

INTRODUCTION

Who are the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the Phoenix metropolitan area? What particular issues do they face? Which strategies and programs would benefit them the most? This report provides answers to these questions, outlooks and opinions of community members and recommendations for community change.

The LGBT Community Assessment is a groundbreaking effort to investigate the strengths and needs of the LGBT community in the Valley. It is part of a larger effort of the Arizona Community Foundation, which was awarded up to \$100,000 in matching funds by the National Lesbian and Gay Community Funding Partnership to begin building a permanent philanthropic resource for addressing the concerns of the LGBT community in Arizona. The assessment results will be used to:

- Inform the Arizona Community Foundation, and other potential funders, on the major issues and concerns in the community
- Provide the community's perspective on the most critical issues and programs requiring resources and future funding priorities
- Present the outlooks of different groups in the community to inform LGBT organizations on how to meet the needs of their members

This report presents the results of phase one of the LGBT Community Assessment implemented from January through May 2004. Significant insights and assistance came from many LGBT members, leaders of LGBT organizations, and service providers to the community.

Phase two of the assessment, if funded, will explore in more depth the issues identified in this report, develop consensus on community priorities, and develop more fully strategies and programs for community improvements.

The LGBT Community Assessment seeks to:

- Reveal community strengths, resources, needs and priorities
- Create a common understanding of issues impacting the community
- Identify strategies for community improvements and funding priorities
- Encourage community involvement in activities that benefit all community members

The activities in phase one involved a review of previous LGBT studies, liaison with an advisory committee, and discussions with stakeholders and community members. These activities involved:

- Interviews with 12 community stakeholders including leaders of LGBT organizations, faith-based leaders, members of under-represented groups, and service providers
- 3 focus groups among 27 professionals, adults, and youth in the community
- Meetings with an Advisory Committee established by the Arizona Community Foundation
- Documentation of the findings of the assessment process

WHAT WE KNOW FROM LGBT RESEARCH AND STUDIES

A brief review of what we know from national research, local studies, and previous assessments of the LGBT population follows.

Key Issues Impacting the Community

National research conducted over the past 10 years examines the primary issues confronting the LGBT community. There have been several national studies as well as a number of local and regional ones. Some have been sponsored and conducted by community groups, some by potential funders, and others by academics.

A number of themes have appeared throughout this research. The themes include:

- Problems with participation including: broad civic issues, such as low voter turnout rates. Within LGBT organizations participation is often limited to people who are white, wealthier, able-bodied, younger, and often male.
- Issues of bias including: discrimination, violence, harassment, anti-LGBT legislation.
- Partner status issues including: inability to receive benefits, adoption, marriage, civil unions, health insurance, hospital visitation rights.
- Health and mental health issues including: prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, cancer, drug abuse, smoking, all of which are particularly prevalent problems in the LGBT community. Also included were relationship violence, depression, fertility issues, coming out issues. Health and mental health issues among youth have been specifically noted, including high rates of homelessness, suicide, smoking, HIV/AIDS risk, drug use, violence, and isolation.
- Service provision issues including: lack of acceptance in mainstream services, the need for targeted services, gaps in service provision, barriers to services.
- Issues facing subpopulations including: people of color, people who are transgender and bisexual, youth, older people, women.

There is no general agreement about how these issues should be prioritized.

Local Issues and Concerns

A prior community assessment was conducted in the Phoenix area based on a Town Hall meeting in 2003. The 82 participants were divided into work groups to address the following areas:

- Civic Participation
- Civil Unions
- Community Business Issues
- Community Voter Registration
- Creating GLBT Community
- Dual-Parent Adoption
- Diversity
- GLBT Youth
- Health Issues
- Safe Schools
- Senior Issues

Participants in each group brainstormed a list of relevant issues or challenges within their area and a list of possible remedies. The Executive Summary of the Town Hall explains that all of the areas examined can be placed in one of three concentric circles. The inner circle is the “Family Circle,” surrounding that is the “Community Circle,” and the outermost one is the “Public Circle,” including the larger community of allies and opponents. The report suggested three general themes applicable to issues in all three circles:

- Encouraging full participation from the LGBT community, including civic participation and leadership development
- Building coalitions with and educating the Public Circle
- Establishing and strengthening safety nets for youth, seniors, and other facets of the LGBT community.

