

GUTC Pledge Webinar for Trans Community Groups

(WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT)



FUNDERS FOR
LGBTQ
ISSUES

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**GRANTMAKERS UNITED FOR
TRANS COMMUNITIES**

AN INITIATIVE OF FUNDERS FOR LGBTQ ISSUES

Tuesday, July 2, 2019

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LGBT Funders Webinar (Zoom)

ALEX: Great. All right!

So everyone, thank you again for joining us. This is a webinar on learning about the GUTC Pledge, or the Grantmakers United for Trans Communities Pledge for foundations. I'm Alex Lee, the Project Director for the GUTC initiative, and joining me today, we're going to do introductions later, is Kristina Wertz, also with Funders for LGBTQ Issues, and Luis Ramirez, also from the organization as well, and is going to be handling today the tech aspects of being on this webinar. So I'm going to go ahead and jump in to some slides.

I'm going to share a screen right now, and we're going to also talk about how the functionality of this webinar works and how you can be interacting with us today.

All right. So here is the screen share. Here we go!

Okay.

So, again, this is the GUTC Pledge webinar, specifically how community groups can use it in your fundraising; and this webinar has a couple of neat features.

So, one of the things I wanted to make sure that everyone knows how to do, and get some practice hopefully doing today, is using the different controls up here. So these this should be in your upper left hand corner [points to webinar screen controls displayed on slide].

And there's a couple of features: we're going to be doing a Q&A at the end of our program; so, as we are talking, you can input questions into the Q&A box. If you click on this button, it will open up a window and you can plug in questions as we go and we will return to them at the close and answer the questions.

There's also a chat function, so if you click on this, a chat box will open up, you can chat with any of us, the panelists as well as with the other attendees. This is a good place to ask, comment, or to respond to things. If you have a question that you would like us as panelists to answer altogether, the Q&A is a better place to put that question.

We also have captioning today, so we have a closed caption typist right now: Tony is on our call with us and is actually writing everything that we're saying as we're saying it; if you need to see the captions go ahead and click this button and it will open up.

If you are someone who doesn't like to interrupt, and right now we have the mics muted so that interruptions are at a minimum, you can raise your hand.

If you click this box, a little graphic will pop up on our screen that shows a hand waving that means you want to speak and we can work to unmute you and then you can speak. There'll be times in which we're going to ask for people to speak up.

Okay. So those are our main, controls, we are recording, so that's just making sure everyone understands there's going to be a recording after this, sent out to everyone on this call as well as people who RSVPed but who are currently not on the call. We have a polling feature so we'll ask you to set a minute aside to give us input in a pop up box on the screen Luis is going to be doing for us, when we have questions to ask you. Again, if you need help accessing the webinar, anything related to technical aspects to use in the webinar you can actually chat use the chat box, to reach Luis, chat to all panelists so Luis can see it or you can text Luis directly, and this is for folks who are on the phone, Luis number is XXXXXXXXX.

Again, that's XXXXXXXXX

So that is a U.S. number.

Okay.

KRISTINA: One quick thing to add on the Q&A: You can see what other people have asked.

And if you would like, you can upvote those questions, so if there's something that you see and have the same question, you can give that question a thumbs up to let us know multiple people are curious about that, and we'll prioritize those questions that have the most volume.

ALEX: Okay.

On repeating everything, better and more thorough, again, I'm the Project Director for the GUTC initiative, otherwise known as Grantmakers United for Trans Communities, and I have been in your shoes before. I used to run a group called the TGI Justice Project, now headed up by the wonderful Janetta Johnson and her team in San Francisco, and this is a nonprofit that works with trans folks in prison in jail in California.

So I had the experience of starting up a nonprofit that was trans-specific and very, you know, unashamedly, trans-focused organization.

And understanding how difficult it is to actually fundraise especially when you're dealing with foundations who have a variety of understanding or total lack of understanding of who trans folks even are. So in this role now, I have the privilege of working primarily with foundations to educate them, to basically learn and be better allies to trans communities. This webinar was definitely created, and we're doing a few other projects, to support trans-led groups whether they have 501(c)(3) nonprofits or not to be able to access foundations and foundation funding in an easier way. So that's where I'm coming from for this; Kristina do you want to introduce?

KRISTINA: I'm Kristina Wertz, Vice President of Engagement and Philanthropic Outreach at Funders for LGBTQ Issues. I've been at Funders for almost six years now but, like Alex, before that I was a trans-specific nonprofit; I worked at Transgender Law Center for five years.

And when I started a TLC, when there were three staff members, and fundraising was a huge part of our work, and so similar to Alex, I understand the position that many of you are in. And have had some difficult conversations with funders, over the years, and understand sort of what it takes to help funders see that trans issues cut across all foundation priority areas.

