$30K in Grants Focus on Health and HIV Services for LGBTQ Southerners

The awards from Campaign for Southern Equality go to these four groups.

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To better address the health care needs of LGBT Southerners, a total of $30,000 in community grants has been awarded to four different organizations, reports the Campaign for Southern Equality (CSE), which distributes the money through its Southern Equality Fund.

HIV preventions, testing, treatment and care are considered a vital part of LGBT health in the South. As the SCE explains in its press release:

> "This infusion of funding to organizations on the leading edge of serving LGBTQ Southerners is designed to support new models in the South that increase access to care and ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect in health care settings. More than one third of all LGBTQ Americans live in the South, and LGBTQ Southerners experience disproportionate health disparities. The South is the epicenter of the modern HIV crisis in the United States, particularly for transgender women of color and black men who have sex with men. Transgender and nonbinary Southerners are frequently confronted with ignorance or discrimination while seeking care. And LGBTQ Southerners in rural areas sometimes must drive long distances to identify an affirming physician or mental health provider."

The four grant recipients are:

Western NC Community Health Services

Based in Asheville, North Carolina, the group offers HIV and primary care in 18 counties across the state. The $10,000 grant will go toward promoting its Transgender Health Program.

Gender Benders

Based in Greenville, South Carolina, the organization offers services to transgender and gender-nonconforming residents. The $10,000 grant will help support programming at Gender Benders' annual summer camp.

Nationz Foundation

Based in Richmond, Virginia, the foundation provides HIV prevention and education to the LGBTQ population in central Virginia. The $5,000 will support HIV testing and housing efforts.

Memphis Center for Reproductive Health

Based in Memphis, Tennessee, the center provides transgender health care as well as reproductive health services. The $5,000 grant will help fund testing for sexually transmitted infections.

“Health care is a human right that is fundamental to being able to survive and thrive,” said CSE executive director the Reverend Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, in a press release. “We are honored to support these four incredible organizations, which are using innovation and grit to create new models to help Southern LGBTQ people access the care they need and deserve.”

In related POZ news, August 20 marked the debut of the annual Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (#SHAAD). To learn more—and to watch a video that visualizes data about HIV in the South—click here.

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