming. A recent project focuses on improving access to respectful and affirming social, health and legal services through individual advocacy work, trainings and coalition building.

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project also recently joined the NY Coalition for Immigrants' Rights to Drivers' Licenses. This important coalition, consisting of dozens of New York organizations, is opposing new policies designed to suspend the licenses of immigrants in New York State.

A grant from the **Peace Development Fund** helps to support SRLP's work.

According to a 2001 National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute report, *Leaving Our Children Behind*, we can estimate that there are between 900,000 to 2.5 million poor LGBT people.

- Both Latino/a and Asian LGBT peoples report that immigration restrictions and English-language issues are major factors inhibiting economic advancement for their communities.
- Same-sex households were 1.3% of the unmarried partners reported by American Indians and Alaska Native peoples, out of a total indigenous population of 2.5 million. Their overall poverty rate was calculated at 25.7%.¹⁰

According to a 2001 National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute report, *Leaving Our Children Behind*, we can estimate that there are between 900,000 to 2.5 million poor LGBT people.¹¹

In addition to facing homophobia and job discrimination during their working years, LGBT people can suffer from high rates of poverty and economic distress both early and late in life.

- Many LGBT youth face dire economic insecurity. It is estimated that one in four young LGBT people are forced out of their homes because of parental objection to their sexual orientation, only to face hostility and harassment in adult-supervised alternative living situations. Many wind up on the streets; a 1994 study reported that 75% of homeless youth worked as prostitutes.¹²
- There are from 1 million to 2.8 million LGBT elders. Many of them live alone, without supportive family networks. Even if they are partnered, gay and lesbian elders earn less in retirement, as they are ineligible for Social Security survivor and spousal benefits, ineligible to be the beneficiary of their partner's pension under most pension plans, and they must pay taxes on any 401(k) distribution (married heterosexual spouses don't pay taxes on 401(k) benefits, and can roll them over into a tax-exempt individual retirement account).¹³

Further, gender-different people experience severe problems at work even in the few states and cities which have laws against sexual orientation discrimination. According to Shannon Minter of the Transgender Law Project of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, transgender people currently have no protection under federal or most state laws against workplace harassment or unwarranted dismissal.¹⁴ In addition, even applying for a job can be problematic, as many transgender people also have difficulty securing personal identification documents that reflect their chosen gender identity rather than the sex assigned at birth.



Sylvia Rivera Law Project

ACCESSING PUBLIC BENEFITS

The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 has had a devastating impact on many LGBT people. Queers for Economic Justice, along with other LGBT groups engaged in economic justice work including the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), have documented how welfare reform has impacted LGBT communities.¹⁵

- There has been an increase in both homelessness and hunger in New York City's LGBT communities since 1996 welfare reform.
- Non-biological lesbian mothers are not recognized as family by the welfare system, and thus are not eligible for child support benefits.
- Substance users who are addicted and seek public assistance are mandated into treatment programs that are often homophobic and not sensitive to LGBT issues, resulting in gay addicts dropping out and thus being denied benefits.
- Many homeless queer youth are unable to access benefits because they are required to provide letters from parents proving their independence, yet these youth are usually homeless because their parents have thrown them out and are unwilling to admit to it in writing.
- Transgender people have been so severely harassed at workfare sites that most have quit, given up benefits and returned to sex work on the streets—where they feel safer.
- The current and increasing promotion of faith-based programs as the providers of social services will potentially create further barriers to LGBT people in accessing necessary services.

In *Leaving Our Children Behind*, four elements of welfare reform that pose a particular threat to LGBT people of all economic classes are noted.¹⁶

- Marriage promotion privileges heterosexual married couples over other families in social service provision and adoption proceedings.
- Fatherhood initiatives, which claim that children cannot be properly raised without a father, stigmatize homosexuality and lesbian and gay families.
- The promotion of abstinence-only until marriage "sex education" posits heterosexual sex in the context of marriage as the only acceptable and safe form of sexual activity.
- The "charitable choice" faith-based initiative provides contracts to religious institutions to provide a broad array of social services, with \$80 billion in federal and state funds over the next decade.