I always felt like as an ally to the trans community and as a gender nonconforming person, it was my job to stand in the gap as much as possible and take some of the sometimes terrible questions that program officers had, and so I feel like, you know, I have some empathy and understanding for the situations that some of you may be in with at site visits and with program officers; so I bring that perspective to this work, and I think both Alex and I try to keep ourselves rooted in and connected in understanding how GUTC can be useful to all of you.

That's what we really want is to have this initiative be useful. So the goals for today, are these three bullet points, I don't necessarily have to read them to you but they are essentially introducing Funders to LGBTQ issues us as an organization as well as the GUTC pledge and initiative to you all, give you tips and advice on how trans groups can use the Pledge, and get information from you all about how you might want to use the Pledge as well as how you want to give us feedback and more information about how it's working for you; how you're able to access the foundation and grantmakers with the pledge or without. We just like to hear how things are going.

Okay.

KRISTINA: Great. So I'm going to tell you a little bit about Funders for LGBTQ issues, I know not everybody is super familiar with the organization so first, what we're going to do is a little poll.

I am going to start. I'm going to launch this poll now for my fellow, panelists.

So, take a moment, if you are on the Zoom, interface, and answer this question: How familiar are you with funders for LGBTQ issues?

You never heard of us before, you've heard about us, used our research and you're very familiar, or you're a huge fan!

I suppose we should have added one that is "constructive critic."

[LAUGHTER] as well and we like to be flexible! I'm going to let these trickle in a moment. Looks like most of you have participated. We see a little bit of a bell curve. Most of you have either heard of Funders for LGBTQ issues or GUTC and know a little bit about our work, most of you hadn't heard about us at all, and a couple of you have used our resources.

So, a healthy bell curve there.

All right. I'm going to turn off this poll. That's helpful to know going into this.

So, a bit about us.

Alex, if you could go to the next slide.

ALEX: Absolutely.

KRISTINA: So Funders for LGBTQ issues, despite our name, we are not a funder ourselves; rather, we're a network of foundations, and we're a membership based organization, so our members are foundations.

And we work to increase the scale and impact of resources, for LGBTQ communities, and we always do that with an explicit racial economic and gender justice lens.

So, we do this work in a handful of ways.

We're trying to increase resources for the community, and we're also trying to ensure that those resources are distributed to the community, in a meaningful way.

Before I share sort of how we do it, a little bit more about what we do: We work within the universe of people who are already funding LGBTQ issues to help them be more social justice focused to fund trans communities, communities of color, communities in the South, folks who need it the most. And then we also work with foundations who have never funded LGBTQ issues before; we call those folks "LGBT funding curious."

And we help bring those people in, into the community to start funding LGBTQ issues.

We do this in a couple of ways.

We host convenings, so we do a couple of different conferences a year, you may have heard of Funding Forward, our annual conference for LGBTQ grantmakers, grantmakers supporting our communities. We also bring our funders together for collective action, so members will contact us and say, "Hey, I noticed in your research, that funding for queer communities in the South is superlow. How can we work together to change that? Convene a working group of funders to partner to pool resources, and to develop a program around that?"

We do outreach and support services, so that's the work to bring in new funders, where we help new funders see the intersections between their specific funding priorities and LGBTQ communities.

So if you're a health funder, we can meet you with research about health disparities for queer and trans communities; we can help you see, you know, if you're a place-based funder where there are queer and trans folks in your community that can use your support, and we also do trainings for foundations. And sort of the underpinning of all of our work is our research: every year you may have seen our annual tracking report. Every year we put out this big report that shows where money is coming into the field what foundations are

supporting LGBTQ issues and where that money is going; philanthropy does not have any sort of natural transparency attached to it. Foundations need to list it on a 990 but don't need to give very much information to the world about where their money is going, and we believe that transparency is really important to a healthy ecosystem for LGBTQ organizations.

So we put out this research every year and we use that research to guide our programming and we're able to see where funding within the LGBTQ community is concentrated and what communities, geographic areas, issues, might be underfunded and can use some support.

So that's a bit about what we do. If you've got any questions about that, feel free to drop them into the chat box, and we can follow up on that. Alex I'll kick it off over for you.

ALEX: That is a great background, and sorry I'm distracted because a few people are texting. I wanted to give a little bit more about Grantmakers United for Trans Communities. We are an initiative of Funders, a little project within Funders for LGBTQ issues, and we're relatively new.

So this is a project that essentially has been around in the planning stages since 2015, but really came into being in the late 2017. This is our mission; our work is essentially to, and I can sum this up and say, our work is to potentially transform and deepen the relationships that foundations have with trans communities.

Otherwise, when we're talking about trans communities today we're also including gender nonconforming as well as nonbinary people, I just want to make sure that's understood we're using trans in the expansive way.