There is also information available about hate or bias crimes from the Phoenix Police Department. The report cites violence against gay men and lesbians, but does not specifically include bisexual or transgender people. It is unclear whether there were no reports made, if any reports were included in the “gay” category, or if these groups are not included in bias crime reporting. Anecdotal reports from members of the transgender community make it extremely unlikely that no incidents against members of this community actually occurred. In each of the three years from 2001 through 2003, members of the lesbian/gay community were either the second or third most frequently victimized group in the city of Phoenix.

An additional local study was conducted by the John and Genevieve Dyer Foundation and Arizona Human Rights Foundation in 2001. This study looked at the attitudes and beliefs of likely voters in Arizona toward the gay community. Nine types of voters emerged from the data. The study concludes that there are a number of positive indicators of the community’s ability to move their agenda forward through education and advocacy. This can most effectively be done by developing an effective program to communicate with the general public. The study also suggested that messages must be targeted to the unique groups of people living in the state.

Composition of the Local Community

A number of studies have attempted to estimate the size of the LGBT community. Although the percentages vary by study, there appears to be some consensus that between 1% and 10% of the general population is gay or lesbian. Based on these figures, the number of gays and lesbians in the Phoenix Metropolitan area ranges from 33,000-330,000 people. This is likely a conservative estimate of the LGBT population, however. The studies the estimates are based on do not include transgender people.

Studies also indicate that the LGBT community mirrors the diversity of the population at large. The percentage of LGBT people of color, low-income people, women, and youth is roughly equal to those percentages in the local population. For the Phoenix area this means a significant portion of the LGBT community is Latino, poor, and young. There are also pockets of high income, African American, Native American, and older LGBT.

LOCAL LGBT PERSPECTIVES

Our efforts to learn from a range of people in the community yielded a handsome return of insights, ideas and possibilities. Notably, the assessment participants held a number of common opinions and stories that frequently illustrated what service professionals, or national studies described as a problem or a common situation. In this way, a broad range of views turned out to be complementary, revealing directions that could help the community improve. The assessment outcomes can be summarized and presented in three areas:

- Insights and Perspectives
- Issues and Concerns
- Recommendations for Improvements and Change

The results of 12 in-depth interviews and focus groups with almost 30 people reveal a lot about the LGBT community. The following sections summarize the general themes, variety of perspectives, and recommendations for community improvements.

Insights and Perspectives

Phoenix is a Good Place to Live -- for Some, That Is

Many participants believed Phoenix is a good place for LGBT people to live. The most common reasons were the same ones people give generally for moving to Phoenix -- the sunny weather, endless outdoor activities, and job opportunities. Participants felt the wider population in this area hold an ethic of individualism -- common in the west -- that accept gay people as long as they are not personally confronted by them. There is a “*live and let live attitude.*”

Although Phoenix is thought to be politically conservative, many participants viewed the changes in the last few years as very positive. While the area lags behind California generally in terms of legal and political gains for LGBT people, Arizona has made a number of gains in a relatively short period of time -- inclusion of LGBT in hate crimes law, elimination of archaic sex laws, city and state non-discrimination laws including sexual orientation, and numerous LGBT elected officials.

In contrast to most large cities, Phoenix does not have a specific area where heavy concentrations of gay people live. This was considered a positive attribute. A number of participants liked the diversity of their neighborhoods and believed that the diffusion of LGBT people in the Valley helped to spread tolerance.

This rosy picture of Phoenix changed somewhat for people of color, transgender people, and those with health and social service needs. According to some

participants, it is difficult to find services, or even information about various program options, and that for people not fitting into the mainstream, life is more of a struggle. White, middle and upper-class gay men, it was reported, tend to have the fewest struggles in terms of job and financial security, mental health issues, and social acceptance. Women, people of color, those with lower incomes, and transgendered people were less positive about life in Phoenix. *“It’s OK if you are well situated economically and are not in crisis. If you’re poor or in crisis, it’s not a good place to be.”*

LGBT Community has Significant Assets

Change and evolution were identified as important assets of the community. The legal and political gains achieved in recent years, the ability to galvanize the community over issues (such as the recent rally at the Capital to oppose the legislature’s encouragement of a federal constitutional amendment banning gay marriage), the effort by Central Pride to prove the importance of LGBT people to local tourism, and Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon’s participation in the recent Pride Festival – have moved the community into a more prominent and positive standing within the larger context of Phoenix. Governor Janet Napolitano excited the community in 2003 by attending the Arizona Human Rights Fund Annual Awards Dinner and announcing an Executive Order she was signing banning discrimination of state employees based on sexual orientation. Because of this recent progress, there was a clear sense among the participants that even more change is on the horizon.

