

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Factsheet



U.S. Student Association Foundation 2008

Funding LGBT Student Organizations

Although there are many things that can be done with very little cash, most LGBT student organizations need some resources, money, or donations, in order to have larger events and actions and to carry out organizing campaigns.

What can your LGBT student organization do with a little bit of cash?

- * Pay for materials for a petition drive
- * Rent a space for a press conference
- * Put on a party
- * Print fliers
- * Buy props and visuals for an action
- * Bring in a guest speaker
- * Send students to a conference
- * Place ads in the student or local newspaper
- * Host a film festival, teach-in, conference, or other large event

How can your LGBT student organization get funding? Here are some ideas.

University Departments and Academic Departments

If you are trying to find funding to send a student to a conference, you might look at classes the student is taking and request funding as part of a research project. If you know that there will be speakers and/or workshops at the conference that relate to the student's research, there is a good possibility that a related academic department may fund some or all of the conference expenses. Departments may also provide space in one of

the classrooms they control, access to a photocopier, or funding to sponsor a larger event. Ask professors and also go to the department chairperson to make your requests.

Student Government

Student governments often have access to resources such as photocopiers, meeting space, and funding. Usually there is a process for requesting funding from student governments. Research the process and follow it. It will help if your organization has members who are a part of the student government. You can also lobby the student government to pass resolutions that favor the campaigns you are working on. For example, if a student government passes a resolution supporting a campaign for transgender-inclusive health care, you can expect that they may help photocopy campaign materials, distribute them, and/or provide space for a press conference.

Student Programming Boards

Various programming boards on campus have funding for educational programs and events, like conferences, film festivals, travel, and speakers. Almost all of these funding boards will have a very clear application process. Make sure that you start planning early and follow the process. If you have connections to people who make the funding decisions, you can leverage those relationships to help ensure that you get the requested funds.

LGBT and Student Affairs Offices

LGBT centers and offices in student affairs have some discretionary funds that can be put towards various programming. You may find strong staff allies who can help with things like photocopies and space. They may also have access to certain resources or spaces that only staff can access, so it is worth looking to see what resources you can obtain from these offices.

Other Organizations, Through Co-Sponsorship

Other student organizations may have money in their bank accounts or access to various funding pools. They could put in a good word for you, or make a funding request that would be directed towards your event. In return, you may help them with turnout for their events and/or include their organization's name on your event advertisements. Working with other organizations is a great way to build partnerships and possible future coalition relationships.

Local LGBT Community Centers

Local organizations are not always willing to fund campus organizations, but sometimes they will. They are often struggling for funds themselves, so you may need to show how your work can support them. Some things to look for are funding for students to attend conferences. If you can show how the skills that students going to the conference gain will benefit the community organization (i.e. if your organization members are also volunteers at the local LGBT community center), then you can justify your case for funding. You can sometimes get food, space, or other resources from a community center.

Private Donations from Allies

Some individuals, such as parents, alumni, community members, faculty, and staff may be willing to make personal donations to an organization or event. Sometimes all it takes is for someone to ask them. When you ask, it is always good to be able to tell them a little bit about your organization, why your organization is significant in improving students' lives, and what specific project you would like them to help fund. It can be helpful to present choices of different projects that might interest the prospective donors.

Grassroots Fundraising

Don't be afraid to pass the hat when you have an event or at your next pizza party or movie night. People who can give will give and your members will feel invested in your organization.

Membership Dues

Student organizations can choose to collect membership dues. While it may not be a good idea to prohibit people from coming to meetings or participating in campaigns if they don't pay membership dues, you can give incentives to prospective members. For example, you can offer a member newsletter, a membership packet, member names on an annual conference program, a discount to certain entertainment events, etc.

Fundraising Events, Performances, Benefits, etc.

Selling food items, raffle tickets, and other items can be a good way to raise some small funds. Groups can also hold car washes, date auctions, benefit concerts, silent auctions, and other events to bring in money.

Sponsorship from Local Businesses, Including LGBT Businesses

Make a list of LGBT and LGBT-friendly businesses in your area that you think it would be worth contacting. Go to each of them and present them a letter asking for their support and for a specific donation of services or money. Most businesses are willing to donate small items, such as a gift certificate to a restaurant or \$20 worth of photocopies. If you get enough of these items, you can use them in a raffle or other fundraising event to turn them into cash. Services such as photocopies or free food for a reception can help make your campaigns and events stronger and cheaper.

Grants

Your organization may be eligible to apply for grants. Granting organizations give small grants to groups to get projects off the ground or to support organizing campaigns. There are also grants specifically for LGBT and progressive groups and grants to do education, support, organizing, or advocacy work. Sometimes you have to have a non-profit tax status in order to apply for these grants. You may look into how your organization can obtain a non-profit status or use your university as a fiscal agent to apply for the grant. Look for other student organizations that have already applied for grants and find out how they did it.