Our work is to do two things, two projects that I have: a GUTC Fellowship, which is essentially a leadership and professional development fellowship for trans gender nonconforming and nonbinary people who are working in philanthropy. The idea behind that is so we can help them advance in their careers so they can hopefully start changing the power dynamics within philanthropy in a more positive direction for trans communities. The second thing I'm working on is the GUTC Pledge, the movement from Funders to essentially mobilize more funders and asking funders to commit to use concrete things to support trans communities which they may not have been doing before.

All right, I did want to also say there are people involved in this besides us. So the GUTC program itself was being planned since 2015 by a working group, called the GUTC Working Group. You can see here this is a partial screen shot list of the members, there's actually 20 members. So if you go to our website down here you actually can see the full list. I want to really underline this initiative was started by trans folks working in philanthropy. I have to say when it first started that was really just a handful of people. Fortunately, things have changed a little bit and that there are more transgender, nonconforming and gender nonbinary people working in philanthropy so the working group itself has gotten bigger but this from the beginning has been driven by trans folks in philanthropy responding to needs they're seeing both as professionals in the field, as well as the actual funding and the lack of funding to trans communities in the United States.

Okay. So I'm going to talk to you now about the pledge, this is what we asked you to come to this webinar for: So the pledge, and this is a screenshot of its four main components, but if you go to our website here you can actually see the whole thing, including, who's already signed it.

And that's very rich in terms of information, I'll explain to you a little bit more how you can use that information, in the next couple of slides.

So first thing I want to say, the purpose and the strategy for the pledge, is to you know, Kristina can actually clue you in a little bit more on it because Kristina worked on it back in the day when it first started so Kristina, go ahead.

KRISTINA: Sure. So the pledge was our primary organizing strategy to bring new funders into the space, and to help funders who are committed to trans issues be vocal about it and give them specifics about what they can do to support trans communities, so it's a sign-on campaign for foundations to indicate publicly their support for trans communities.

I will say, that while it might not seem like a particularly cutting edge strategy, in the world of philanthropy, this is actually quite a bold strategy. There have been a handful of strategies in philanthropy, a handful of pledges in philanthropy, some have gone well. Some have not gone well. But we decided that we wanted to take this risk. That Funders for LGBTQ issues had built up a substantial amount of social capital over the last 5 or so years, and that we were ready to use that social capital and spend that social capital on trans communities that were so drastically underfunded.

So the pledge asks foundations to sign on, and express their commitment to the well being of trans communities, and take four specific actions.

Which Alex will tell you about in more detail in a moment; I'll note that the Pledge, has a very sort of "bringing people in" kind of tone. It's more of a "call in," than a "call out;" this is kind of the culture of philanthropy, it's a very polite culture; it's a very sort of "folks want to feel good about what they're doing." And want to be able to express publicly that they're doing good in the world. We wanted to kind of take advantage, to be honest, of that desire to feel good about doing good; and ask people to make real, solid commitments about doing specific things for the trans community, rather than just saying "yay we love trans people" and not taking any action after that. This is sort of an accountability tool to ask foundations to indicate their support and take specific actions.

So Alex, you want to share with us a bit about what those specific actions are?

ALEX: (No response)

KRISTINA: You're muted, Alex.

ALEX: Always a fun thing to be muted and talking.

There are four components to the GUTC Pledge, and they're articulated here. We are essentially asking foundations to sign the pledge to commit to these four things.

The first is to basically educate, continue to educate, participating in training professional development opportunities to learn more about trans communities in their own areas of funding.

So we're not asking them to start brand new trans programs; that would be great but that's not necessarily what we're asking them to do. But we are asking them to look at what they're actually doing already to figure out how they can support trans communities in their funding priorities.

Second thing: improving the recruitment and retention of trans and gender nonconforming staff and board members and, again, this is about hiring, about HR, it's about making sure that they actually are hiring from our community and when they are, they're actually being supportive of the community. On staff.

Thirdly: increase their grant making. This is where the rubber hits the road really. We're asking them to commit more resources, more dollars, and sending them out the door to trans communities; we are asking them down here as you can see, the commitments, in particular, to trans-led organizations.

And finally: We have a commitment to publicly express their support for, and solidarity with, trans communities. Especially at this moment in this time and history, where there's a lot of public attacks on the trans communities, we thought this is an important thing to ask foundations to do, using their voice, to advance our rights, and make sure that, you know, they're seen and known as people who support trans groups and trans communities, and why that's important for them to use their voice that way.

For example, as part of No. 4, we are about to start working with our network of signatories to the pledge, as well as other people that we are connected to within Funders for LGBTQ Issues to put in public comments for the Section 1557 rollback attempt by the Trump Administration. So that's an example of how we can make No. 4 work, and how I would expect people to be able to meet No. 4 through the pledge.

So we have currently 40 signatories, so let me give you a little history on how we started it. It launched officially the end of March, with 25 signatories.

