

LGBT Fund – Theory of Change

What we fund:

GNOF's LGBT Fund supports organizations that increase the quality of life and access to opportunity for LGBT individuals and families, particularly transgender youth and adults of color, low-income LGBT people, and LGB youth of color. Priority is given to work that aims to:

- 1.) Advocate for effective policies that will improve the quality of life for LGBT individuals and families, particularly transgender youth and adults of color, low-income LGBT people, and LGB youth of color.
- 2.) Build the cultural competency of "mainstream" organizations that serve LGBT clientele, particularly transgender youth and adults of color, low-income LGBT people, and LGB youth of color.

This work would provide the staff of "mainstream" organizations with the education, tools, and professional development opportunities that will help improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes when serving LGBT clientele.

- 3.) Provide LGBT individuals and families with high quality, well-coordinated, and culturally competent direct services related to: primary care, behavioral, and preventive healthcare; crisis management and legal support; workforce development; financial literacy and asset building; transportation; housing and safe spaces to congregate; and non-HIV status-related social services.

Why we use this approach:

The selection of these funding areas was informed primarily by input from members of the LGBT community, and by input from those who provide services to and advocate on behalf of members of the LGBT community. We believe these individuals can most effectively identify community needs and potential ways to address them.

Part of what we heard from community members is that transgender youth, adults of color, low-income LGBT people, and LGB youth of color face the greatest challenges.

As for the specific priority areas:

1. **Advocacy.** We understand that while direct services for members of the LGBT community are critically important and much needed, the community is very strongly affected by policies that fail to protect individuals and families from discrimination in employment, housing, and other areas, and that hurt the community in other ways.
2. **Cultural competency.** We heard that so-called "mainstream" service organizations can do a better job of understanding and responding to the special circumstances and challenges faced by members of the LGBT community. Mainstream service providers also acknowledge they can improve services by applying an "LGBT lens" to their work.

3. Gaps in services. Our informants identified the following service areas as being the highest priority: Primary, behavioral, and preventive healthcare; crisis management and legal support; workforce development; financial literacy and asset building; transportation; housing and safe spaces to congregate; and services (not relating to HIV status).

What we don't fund:

Unfortunately, we are not able to support organizations that do not prioritize increasing the quality of life and access to opportunity for transgender youth and adults of color, low-income LGBT people, and LGB youth of color. We are grateful to the many organizations and foundations that support important LGBT interests, such as marriage equality. While we realize funding from the LGBT Fund is not enough to support the entire spectrum of LGBT issues, GNOF believes that supporting organizations that prioritize increasing the quality of life and access to opportunity for LGBT youth and adults of color and low-income LGBT individuals is the most strategic way to support our LGBT community with limited dollars. Additionally, we believe that supporting organizations that advocate for effective policies to increase the quality of life and access to opportunity for transgender youth and people of color, low-income LGBT people, and LGB youth of color will have the largest impact throughout the LGBT community, communities of color, and low-income communities.