"With all the recent focus on the important struggle for marriage equality, we sometimes forget that it is still perfectly legal for someone to be fired simply for being lesbian, gay, or bisexual in 41 states. For transgender workers, the situation is even more grim..."

Eroding public benefits have affected LGBT people who are poor in much the same ways that all poor people have had to endure cuts in social welfare. In addition, LGBT people have had to face the added burden of discrimination because of their sexual and/or gender identity when it comes to basic survival issues.

As Jeremy Bishop, Program Director of the AFL-CIO's Pride At Work, has written, "With all the recent focus on the important struggle for marriage equality, we sometimes forget that it is still perfectly legal for someone to be fired simply for being lesbian, gay, or bisexual in 41 states. For transgender workers, the situation is even more grim. Only 4 states—California, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Minnesota—have employment non-discrimination protections that include gender identity/expression. There are no federal employment protections that safeguard LGBT people from discrimination on the job."¹⁷



Queers for Economic Justice

Homelessness

and LGBT People

THE MYRIAD PROBLEMS FACING LGBT PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS include a lack of housing and services that meet their specific needs. One of the most pressing needs for LGBT people living on the street is safety. When people feel unsafe, they are less likely to approach a caseworker, making it more likely for those who identify as LGBT to be the last in line for shelter or other services.¹⁸

The experience of the LGBT homeless population points to the marginalization of LGBT people in the way in which services are offered. LGBT people have unique experiences and suffer from specific discrimination because of their sexual and gender identity.¹⁹ For example:

- An estimated 40-50% of the homeless youth living on New York City's streets identify as LGBT. They are living there because they were thrown out of their homes for being queer, or ran away to escape an abusive situation.
- Family housing in the shelter system across the country is not available for homeless same-sex couples.
- Transgender people are not allowed to choose with which gender they are more comfortable living in the shelter system.
- Abuse and harassment of LGBT homeless people is rampant in the shelter system.
- Most domestic violence shelters do not accept gay men or transgender people.
- There has been a lack of any comprehensive plan for long-term housing for people with AIDS.
- Transgender seniors are often homeless. Throughout their lives, the only jobs that were available to many of them were low-paying and off-the-books (bars, sex work), which did not allow for savings, pensions or Social Security.

Promising Practices

FIERCE!, New York, NY
www.fierceny.org

Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE) is a community organization formed in 2000 by transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, queer and questioning (TLGTSQQ) youth of color in New York City. FIERCE organizes for housing, employment, education and healthcare for homeless and low-income youth, and provides training in community leadership. A recent project includes *Fenced OUT*, a youth-inspired documentary created in collaboration with FIERCE!, Paper Tiger Television and The Neutral Zone. *Fenced OUT* documents the struggle of LGBTSTQ youth of color to save the Christopher Street pier and the West Village from re-development and gentrification. FIERCE! has used the documentary as a public education tool to raise awareness about the increasing displacement, violence and criminalization experienced by LGBTSTQ youth of color.

A grant from the **North Star Fund** supports FIERCE's organizing work.



LGBT COMMUNITIES HAVE AN IMPORTANT STAKE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES.

As more and more public resources are shifted away from human needs toward prisons and policing, it's necessary to explore the impact on LGBT communities.

Specific groups within the LGBT community are disproportionately affected by violence and discrimination, sometimes at the hands of law enforcement officials. In recent years, there have been many documented instances of police brutality directed towards LGBT people in the U.S. Many police departments continue to be accused of insensitivity, including not appropriately responding to violence directed at LGBT people.²⁰ For example:

- LGBT people of color, youth, and sex workers are particularly vulnerable to police misconduct and abuse; transgender people are also at greater risk of being targeted by police and treated inappropriately or abusively while in police custody.
- LGBT people of color, transgender people and LGBT homeless youth are disproportionately targeted by police officers for non-violent drug arrests; they are more likely than most white, heterosexual middle-class drug users to face drug possession charges; and they often receive harsher sentencing.
- Once imprisoned, LGBT people are frequently targeted for additional harassment in an already inhumane prison system.