Since then we're now up to 40. So even beyond the initial launch, people have still expressed interest, people are still calling and e-mailing us and asking to sign on. That's what we want, to build momentum and make this something people want to affirmatively sign on, seek out and actually sign on, talk to their board members and trustees, the people who hold the power in their foundations, and have conversations about why it's important to sign on.

The current signatories as you can see, again, on this list here--if you go to our website, you can see them all. We've put their logos up there as a signatories, and you can see if there's anybody you've already been talking to, or people who you never talked to on that list.

The current signatories are actually all working with me, this has been going on since March at least, but essentially I'm working with them all one by one to find out what exactly they're needing to meet the pledge components. Some of them need actual training to hire people, other ones need people to do a full on HR review of them.

They have different needs and are in different places, so we are trying to customize the support we as Funders can give to these foundations to actually meet these 4 components, as well as hold them accountable to meeting them as they go along, and, again, as Kristina mentioned earlier, this is more like, a “hand up,” we’re trying to help them do this. We are not using this as a way to kind of attack or malign foundations, and I’m going to talk a little bit more later about kind of the approach and voice around it.

So....

Okay.

So in terms of future plans, we’re continuing to get foundations to sign on to this, we have plans to do another forum. So we did, in preparation for the launch, in December of last year, we held a funder forum, essentially, an informational session, all-day information session for funders in Oakland, California, in December, that featured about 20 trans folks from the community who are doing different work from different organizations all over the country both actual and 501(c)3s as well as just informal community groups.

And, you know, talk about their work in front of a selection of about 50 funders or people from foundations.

So we want to do something like that again in the coming years and potentially other parts of the country highlighting specific regions, and we are also going to be working with more funders that are a little further out from us to kind of keep spreading the word and getting folks who ought to be taking the pledge because there’s so many overlaps between what issues impact trans communities and work they’re working on to sign the pledge as well. So essentially this is a live campaign. We are continuing to roll it out; we’re continue to get signatories.

Okay.

So: Where are we now? We want to talk about now, how foundations how nonprofits, excuse me, and community groups, can actually take advantage of this pledge, the first question, though, is another polling question we have for you: let’s hear some common challenges you’ve encountered when trying to raise money from foundations.

I know, and I’ve talked to some of you individually, you all have stuff to say on this!

So I’m going to turn on the poll right now for this question.

Give everybody a minute.

... to answer.

(A pause), yeah, and you can click as many as are applicable, there’s not a single choice.

(A pause).

ALEX: Okay.

I think some of you are selecting all of them, which makes sense!
[LAUGHING] Right.

Okay. Give us about 15 more seconds.

ALEX: I see some folks are also clicking the last one, “not having 501(c)(3) status,” I’m glad we have folks on this call who are not 501(c)(3). I’m going to close the polling.

All these questions that you guys checked, you all checked, these are really common things we hear from foundations, sorry, from groups all the time about how hard it is to get money from these institutional funders, these foundations.

So these are all things that we talk to foundations about, and these are things that we, you know, the pledge can be sort of opening conversations around these issues.

So we’re doing it on our end, but on the nonprofit side, on the group side, here’s some ways you can use the pledge to kind of address some of these things.

So for example, you can use the pledge, itself, as an outreach tool.

So, again, if there are funders that you are trying to access, and a number of you checked that box, the whole difficulty of actually making contact question-- this is a good reason to reach out to funders who you may not have ever talked to before. Or reactivating a conversation that maybe you had started with a foundation that then just kind of died off.

You can tell them, you know, “Hey, there’s this movement around foundations called the GUTC Pledge, have you seen the document?” You can show them the website, show them who else has signed it. It’s a good way to set up the conversations as a reason to reach out.

And it’s also an opportunity to find internal champions. So what we mean by this is when we’re working with foundations is there’s usually one or two, maybe five depending on how large the foundation is--but people who do actually care very, very much about supporting trans communities.

They may be trans, may have family members who may be trans or queer, but they’re having trouble accessing folks who are a little higher up to get their input and buy-in on prioritizing this. One thing you can do is use the GUTC Pledge to find the internal champions when you send this pledge out to staff members who you may have had a better relationship or better contact with, or who were more responsive. You can, then, you know, use this is a tool for them to actually use to bring it up to their superiors.

So it’s a way for them to have a concrete action item to engage people who have more power and seniority in their foundations.

You can also use it as a way to acknowledge funders. So I know that a number of you have galas or parties or some other celebrations that you do

every year where you also give awards. This is a way to use the “carrot” sort of encouragement: if folks sign on to the pledge, you can use your power to acknowledge them either in these awards that you give out, or other shout-outs you want to give, to say thank you, and it sort of encourages that good behavior.

And also it allows foundations to essentially show off, to their peers, other foundations that they’re doing this, and they love to do that, because it really puts them in this kind of “model role,” which they really like.

