



Funders Concerned About AIDS

Mobilizing Philanthropic Leadership, Ideas, and Resources in the Fight Against AIDS



Meeting Report: Putting the “T” in LGBT HIV Funding: Matching Funder Response to Community Needs

Ford Foundation, NYC

April 26, 2016

Although funding for projects focused on transgender communities has increased over the past several years, it still only represents roughly two cents of every philanthropic dollar in the US. This is true at a time when alarmingly disproportionate rates of HIV, violence and economic insecurity are experienced by transgendered individuals both within the US and around the globe. There is a clear gap between community needs for resourcing and a collective funder response. [Funders Concerned About AIDS \(FCAA\)](#), in partnership with [Funders for LGBTQ Issues \(FLGBTQI\)](#), and the [Global Philanthropy Project \(GPP\)](#), convened a meeting designed to give funders access to critical data on

“The bigger picture isn’t just about equality. It’s also about equity. Without adequate resources, the trans community is going to stay stuck, where we are, for a long, long time.”
Cecilia Chung, Transgender Law Center

needs and funding trends, barriers and opportunities for future funding and ideas and models for best practices moving forward.

Download these presentations:

- [FLGBTQI & FCAA](#)
- [Strength in Numbers](#)

Data Sources:

- [Philanthropic Support to Address HIV/AIDS in 2014](#). Funders Concerned About AIDS. December 2014.
- [HIV Philanthropy for Transgender Communities](#). FCAA. April 2016.
- [2014 Tracking Report: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Grantmaking By U.S. Foundations](#). Funders for LGBTQ Issues.
- [TRANSformational Impact: U.S. Foundation Funding for Trans Communities](#). Funders for LGBTQ Issues.
- [Transgender Funding: A Report from the Field in 2013](#). Strength in Numbers Consulting. Commissioned by GPP Trans* Working Group in collaboration with Arcus Foundation and Open Society Foundations
 - o Fact sheet: [People Living with HIV/AIDS](#)
 - o Fact Sheet: [U.S.](#)
- [Positively Trans Survey Report](#). Transgender Law Center. March 2016.
- [The State of Trans* and Intersex Organizing](#). GATE and AJWS. January 2014.

THE FUNDING LANDSCAPE FOR TRANSGENDER COMMUNITIES

The day began with a panel presentation sharing new data on the funding landscape for transgender organizations.

The Numbers:

Ben Francisco Maulbeck (FLGBTQI) and Sarah Hamilton (FCAA) shared the most recent data available on funding for transgender communities from LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS-related philanthropy.

- Less than 10% of LGBT funding in the US is dedicated to transgender work, and only 2 cents of every philanthropic dollar among all funders
- Less than 2% of all global HIV philanthropy was disbursed to transgender work in 2014.
 - o 61% of all HIV funding for transgender work was disbursed to the United States



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- HIV funders are among those that have stepped up most on transgender-specific grant making. Women’s funders have also taken some leadership in this area
- Among LGBT philanthropy, the types of organizations funded: 41% are trans-specific organizations, 33% are not LGBT focused but are running a transgender project and 25% are LGBT organizations.
- Among LGBT philanthropy, a small group of 20 funders provide 85% of the funding. Among HIV philanthropy, the top 20 funders of trans-related programs represented 95% of all funding for this population.

“Unless you are providing general operating support to trans-led or focused organizations to address the broader issues and inequalities that impact their lives, you’re not truly addressing HIV in the trans community.”

Dave Scamell, American Jewish World Service

The Landscape:

Erin Howe (Strength in Numbers consulting group, on behalf of the GPP Trans Working Group) discussed data collected from 340 transgender organizations and networks globally and 38 funders from the US and globally.

“It seems that many of the agencies that get additional money (for trans work), are those who already get funding.”

Tori Cooper, Positive Impact Health Centers

- 1 in 5 transgender organizations had no budgets and only about one quarter of transgender organizations have foundation funding
- Organizations that served all or most trans women were 2.6 times more likely to have leadership representative of the constituency served
- Almost a quarter of transgender organizations had most or all people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) constituents
- Among transgender organizations, those who serve PLWHA are more likely to have paid staff. These organizations are more likely to be projects or programs of larger organizations, which can

compromise autonomy of transgender decision makers

- Transgender groups listed most common barriers to foundation funding in descending order:
 - lack of staff who know how to write grants/fundraise
 - not knowing where to look for funding
 - delays in payment or response by funder
 - long and complicated funding applications
 - lack of interest from foundations
 - language barriers

“We came from a place of knowing what it was like to work as a grassroots org, how beautiful it can feel, and how much possibility there is in working with community, but also, how painful the reality of the lack of funding can be. There’s a lot you can do with duct tape, and it’s magnificent, but it shouldn’t be necessary all the time.”

Gabriel Foster, Trans Funding Justice Project



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- The data also highlighted differences between what transgender groups would like to see funded, and what funders prioritize, including:
 - Common strategic priorities for donors included policy and legal advocacy and attitude change
 - More than half of donors identified anti-violence work, which is a shared high priority for transgender organizations as an area of strategic interest
 - Existing donors were less likely to prioritize support for direct services including health care, support groups and social services, which are high-priority for transgender groups.
 - Of the donors that support skills training, advocacy and community organizing were the most common topics. Smaller numbers supported fundraising, program development and budgeting and financial management.
 - Transgender activists clearly wanted skills training in fundraising, budgeting and financial management and program strategy and development

“In working on HIV prevention and treatment in trans communities, I learned it’s not just about the body, or taking meds. If you’re not happy, you’re not healthy. If you don’t have a bed to sleep in, you’re not healthy. If you can’t get a job, or can’t get paid for the work you do, then you’re not healthy.”