Promising Practices

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE LGBT RIGHTS PROGRAM, Philadelphia, PA

www.afsc.org/lgbt

The AFSC LGBT Rights Program makes connections between increased U.S. militarism, incarceration and LGBT communities. They work to build greater understanding of the intersection of hate violence and the violence of the criminal justice system, emphasizing that successful anti-violence strategies must address both. By producing and distributing resources, coordinating workshops and mobilizing LGBT activists, they address the intersection between hate violence and state violence and the dynamic interrelationships of race, class, sexuality and gender/gender identity. In addition to their national LGBT project, located in Philadelphia, they also have local LGBT organizing programs in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Honolulu, Hawai'i; Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington.

AFSC's LGBT organizing has been supported by the **Gill Foundation**.

- LGBT people often internalize society's negative messages and many turn to alcohol and drugs to cope. LGBT people are 2-3 times more likely to use drugs than are heterosexuals. LGBT youth are more likely than their non-gay peers to use tobacco, marijuana and cocaine before 13 years of age.

ORGANIZING AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Race and class are central to an understanding of the criminal justice system in general and the death penalty in particular. Many LGBT activists who have a racial and economic justice analysis are working to oppose the death penalty and how it is applied in the U.S.

In a global context, it is necessary to understand that the death penalty is used in many nations not only as a response to serious wrongdoing but to sustain the social, political and economic status quo. People may be sentenced to death and executed on the basis of many factors, including expression of political ideas, sexual and gender identity, religious expression and ethnicity.²¹

In the wake of Matthew Shepard's brutal murder in 1998, some LGBT organizations called for the death penalty for his killers. Others came out publicly to oppose the death penalty, linking it specifically to LGBT issues. These organizations recognized and clearly articulated that in addition to the death penalty being disproportionately applied to people of color, poor people and young people, the strategic use of homophobia and rigid gender stereotyping by prosecutors often plays an instrumental role in persuading jurors to sentence particular defendants to death.²²

LGBT organizations continue to call attention to the links between race, class and the criminal justice system as it relates to LGBT lives.

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Promising Practices

A COALITION OF LGBT GROUPS OPPOSED TO THE DEATH PENALTY

On February 9, 1999 a number of groups representing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities announced their joint opposition to the death penalty, responding to the filing by the prosecutor of intent to seek the death penalty against those accused of Matthew Shepard's murder. In addition to the American Friends Service Committee, the organizations included the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Gay Men of African Descent, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Lambda Legal Defense, the New York LGBT Center, New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organizations (LLEGO), the American Civil Liberties Union/Lesbian and Gay Rights Project and OutFront Minnesota.

Violence and Discrimination

Against LGBT People

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AND THOSE PERCEIVED TO BE LGBT are regularly targeted as victims of hate crimes and violence. However, LGBT individuals' experiences of violence and discrimination differ depending on a number of factors including race, gender, income, immigration status and language barriers.

- According to hate crime statistics collected by the FBI for 2003, anti-LGBT violence is consistently the third highest form of bias crime (at 16.5%), after racial bias (51.3%) and religious bias (17.9%).
- From 2002 to 2003, the number of anti-gay murders increased 80%, with the upward trend continuing into 2004 with an 11% increase.
- Within the sample of more than 20 cities examined by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, about 1,800 sexual orientation-based hate crimes were reported in 2004. These included 20 murders.

Transgender people are particularly vulnerable. For more than a decade, approximately one person a month has reportedly been murdered because of their perceived gender identity or expression. Yet, transgendered people are rarely covered by hate crime laws. While 46 states have hate crimes laws, 15 of those do not include crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity and only 7 states and the District of Columbia include enhanced penalties for crimes committed

Promising Practices

AUDRE LORDE PROJECT, Brooklyn, NY

www.alp.org

The Audre Lorde Project is a lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit and transgender people of color center for community organizing, focusing on the New York City area. Through mobilization, education and capacity-building, ALP works for community wellness and progressive social and economic justice. ALP's current programs include working groups on immigrant rights, transgender justice, and police brutality and state violence.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have been active in police brutality issues against people of color, making important connections between discrimination based on race and sexuality. LGBT groups were very active in the protests in 1999 in New York City after Amadou Diallo was murdered. The Audre Lorde Project was part of the core of People's Justice 2000, the multiracial grassroots coalition that formed after the murder. ALP's Working Group on Police Violence has played a significant role in the ongoing struggle against violence and discrimination especially around issues of police brutality.