So that’s really kind of the psychology of working with foundations that this pledge is set up to really access.

We also love it if you can share with us, how funders are doing with this pledge. So as you are talking to foundations with this pledge, and as you are following up also, like, you know, the foundation signatories who are already on it, because they’re expressing already that they want to fund trans communities at a higher level, you can approach them too. If you’ve never talked to them, you can approach them, too, we like to hear how that’s going for you.

So, you know, the pledge can be a tool to work with us, in terms of figuring out how we can better support the foundations and the funders to be more responsive, and to actually do the increasing funding that we want them to do.

Okay.

And I would like to turn it over to Kristina to talk a little bit about a few caveats. You’re muted. Now your turn to be muted.

KRISTINA: Every damn time! Okay.

A few notes on what the pledge is not. Because we want to be realistic about what this can and can’t do.

One note is that, philanthropy is a slow moving beast. And so if someone signs onto this pledge, it doesn’t necessarily mean that money is going to flow immediately, and all of a sudden, you know, you’re going to get grants you didn’t apply for and there’s just going to be handing out big dollars to trans communities.

Some might.

Some may say, you know, we’ve signed onto this, we need to put our money where our mouth is and we’re going to issue new grants right away. Others are going to take more time learning about the community, understanding, the intersections with their priority areas and making grants from there.

So it doesn’t necessarily mean that money will flow immediately, but that is the ultimate goal, is increased resources for trans communities.

The second is that this isn’t a punishment tool for foundations; it’s, like, Alex said, it’s a carrot rather than a stick, we’re not using this to shame or call out

fundlers.

We don't have a sort of second list of funders that have not signed the pledge.

Rather, we're using this psychology of praising people for what they are doing, and then trying to meet them where they're at and push them a little bit further.

Unfortunately, it's not a guarantee that foundations that have signed up onto the pledge will follow-through. We're committed to supporting them to holding them accountable, to finding ways through peer pressure or other ways we've found that work with funders to have every signatory take meaningful action for trans communities, but it's not just something we can guarantee.

But we are doing our best.

And then the last caveat that I'll share, which is an important one:

Is that if a foundation does not sign onto the pledge, please don't take that as an indication that they don't support trans communities or they aren't interested in learning more about trans communities, in fact we have some of the top funders of trans communities that simply have an organizational policy of not signing on to pledges. Or are anonymous foundations that don't want to take a public stand, or don't take public stance for anything.

So even if you are interested in approaching a funder, and you look to see if they're a GUTC signatory and they're not. Don't take that as an indication that they don't want to hear from you.

So with that, given, you know, some of the ideas that Alex shared, and some of the caveats, I'm very interested in hearing from all of you about other ways that you would want to use the GUTC Pledge, ways that you are, you know, thinking about this could be useful; or, if you started using it, you've talked to foundations about it, what advice can you give to other folks on the call, about how this can be a useful tool for you in your fundraising?

So, Alex, I believe, people can either put their questions in the box, down at the bottom of your screen, or you'll unmute and call on people who raised your hand.

ALEX: If you click on the raise your hand box at the top, I can see your little graphic pop up saying you need to talk and I can unmute you and, yes, you can also write in the chat box.

And we'll read those out loud!

KRISTINA: Great.

ALEX: We'll give you just a few minutes for that.

KRISTINA: Feel free to share with us, ways this can be useful to you, or ways that it has been useful to you!

(A pause).

KRISTINA: That's fine if we've got more questions than answers, at this point, if folks haven't started using this as a fundraising tool yet.

ALEX: We're going to have a Q&A in a second as well. We'll talk more then.

(A pause).

KRISTINA: Last chance to share any ways this may be useful to you, that we haven't mentioned. All right. So let's move on to a general Q&A.

I'm happy to answer, you know, Alex and I are happy to answer any questions about the pledge, or do some strategizing.

To kick us off, I actually wanted to address some of the common barriers, that you all mentioned; and ways that we can assist in those common barriers.

One of the things that rose to the top, was that it's hard to determine what foundations might be interested in funding your work.

So one of the things that we do at funders for LGBTQ issues is collect data on what foundations are supporting and we put out an annual tracking report that lists the top funders of trans issues, top funders of issues that intersect with trans issues; so for example, we have a list of the top folks that are funding, anti-criminalization and incarceration work; or folks that are funding, sex worker right; folks that are funding health for LGBTQ communities, and so we have lists of all those foundations and we're happy to brainstorm with you about who some of those funders might be. We also mentioned it's hard to make contact with staff to introduce your organization, one of the things I mentioned we do is we host conferences and convenings with funders, and we try to bring in nonprofit leaders to participate in those conversations, and try to maintain a diversity of nonprofit leaders. So the more that we know about the work that you're doing, the more Alex and I, and other folks at Funders for LGBTQ Issues are in the loop, the more that we can help get you in front of a funder audience, so I just wanted to name a couple of specific ways that we can help out.