Cecilia Gentili, Trans-Latina Network

The Context

“Decriminalizing HIV, decriminalizing sex work, decriminalizing drugs will do a tremendous amount to keep people out of incarceration, which has ripple effects of ongoing trauma and instability in people’s lives.”
Anand Kalra, Transgender Law Center

Cecilia Chung (Transgender Law Center, TLC) wrapped up the data panel with some findings from a recent Positively Trans (a project of TLC) national survey of transgendered individuals.

- 42% of respondents are living on under \$12,000 annually and 65% are under \$23,000 annually. These numbers are even higher for individuals living in the South, with 58% living on under \$12,000 and 77% living on under \$23,000 annually
- 28% of respondents reported a hostile experience in a primary care setting; 35% in the South
- 27% reported being kicked out of their family home before the age of 18; 32% in the South 32%
- 41% of respondents reported a history of incarceration



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THE CONVERSATIONS

Following the data review, the meeting featured two moderated panels featuring composed of funders and transgender experts. The conversations focused on how to quickly and effectively resource urgent work led by and for transgender communities.

Recommendations Included:

“As trans people, as people of color, as human beings, we deal with historical trauma – a result of almost daily micro-assaults and trauma – that can break down one’s psyche in a way that the health system is not set up to address.”

Tori Cooper, Positive Impact Health Centers

- The importance of funding transgender-led organizations and networks, and ensuring that opportunities for leadership and employment must be accessible in that work. Funding non-transgender led projects may mean supporting organizations where transgender autonomy and leadership is not clearly present. Assessing this among applicants during the RFP process is critical.
- Given the role economic insecurity plays in increasing health disparities among transgender people, funders should play a role in ensuring transgender individuals are compensated for their roles in serving and representing their communities.
- Resource opportunities for professional growth and capacity building among emerging and established transgender leaders and organizations, going beyond simply teaching people how to approach funders to provide deeper skill building including grant writing and management, networking, and mentorship.
- Engage transgender leaders and activists to inform priority setting and funding decision
- There must be a grant making framework that recognizes the intersectionality of issues impacting transgender individuals, one that recognizes the whole person and their lifetime of experiences, including trauma and its impact on health and well-being.
- Transgender organizations and networks need resources to fund advocacy (like anti-criminalization campaigns) and anti-stigma efforts, but they also prioritize areas that are not currently funded as commonly, including social service support (support groups, healthcare), capacity and skill building in grant writing and managing funded projects and as one participant put it, “how to make it as an organization”.
- RFP processes must be streamlined and simplified if funders want a robust and diverse pool of transgender led applicant organizations to succeed in securing funding.

The Funder Panel:

Gabriel Foster, Trans Justice Funding Project; Michael Joyner, ViiV Healthcare; Scott Campbell, Elton John AIDS Foundation; Dave Scamell, American Jewish World Service. Moderator: Rye Young, Third Wave.

The Expert Panel:

Tori Cooper, Positive Impact Health Centers; Cecilia Gentili, Trans-Latina Network; Anand Kalra, TLC. Moderator: Cecilia Chung, TLC’s Positively Trans Project.

“Organizations have to realize, that some of us have been too busy trying to stay alive. I am where I am because I had to improvise, and because someone took a chance on me and gave me a job that wasn’t designed to be done by someone like me - it was designed to be done by someone with a Master’s degree.”

Cecilia Gentili, Trans-Latina Network



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- Develop a distinct area of funding focused on transgender populations, and staff this with appropriate expertise may promote stronger grant making efforts at foundations.
- Any grantmaking focused on transgender communities must address [critical enablers](#); conversely, if you're not funding trans communities, you're not addressing critical enablers.

Good Practices & Resources for Funders

- [Watch the videos](#) from this convening

- Review the community-led grant review processes of the [Trans Justice Funding Project](#) and the [Third Wave Fund](#).

- [ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action for MSM & Transgender Initiative](#) now explicitly requires funded projects to be specifically trans-led

- With support from the **Elton John AIDS Foundation**, the **Transgender Law Center** launched [Positively Trans \(T+\)](#), “a constituent-led project grounded in the principle that we are all capable of forming our own network, telling our own stories, and developing our own advocacy strategies in response to inequities, stigma, and discrimination over punitive laws and lack of legal protections in our local communities”. Visit the site for new research, and a collection of videos featuring trans individuals sharing their stories.

- The **ThirdWave Fund** launched the [#FlushTransphobia](#) Fund just one day after 11 states sued the Obama Administration over policies that protect the rights of trans students in effort to fuel the grassroots movement working to combat these horrific bills. The Flush Fund will make grants over the next year to powerful organizing led by transgender and gender non-conforming people who are working tirelessly with very few resources. For more on how philanthropy is responding to the wave of anti-LGBTQ laws, please [read this insightful analysis](#) from Funders for LGBTQ Issues.

- **AIDS United** instituted a [new diversity index](#) as a requirement for all prospective grantee organizations. The goal of the index was to better understand each organization's state of inclusion of populations they seek to serve, by evaluating diversity throughout staff and client representation.

- Through the [Trans* Funding Working Group](#), the **Global Philanthropy Project** mobilizes new research and supports collaborative funding efforts towards increasing the amount and influencing the type of private and public foundation funding dedicated to global transgender issues. Contact GPP Coordinator Matty Hart for more information: mhart@globalphilanthropyproject.org.

- **Funders for LGBTQ Issues** hosts the [Trans/Non-Conforming Working Group](#), a “caucus of funders interested in working together to increase resources for efforts that focus on gender identity and expression.” For more information, please contact: workgroups@lgbtfunders.org