The integration of LGBT people into the overall community -- rather than concentrating in one geographic area -- was viewed as a strength by most participants. Although higher concentrations of LGBT people live in Central Phoenix, and perhaps Tempe, both of these areas are fairly diverse. They are considered gay-friendly but by no means a “*gay ghetto*.” The participants lived all over the Valley – from Central Phoenix to Northeast Phoenix to Gilbert. However, almost every participant wished to have a specific place in the area that belonged to the community – a space they could call their own, and lamented the fact that no such space existed at the present time.

Community members are thriving in the private sector, some participants reported. This has resulted in a significant number of gay-owned businesses and the movement toward a gay business center in Central Phoenix. Phoenix’ light rail has taken the gay business community quite seriously – consulting with numerous gay business owners to determine and mitigate the impact of future rail line construction. A number of local corporations and government agencies have formed corporate pride groups – which provide networking opportunities and pursue equal treatment and benefits for their LGBT members. Qwest, Prudential, American Express, and Bank One Pride groups (among others) have given substantial funding to Central Pride for the annual Pride festival and other initiatives. In addition, there are community members with significant wealth giving generously to issues and concerns impacting the community albeit,

selective ones. These people also tend to be seen as community leaders and most communitywide functions cater to their lifestyle.

Some service providers believe the area has strong services for people with HIV/AIDS – particularly as compared to the services available to people with social and mental health issues.

Four or Five Organizations Considered Leadership Groups

A quick check of the internet identifies numerous LGBT organizations in the Valley. Some groups work on human rights, social services, and political issues. Others bring people together for more recreational and social purposes such as square dancing, hiking, networking, the rodeo, and business. A great deal of agreement revolved around which organizations were considered community leadership groups:

- Arizona Human Rights Fund
- Greater Phoenix Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- Arizona Central Pride
- Valley One in Ten

Interestingly, these particular organizations have started working together in the last year. A board member from each organization has been serving on the other groups' boards to improve communication across all agencies. Also, the four groups started an information and referral service 1-888-GAYAZ4U.

AIDS groups were also considered important leadership groups such as Body Positive and AIDS Project Arizona – although no one group was mentioned more than another.

Lack of Consensus on a Name

Perspectives varied widely on an appropriate name for the community. Working people and professionals reported feeling comfortable with LGBT, although men tended to use the acronym GLBT. Some were comfortable with the term gay feeling it was generic enough to include the entire community, not just men.

Older people, it was reported, have quite different perspectives. *“Older women don’t even like the word lesbian, so they won’t respond to programs that use that word. We need to think about the language we use to try to do outreach. We try to use women who partner with women with the older women and we usually use queer with the younger women. Many gay seniors don’t know what LGBT means. Also with language, gay seniors, particularly men, don’t like to be called seniors.”*

Young people added a “Q” for questioning as an important part of a name; they believe people who may be questioning their sexuality -- but are not yet certain -- are an important component of the community. Some youth prefer the term

queer, it was reported. Letting go of any past connotations, young people see queer as a meaningful name, rather than LGBT which focuses on the disparate groups that comprise the community. Preferring more inclusive terms, some youth suggested using gay or homosexual community.

Many, Many Groups Make-up the Community

There was general agreement among participants that the community includes gay men, lesbians, bi-sexuals, and transgendered people. However, some gays and lesbians seemed a bit unsure of or unclear about how bi-sexuals and transgendered people fit in.

Young people viewed those questioning their sexuality to be a part of the community. Others felt their allies in the straight community – family, friends, and supporters – are part of the LGBT community.

Demographic groups are key groups to consider as well -- because opinions and perspectives vary greatly depending on the racial, cultural, age and income groups one belongs to. The LGBT community includes significant numbers of Latinos as well as smaller numbers of African Americans and Native Americans. It also has people belonging to all income levels – low, middle and upper income.