Someone asked: how exactly can the list of funders be accessed?

Two ways: We recently put out an infographic on trans funding that's available on our Web site, and can drop a link to that in the chat box there. And that has a list of top trans funders. You can also reach out to Alex or I, or someone from our research and communications team, and ask us. The more specific your question, the easier it is to find data on who is doing the funding; so for example, if the question is, "who do you know that's funding... anti incarceration work for trans folks in Louisiana?" we can splice our data in that way, and, you know, there's probably, like, three funders that are doing that. The more specific we get the more narrow it gets, but we can access that information for you, so you can either reach out to us or take a look at the tracking report or the recent infographic on trans funding.

ALEX: We have some questions in the Q&A box.

So... let's see...

We have questions from Pearl asking "I don't yet understand how the GUTC Pledge works--is cash flow going to Funders or to the nonprofits or the groups directly?"

So, yeah, I can clarify that.

The idea is that the foundations that we're talking to, to ask them to sign the pledge, will fund the groups directly. So we're just there to make sure the connections happen, educate funders so they understand and see the different opportunities within the trans community that they can fund; so that they actually start doing that.

So the money will go out directly to the groups.

So....

Pearl, do you have any follow up questions, feel free to either raise your hand, or input more questions in the Q&A box.

There's another question: "I'm in the process of forming a business to create jobs, I'm seeking funding for start up costs of the umbrella. What resources or connections to resources would you have to make this possible and where can I get more information?" So one of the things I've been doing is talking to different groups, all over the country about this exact question, where they can find funding. Who the likely sources are.

So Pearl, I would invite you and anyone else on this call to set up a meeting with me, and we can have a conversation on the phone, and I can be more specific with you and getting you the resources you're looking for.

So my e-mail address, was... is actually listed here at the bottom. alex@lgbtfunders.org, feel free to reach out to me there.

Okay. So Kristina, do you have any comments on the one from Louis per chance?

KRISTINA: That question: "It's a challenge for us because we don't provide direct services, yet provide invisible support for those who do, therefore we don't fit into conventional foundation rubrics or outcome calculation tools." This is something we hear often particularly from trans organizations and trans led can groups, many of whom are doing pretty unique work that is responsive to the community, that doesn't fit into a neat foundation silo or bucket.

And so one of the things that we're always battling with philanthropy is, you know, thinking about the common barriers that you face in fundraising. I was reflecting on my fundraising days and how often I heard, "Oh, we don't fund by identity. We fund by issue area, we only fund health we don't fund LGBTQ people," and that doesn't make any sense. "We only fund direct service. We don't fund people who support direct service." I'm not sure I totally, with limited information I don't know exactly what you do. But the gist is that foundations often have pretty rigid guidelines.

One of the things we're really trying to do with GUTC is educate funders of the unique way that trans organizations, trans-led organizations operate, when in a community that is so underfunded, that folks are trying to do everything. Right?

A policy organization, no matter what, is doing direct service. A direct service organization, no matter what, is having to address policy issues and systemic change. So, you know, everybody's doing organizing, everybody is doing, you know, direct service, like, food access and things like that, that many nonprofits aren't doing.

So we're trying to educate foundations about the diversity of work, that sort of holistic nature of trans work, and Louis, if there's a specific foundation that you're interested in approaching and want some help strategizing about how to do that, we're happy to have that conversation with you and get a little bit more specific.

Alex, do you have anything to add about that?

ALEX: No just to say that, I mean, that is exactly what we're trying to do, an issue we're running into with foundations they just don't understand the history of trans communities and our work, and for example, they don't know that much about how much HIV and AIDS impacted our community and, therefore, how much HIV and AIDS work is actually intersectional and part of organizing that the trans community does.

So we do have this conversation. I would ask also Louis, and everyone else who has this question on their mind, this is a great piece of feedback, if you're running into a foundation and you're like, "You know what? On paper this makes sense they should be funding us but they don't understand because we don't fit into their rubric," this would be a conversation to have to strategize about the work.

For example, there's a new framework, this idea of "healing justice" and you can imagine, for us, that basically means all the mental health stuff we do in addition to the political work, the artwork, the cultural change stuff, the stuff that basically takes care of our souls that we need to do in order to do any kind of organizing--that stuff is being visible now, and called "healing justice" so funders can actually see it and take it seriously. Stuff like that is happening, and we would love to connect you with that kind of language and those ways of making your work more understandable for people who don't know the community very well.

KRISTINA: Yeah, I see a big part of our job as being sometimes a translator, between foundations, and folks that are doing grassroots work. And helping everybody kind of understand the language that each other is speaking and make sure the resources really are flowing to folks who need it.