ALP's work is supported by the **Public Welfare Foundation**.

because of perceived gender identity or expression.²³ However, it is important to note that enhanced penalties and hate crimes laws also disproportionately affect people of color. This has led many LGBT POC groups to develop an analysis that is actually opposed to enhanced penalties.

In addition, and consistent with the above-stated data, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' 2004 annual report on anti-LGBT violence reports that a disproportionate number of LGBT victims are of African descent (20% of all victims for whom race and/or ethnicity information was available) and Latinos/as (17%). The next largest category of victims (6%) was people who identified as multiracial.²⁴ Significantly, there was a 70% increase in the number of victims who identified as being multiracial.

The NCAVP report further cautions that with the current political, economic and social climate which began with the "war on terrorism" and the current call for federal and state constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage, the likelihood is that the level of hate crimes, particularly against LGBT and people of color, will continue to rise.



The Audre Lorde Project

Promising Practices

IMMIGRATION EQUALITY

New York, NY

www.lgirtf.org

Immigration Equality is the only national organization addressing the unique issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive immigrants. They provide informational materials, conduct trainings, and match constituents with qualified legal representation in this complex area of the law. They also work through education and advocacy to change the discriminatory laws affecting LGBT people and communities. Immigration Equality educates the broader LGBT community about the discrimination immigrants face and educates the immigrant community about the discrimination LGBT people confront.

A grant from the **Tides Foundation** has helped fund this work.



U.S. IMMIGRATION IS LARGELY BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF FAMILY UNIFICATION, which allows U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to sponsor their spouses (and other family members) for immigration purposes. Same-sex partners of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, however, are not considered “spouses” and are hence excluded from family-based immigration rights.²⁵

In addition, U.S. law bans all HIV-positive persons from entering or immigrating to this country. LGBT HIV-positive immigrants are less likely to have family in the U.S. and many HIV-positive immigrants who are denied residency and deported face the possibility of persecution in their country of origin. This can include harassment, confinement, quarantine, denial of medical services including emergency care, denial of access to medications, ostracization and even physical abuse and torture.

The Audre Lorde Project’s Immigrant Rights Working Group has identified a range of issues that LGBT immigrants face.²⁶ These include:

- Barriers to accessing services, especially if they are closeted in the communities where they live and in their racial and ethnic communities.
- LGBT immigrants are more likely to face violence based on race and ethnicity and/or sexual identity and/or gender identity.
- Undocumented LGBT immigrants are unlikely to find meaningful employment.

LGBT groups are working in coalition with immigrant rights groups to call attention to the discrimination faced by immigrant populations in the U.S.²⁷ This advocacy has taken on an even greater importance since 9/11 with the subsequent U.S. war on terrorism, including the mass roundup of immigrants, detention without charges and denial of legal counsel to detainees.

Philanthropic Support and Recommendations

ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS ARE INTERCONNECTED.

Resources for low-income LGBT people and LGBT people of color to address the range of needs they face—including employment, poverty, housing, violence and discrimination, among others—are crucial to sustaining and expanding their work.

There are multiple opportunities for the philanthropic community to support the cutting-edge work of LGBT organizations working primarily within a racial and economic justice framework. Low-income LGBT people and LGBT people of color have been organizing around multiple issues to respond to their multiple identities as poor people, people of color, immigrants and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Many foundations may be indirectly supporting LGBT people, since LGBT issues fall within most existing program areas including housing, health, poverty, criminal justice and youth and aging. LGBT-specific organizations have historically faced a unique set of factors that, combined, present significant obstacles to receiving support from the philanthropic community. LGBT groups focusing on racial and economic justice have had an even more difficult time accessing philanthropic dollars.²⁸

However, as seen in the Promising Practices sections of this report, several foundations have actively supported LGBT organizations working on these issues, but there remains a much greater need for assistance.