Issues and Concerns

Need to Develop New Leadership

A common theme heard throughout the assessment was the need for new community leaders. Participants talked about the same people serving on the boards of LGBT organizations for years – and these people tend to be white, male and economically well-off. Many believe it is time for new people to step up to the plate who will bring a different perspective to LGBT groups. This new perspective, it was heard repeatedly, should reach out and embrace those in the community who have not been as active and involved, particularly people of color and young people. It should also embrace, according to some, issues beyond exclusively gay issues like HIV/AIDS to issues impacting the community's allies.

Some participants also reported the need for leaders to be more sensitive to people with lower incomes since most communitywide events require a hefty outlay of money to attend – leaving out lower income LGBT people. Participants generally acknowledged the need for organizations to be more inclusive but believed they had tried and found it difficult to bring in new people willing to volunteer their time and get involved. Therefore, it is the same people doing the work year after year after year.

Too Many Divisions within the Community

The community is rich in diversity. It includes people of all ages, genders, races, cultures, and incomes. The problem, many participants reported, is that there are few formal connections between the various groups in the community and

little unity on issues beyond politics. Participants talked about the lack of interaction between women and men; the lack of involvement of Latinos and African Americans; and the lack of understanding, knowledge and acceptance of transgendered people. Both in terms of organized groups and outlooks, divisions seemed to fall along these lines:

- Gays and lesbians
- Young men and older men
- Whites and people of color
- Affluent people and low income people
- Gays/lesbians and bisexuals/transgendered people

Transgendered people in particular have a difficult time being accepted by the general community, it was discussed, and even by LGBT members. *“I’ve worked with a few {transgendered people}. I didn’t know much and thought they were weird. I got to know them and accepted them. But even in the gay community, they are harassed. They are part of our community.”*

Lack of Information on Services and Resources

There are a number of issues impacting the LGBT community that result in people with significant health and social needs. Young people may struggle with coming out, lose self-esteem if rejected by their families, and suffer from depression, homelessness and drug use. Since women typically earn lower wages than men, lesbian households are likely to reflect lower incomes than gay households. Gay men have higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection than other groups (a local service provider reported the rate increasing dramatically for 18-24 year olds). Others talked about job discrimination and domestic violence impacting community members.

Given the needs, most participants agreed it was difficult to get information on services, access resources, and know where to turn for help. A part of the problem, many believed, came from a lack of a physical location or space for LGBT people – thus there was no place to house a clearinghouse for referrals and information and a place where anyone would know to look for information. Participants acknowledged that a great deal of information could be found in the existing media. But many in the community do not read gay newspapers and magazines or frequent places where gay publications are available or do not get involved in LGBT organizations. For example, a number of participants (even those active in the community) were not aware of the new community referral service – 1-888-GAYAZ4U. Specifically, some pointed out the difficulty in identifying gay-friendly counselors and medical doctors. Young people identified the need for a youth publication – something written specifically to meet their needs and identify youth resources in the community.

Lack of Organizational Infrastructure and Collaboration

Most local LGBT organizations including the leadership groups do not have office space and paid staff. With the exception of AHRF, the groups are run by volunteers. This has led to an uneven ability of groups to fundraise. In particular, AHRF, Central Pride and the Community Church of Hope have been able to raise significant amounts of funding; but other groups have struggled. This situation has also perpetuated a single minded focus of groups to address their own issues and concerns with little collaboration or communication across groups. In the last year, alliances among organizations have just started to form. Here's a young person's perspective: *"The LGBT community is separated. Groups don't collaborate. It's not really a community. It's scattered bits and pieces. It would be better for us if it was more of a community."*

Some youth said LGBT organizations do not really accommodate them so they do not get involved. One young person was interested in LGBT sporting groups – but would like to be with people her own age. Apparently, there is little in the community available to her.

Lack of Inclusiveness

People of color tend to have more difficulty coming out due to cultural and family issues, we heard. One participant said it this way – *"If you are white and you lose your family it is not as big of a deal because you are accepted everywhere else. People of color have so little support they cannot afford to lose their family and community. So coming out is particularly hard."*

People of color also face double discrimination, it was reported. Not only do they face racial and cultural prejudice as well as homophobia from the general population, many participants felt they also faced discrimination – or at least a lack of sensitivity – from within the LGBT community itself. Few LGBT groups have people of color serving on their boards, and few minorities belong to groups as members. Frustration was expressed by people on all sides of this issue. Some said their organizations had tried to open their doors but few minorities had come inside. People of color said they did not see themselves among the leaders or being welcomed by these groups, and so they did not go. Most participants believed there was a need to broaden the perspectives of the current LGBT leadership in order to widen the net of participation in the community generally.