ALEX: Okay, and we have a few more questions coming in, which is awesome!

Thanks Luis, for sending us your information.

I have a question, from Zahara: "We apply to foundations where the applications are open to those whose work aligns with their priorities. However, many foundations whose funding priorities aligns with our work requires invitation

to apply. What strategies should we use to gain invitation to apply to those funders or foundations?"

KRISTINA: Sure it's a tough one, philanthropy is about knowing relationships, knowing program officers knowing folks who know program officers, trying to get things across people's desks so that they pay attention.

So a couple of tips.

One: like I said keep us in the loop on your work, because we do have the privilege of a lot of access to program officers; and we really try to use that privilege as best we can to represent the community. So make sure we're aware of your work.

Two: There's lots of reasons you can reach out to a program officer, short of an application. So for example, if you have a short video that your organization has produced, or a report, or an event to invite them to--reach out with something other than an application, to say "I would love for you to be aware of our work, here's a sample of what we're up to," and then maybe wait a couple of days for a response and ask for a meeting. Even an informational meeting. So there's things that you can do that aren't quite, "Can I apply?" or asking if you can apply, but instead sharing information about your organization; and I know that it can feel sometimes like shouting into a dark void; but it's a little bit of a numbers game, and the more that you're getting your organization out there and in front of people, the more they're going to know about it. And then invite an application.

And I will say: I have been pleasantly surprised with the way that foundations invite applications from groups that they may not have heard of before, when they first become aware, so it does happen. It's they're not just inviting the groups that they already know. Many foundations are looking for new grantees. Especially in this area. Where they're being, you know, where they've signed onto this pledge and they're wanting to support more organizations.

ALEX: Yeah.

A tip that I found super helpful when I ran into this problem when I was leading a project is, I would find out who their other grantees were, so the ones who already got funding from them, and ask those grantees if we had a relationship with them to put in a word for us, basically.

So that's a way to leverage connections you already have in the community, so if there are other organizations, trans or not, getting funding from them that you're friendly with, this is a nice request to ask so other folks can help you figure out how to get access to those people.

That was a great question! So we have a few questions here from Ms. Banxx asking how do we find fiscal sponsorship and how do you get your name out there if you're starting a new 501(c)(3)? Those are great questions; these are fairly technical and it kind of depends on where you live, the size and scope of the work that you want to do; so I would actually say for this question it would be great if you could e-mail me directly and I can have a conversation with you and connect you up with a couple of different resources.

If folks don't already know about Trans United, I would suggest everyone look them up online, Trans United, now run by Ms. Daroneshia Duncan-Boyd, used to be in Alabama, and provide sponsorship services for trans led groups so I would recommend reaching out to them too.

Okay. What else have we got?

KRISTINA: I want to mention one of the things that came up in the polling question was three folks mentioned they don't have 501(c)(3) status and that's been a barrier to funding. Folks may already know but I think it's worth saying out loud: there are a handful of initiatives that are specifically supporting non-501(c)(3) trans groups: The trans justice funding initiative, sorry, the Trans Justice Funding Project, is an important one to take a look at, as well as Third Wave Fund.

They support emerging organizations with capacity building grants, they do long term support and they don't require 501(c)3 status; and then, what was the third one? The Fund for Trans Generations at Borealis Philanthropy, I'm actually not recalling, Alex, if they require 501(c)3 status? They do for that one; you do need to be a 501(c)(3), but they support smaller grassroots organizations and have many grantees every year.

So Trans Justice Funding Project and Third Wave Fund are great places to start.

ALEX: Yeah, through those two, Trans Justice Funding Project and Third Wave. In the chat box, I threw them in there so it's there for people to look them up. They are fantastic, both run by trans folks which is amazing. They are very, very helpful and they totally understand the situation that a lot of groups are in, especially the ones that are just starting; so they not only can they provide funding, lead to funding, but they can also help you figure out how to do the 501(c)3 incorporation if you want to, and get resources.

And Luis just added the Fund for Trans Generations--a clarification, that's right, Fund for Trans Generations at Borealis Philanthropy doesn't require you have a 501(c)(3) but does require fiscal sponsorship at least, so if you're not a 501(c)(3) but are fiscally sponsored by an organization that is one, then you can qualify for funding. That is true for the vast majority of foundations--having a fiscal sponsor is pretty much enough to apply and meet that requirement.

And then another question about what the needs are and services are for trans and QTPOC communities. If anybody wants to see more research, this is great in terms of reference for all of us, what's going on in different parts of the country, for example, you can take a look at the Trans community survey that the National Trans Coalition did.

KRISTINA: The National Center for Trans Equality.

ALEX: There you go, they're wonderful, based in D.C., and they've done these national surveys, essentially finding what those important needs and services are that haven't been filled. So that's one place to look, there are also region specific research. Th Campaign for Southern Equality recently put out southern-related reports on what the needs are in those areas. So I would suggest taking a look at those to get a little bit more information.

