

Funding LGBTQ+ Projects: Navigating the U.S. Philanthropic Landscape

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE REALITY: CHALLENGING, BUT NOT HOPELESS

LGBTQ+ organizations face harsh funding realities as they enter 2026. Rising inflation, legislative attacks, and federal cuts have created unprecedented resource gaps that hinder addressing community needs.

However, here is what most organizations may not know: An analysis of 518 LGBTQ+ funders reveals that LGBTQ+ organizations are competitive for most grants. The funding gap only appears above grants of \$100,000, and private foundations may prioritize LGBTQ+ groups for mid-range grants (\$5,000–\$112,500). Securing ample funding involves obtaining support from a diverse range of sources.

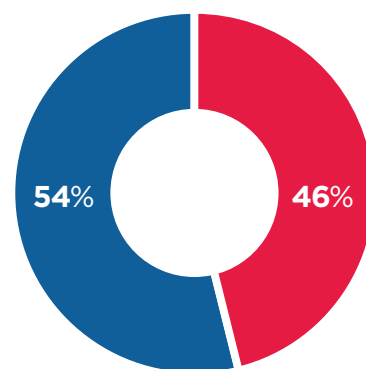
THE FUNDING ECOSYSTEM IS SURPRISINGLY BALANCED:



54% are private organizations
(corporate and private foundations)



46% are public nonprofits
(community foundations, intermediaries, regrants)



COMPETITION LANDSCAPE

- **Most accessible:** 338 funders (89%) make grants under \$25,000
- **Mid-tier:** 120 funders make grant awards of \$25,000–\$100,000
- **High-stakes:** Only 34 funders make grants of \$500,000+

WHAT'S IN THE COMPLETE REPORT?

- Detailed strategies
- Case studies
- Regional and competition analysis



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

1. Build authentic relationships.

Start with accessible entry points — community foundations and intermediaries offer flexible processes and champion your work. Speaking engagements remain one of your “best calling cards.” Be politely persistent with funders, engaging in consistent, respectful follow-up.

2. Tell stories that move donors.

Focus on your organization’s impact in the community rather than your organization itself. Frame your work around current socio-political moments, for example, connect LGBTQ+ advocacy to criminal justice reform, democracy, or trending issues. Be realistic about your ability to make change.

3. Navigate challenges strategically.

Adapt your messaging to the political moment. When experiencing funding success, invest in infrastructure rather than immediately expanding programs. Be transparent about challenges so that funders can provide targeted help.

MOVING FORWARD

The environment is difficult, but opportunities exist for organizations that invest in strategic relationships, demonstrate impact, and strengthen their operations. Success often combines authentic relationship-building with strategic thinking and honest acknowledgment of challenges.

Your community needs your work. This guide provides a roadmap to help ensure you have the resources to continue serving them.

The complete report, *Funding LGBTQ+ Projects: Navigating the U.S. Philanthropic Landscape*, includes comprehensive strategies, two detailed case studies, and actionable tools developed through analysis of 518 LGBTQ+ funders and interviews with foundation leaders, philanthropic advisors, and successful organizational leaders. The project was made possible through funding from the Tikkun Olam Foundation, Inc. and Arcus Foundation.

**Download the
full report:**



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