There are a number of steps foundations can take to strengthen LGBT organizations working on issues of poverty and racism:

- Support the most marginalized of the LGBT community—people of color, low-income, young, elderly and transgender people.
- Support organizations that demonstrate an understanding of the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality as integral to systems of oppression.
- Support organizations and organizing efforts that are developed with and led by marginalized communities, such as LGBT people of color, poor people, youth, elders and disabled people.

LGBT groups focusing on racial and economic justice have had an even more difficult time accessing philanthropic dollars.

- Consider LGBT issues as a central theme in all economic and racial justice work.
- Include sexual orientation and gender identity as a diversity category in grant guidelines.
- Engage foundation staff in public education around issues affecting LGBT low-income people and LGBT people of color, especially as they relate to transgender issues.
- Establish collaborations on cross-issue work that includes LGBT issues affecting low-income and people of color populations.
- Advocate with philanthropic peers to support LGBT racial and economic justice work.
- Engage in active outreach to LGBT nonprofit organizations addressing these issues and let them know you welcome their proposals for funding.

Promising Practices

INCITE! WOMEN OF COLOR AGAINST VIOLENCE, Chicago, IL

www.incite-national.org

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence is a national activist organization of radical feminists of color advancing a movement to end violence against women of color and their communities through direct action, critical dialogue and grassroots organizing. They have issued a challenge to anti-prison activists to address the importance of gender and sexuality in resisting the growing U.S. prison-industrial complex, noting that LGBTI street youth and trans people in general are particularly vulnerable to police brutality and criminalization. Through publications, workshops, conferences and coalitions, they are educating progressive activists on the specific forms of state violence faced by LGBTI communities.

The **Ms. Foundation for Women** supports INCITE's work.

Conclusion

SUCCESSFUL MOVEMENTS HAVE EFFECTIVE LEADERS, ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND THE ABILITY TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EXISTING POLITICAL CLIMATE.

These key ingredients are needed to mobilize support and organize successful activities and actions around shared grievances, visions and goals. Many organizations working on economic justice and racial justice issues that have the potential to be models for truly inclusive organizing are small, underfunded and understaffed.

The organizations spotlighted in this report are doing important work that draws connections between multiple identities and experiences and builds coalitions among a broad spectrum of movement organizations.

LGBT organizations working within an economic and racial justice frame are incorporating an understanding of the variety of bases for systemic inequality, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability and/or age. They are making connections and common cause among groups marginalized and oppressed by mainstream society and analyzing race, class and gender within a context of institutions, cultural norms and history.

The organizations spotlighted in this report are doing important work that draws connections between multiple identities and experiences and builds coalitions among a broad spectrum of movement organizations. LGBT groups that have an integrated analysis of racial and economic realities in the context of sexual and gender liberation are engaged in cutting-edge work that is benefiting broader sectors of society.

The intersections among race, class, sexuality, and gender are multiple and the issues they encompass are vast. Foundations have an important role to play in both understanding the complexity of these issues and supporting the organizations that are working across these multiple connections.

Racial and Economic Justice Issues



Affinity Community Services

Affinity Community Services Chicago, IL, www.affinity95.org

Serving lesbian and bisexual women of African descent in the Chicago area, focusing on the intersection of race, class, gender and sexual orientation. Current work is on developing an advocacy agenda, which includes organizing for domestic partner insurance for Illinois and access to health-care for uninsured workers.

A grant from the Crossroads Fund supports this work.

Appalachian Women's Alliance Floyd, VA, www.appalachianwomen.org

The Appalachian Women's Alliance is a movement of women and girls in Appalachian communities who are working for economic justice, human rights and dignity, and safety for women and children in the region. They bring low-income and working women into regional circles to tackle poverty, violence against women, racism and homophobia in their communities. The Alliance has established a specific lesbian-led Willisburg Circle to concentrate on working against homophobia.