And Pearl has added some things: “I’ve heard of too much drama and in fighting and avoid resources as a result. We do need healing and also need jobs and shelter.” This is definitely right on, Pearl! What else could we benefit from? These are great conversations I think the community needs to keep having, we’re at a point now, where kind of the stuff that hits hardest in the past, especially the in-community drama, is really not helping right now. Actually making things much, much worse.

So, you know, this is something that we can hopefully, put folks together to have a conversation more about. I know one example, the House of GG down in Little Rock, is actually looking at this by doing retreats for trans women of color in different Southern communities to actually confront the drama and in-fighting and gossiping and shade that has happened, sometimes going back decades to the point where community members don’t even remember why they’re fighting.

So, by the way, this work, if you are doing this kind of work, this is funders are now understanding is “healing justice,” okay? There’s ways to talk about stuff that we’ve been doing all along in ways they understand now.

Okay. Any other questions? By the way, this is great. The questions people have been putting in here, thank you so much.

KRISTINA: And feel free to raise your hand and share your question, out loud, if you don’t feel comfortable typing it out.

ALEX: I want to point out folks in the room--Louis Mitchell said also a FYI: “We provide sponsorship to small trans organizations.” Please follow up with Louis, if you are interested. It was mentioned before; their Web site is transfaith.info.

ALEX: I’m going to put that in the chat box.

We are also going to be, by the way, sending documentation of this webinar to all of you, so that will include the chat text.

Jaden asked, “This is what I’m working on,” in reference to what we just talked about from the community in fighting, “This is what I’m working on now. The black trans wellness collective, the need for healing justice.” Awesome! This is something we know people in the community have been needing for years, so I’m really happy more and more projects are taking this on.

KRISTINA: Also, if folks aren’t aware, the Astraea Lesbian Foundation For Justice has been playing a real leadership role on the need for healing justice, funding, particularly in trans and queer spaces. They put out a report recently that you can link to here. And they’re really doing a lot of work to try to help funders understand the need for healing justice. It’s another place to take a look at for potential funding. Astraea Lesbian Foundation For Justice, and they fund the entire LGBTQ community. And, again, they fund smaller organizations, I think the budget cap is \$250,000 for them.

ALEX: They have a new report. Go to their website, and you can also Google this term “healing justice,” and see what comes up. It’s an enlightening way to explore. We have about five minutes left.

Any other questions?

(A pause).

Ms. Banxx asked “How do I contact someone in the group?” That’s a great question, if you e-mail me, I can, then find out if that person [LAUGHING] would like to share their e-mail. That’s one thing we need to kind of ask permission from everyone before we do that.

Great. I’m glad this was helpful, thank you Zahara for letting us know, thank you, Jaden, and thank you, Louis!

Oh, yeah, thanks Kristina; just put in the link for the healing justice report and they’re a great funder to get to know. I think they were one of the first grants that we got; they were an early supporter of trans groups.

So Pearl is asking us to repeat the organization that has the research and the survey for the trans needs: that’s the National Center for Trans Equality. I’m going to type it into the chat box. Yeah, so NCTE for short. They’ve also been around for a good number of years, and are one of the larger trans led groups, civil rights groups.

Yes, Pearl, asked for, okay, Pearl is asking, House of GG.

Pearl, did I answer your question?

Okay.

Pearl says, “I think so.” Okay, great.

KRISTINA: Great. And, again, feel free to follow up, with Alex or I. Our contact information is there on the screen, for you all, and like I said, the more in the loop that we are with your work, the more we can represent for you, when we’re talking to folks at foundations.

ALEX: Yeah, please as you’re using the pledge feel free to reach out, this is an overview, right? There’s going to be questions that come up as you’re actually using it and wrestling with how you might want to use it, feel free to e-mail us happy to talk to you about what specifically you’re doing and help you plan the best use of the pledge.

KRISTINA: Also we welcome your feedback, if there’s anything in the pledge that you feel like is a little off and could use tweaking, let us know your thoughts. This stuff is always a work in progress, we’re doing our best; obviously, we’re not perfect, and there are foundations that you’re working with that have signed onto the pledge, and you’re encountering barriers with them, let us know, if there’s any way that we can be supportive and helping navigate through those barriers, or help those foundations, be true to their intent with the pledge.

ALEX: Absolutely. Hoping to close the information loop by establishing relationships with you all so you can tell us how things are going.

All right. Thank you, everybody! So that’s us, you can find us here, and it was a pleasure talking to you all! Thank you so much for everything you’re doing,

you all are heroes to me, and I feel like I'm totally honored to be in service of your work, and you!

All right! Thanks everyone.

KRISTINA: Bye folks!