Their work is supported by a grant from the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

Austin Latino/Latina Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization Austin, TX, www.allgo.org

ALLGO works through cultural arts, health and advocacy programming by supporting artists and artistic expression within its

diverse communities; promoting health within a wellness model; mobilizing and building coalitions among groups marginalized by race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation/sexual identity to enact change. ALLGO's Community Organizing initiative includes a Civic Participation Program—a skill-building and awareness-raising effort to engage queer communities of color in dialogues around civic participation and their place(s) in the civic process.

Grants from the OUT and Saguro Funds of the Funding Exchange support this work.

National Youth Advocacy Coalition Washington, DC, www.nyacyouth.org

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition is a coalition of organizations that advocates for and with young LGBTQ people in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional wellbeing. A key program is the Racial and Economic Justice (REJ) Initiative, focused on developing youth leadership through youth-led civic action activities. Through the NYAC website, publications and conferences, they are creating a space and opportunity for youth to dialogue with, train and organize with one another across racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender, ability and socio-economic lines.

A grant from the Ford Foundation Youth Development Initiative helped support this work.



National Youth Advocacy Coalition

Qteam

Los Angeles, CA, qteam@hotmail.com
Qteam is a queer and trans youth of color collective of immigrants, refugees, poor and working class people who work to challenge and resist interlocking systems of oppressions through multi-issue, grassroots organizing. Qteam works to build and sustain political spaces that empower young people by advancing and supporting leadership development opportunities and education. Recently Qteam collaborated with BikeOut to lead an "Environmental Justice Bike Tour" of toxic waste sites in Los Angeles County.

A grant from the Women's Foundation of California helps support this work.

Southerners on New Ground (SONG)

Durham, NC, www.southnewground.org
Founded by black and white southern lesbians, SONG works to build the progressive movement by developing models for organizing that connect race, class, culture, gender and sexual identity. SONG works in local communities in twelve states of the southeast, providing an important regional infrastructure for LGBT organizing in the traditionally conservative, under-resourced south. In addition to publications, SONG helps organizers develop their skills through trainings, retreats, workshops and conferences. In 2004, they inaugurated the Bayard Rustin Commemorative Alliance (BRCA) to promote Rustin's historic role in the civil rights, peace and social justice movements.

The Gill Foundation supports this work.

Transgender Law Center

San Francisco, CA
www.transgenderlawcenter.org
Through their Transgender Health Care Access Project (HCAP), the Transgender Law Center is drawing the connections between economic justice issues and

healthcare. Most people in this country have difficulty finding a health care plan that fits into their monthly budget and provides them with comprehensive coverage. For transgender and gender non-conforming people, transphobia and other forms of discrimination sometimes make getting basic health care difficult or impossible. Therefore, HCAP works throughout the San Francisco Bay Area to increase full access to health care for transgender people and their families.

A grant from The California Endowment has helped to support this project.

United Lesbians of African Heritage

Los Angeles, CA, www.uloah.com
ULOAH promotes the visibility, unity and empowerment of Black lesbians by building self-esteem, challenging homophobia and increasing activism. Through its ULOAH University, the organization provides educational workshops, discussions and training to increase Black lesbian leadership.

A grant from the Liberty Hill Foundation supports this work.

Wind River Country Initiative for Youth

Lander, WY, info@uglw.org
Wind River Country Initiative for Youth is an alliance of LGBT and non-LGBT people of Native American and Caucasian ancestry who work to address racism, homophobia, classism and ageism at the local level. Under the umbrella of United Gays and Lesbians of Wyoming (UGLW) and Wyoming Equality (WE), the Initiative is a collaborative outreach effort in Fremont County and the Wind River Indian Reservation that supports individuals and organizations to address concerns about discrimination and youth empowerment.

Their work is supported by the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.



Appalachian Women's Alliance

YouthCare

Seattle, WA, www.youthcare.org
YouthCare provides shelter and support to homeless youth in Seattle. They provide specific services to LGBT young people through their ISIS (Intervention, Support, Independence and Success) program, a transitional living program where homeless and at-risk LGBT youth move from street life to safety, stability and the path to independence. Started in 1998, ISIS was the first transitional living program for sexual minorities in the western United States.

They are a grantee of the Pride Foundation.



Southerners on New Ground

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