Need for a Central LGBT Location or Space

Just about every large city in the nation has an LGBT community center except for Phoenix. This concern was repeated throughout the assessment. Particularly because the community is spread out across the metropolitan area, participants felt the need for a central location or space that was exclusively for the community. Many believed a central location would solve numerous problems – for example, the need for a clearinghouse of information, office space for community groups, and a meeting place for people that isn't a bar or drinking

establishment. Young people suggested the need for a youth center that could be part of a community center. This space could be specifically for youth “a place to hang out, get answers, and have a library, access to a 24 hour hotline.”

It was acknowledged, however, that a local LGBT community center was established several years ago and failed. Consequently, some believe, the environment here may not be conducive to a typical community center concept. Some suggested the community ought to develop an alternative community center model that may be better suited to the needs of gay people in Phoenix.

Need to Address a Range of Health Issues

Many health issues impact the community but most of the attention is placed on HIV/AIDS, a number of participants reported. Generally, participants were proud of the resources being put into HIV/AIDS services but some felt this resulted in too little attention given to other important health issues. It was reported, for example, that lesbians have a higher risk for breast cancer than women generally and women more often are under-insured for health care. Participants felt some medical doctors are insensitive to gay people and some in the community are fearful doctors will not treat gay people the same as they treat others. Drug use is a problem among some young people as they face self-esteem issues related to coming out. Smoking is a problem among people who frequent gay bars leading to a host of health concerns. Perhaps most acute are the problems impacting transgendered people. It was reported that many transgendered people have little money, so surgery is not an option. This may lead to a host of other medical and mental health issues – and finding a doctor or mental health provider who understands transgender issues is particularly difficult. People with disabilities are essentially invisible in the community, some reported, exacerbated by the ideal body concept of gay men.

Need to Address Youth Issues

There was general agreement among participants that LGBT youth face difficult issues and that the community must be involved with youth to help address their concerns. These issues include:

- Discrimination and bullying at schools
- Difficulties of coming out
- Homelessness (as a result of losing family support)
- High levels of depression
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Involvement in prostitution
- Low self-esteem resulting in high suicide rates
- Lack of safe spaces
- Lack of transportation to services
- Lack of sensitivity of youth workers

Based on recent studies, a youth worker reported, 32-40% of all homeless youth are LGBT – a significantly higher proportion than their numbers in the general population. Because of this situation, Tumbleweed is considering developing a homeless shelter exclusively for LGBT youth.

A number of youth talked in glowing terms about Valley One in Ten – appreciating the services it offers especially the ability to meet other LGBT youth like them. A big problem among youth, it was reported, is *“learning to be comfortable with yourself. We need more groups like this in the Valley. These groups help, knowing you’re not alone.”* Some high schools have support groups usually in the form of Gay/Straight Alliances, which are supported by the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) – but many have no services available to gay youth. This uneven allocation of resources results in very different experiences for LGBT people in high school.

Some participants talked about the inability of young people to ultimately reach their full potential because of struggles with self-esteem, lack of family support and, consequently resources for advanced education, discrimination in the workplace, and other issues. For this reason, Central Pride started a scholarship fund to enable some LGBT youth to attend college. Some participants believe there is a need for mentoring programs so that youth may get to know successful adult role models. Others commented on the quality and success of Anytown (run by the National Conference for Community and Justice) and would like to encourage greater youth involvement in this program.

Need to Address Issues of Older LGBT People

“A black hole.” “Invisible.” “Isolated.” These were the words used to describe seniors in the community. There were many reasons given: seniors do not fit the ideal body concept of gay men, ageism in the larger community, and fear that they (seniors) will not be treated well by health providers particularly nursing home staff.

Participants discussed issues effecting older community members – concerns about hospital visitation rights when a partner is ill and benefits upon a partner’s death. Most disconcerting many reported, was that some seniors feel they have to go back into the closet when entering a senior center or nursing home.

There are few local organizations addressing the issues and needs of LGBT seniors. Primetimers has over 100 members but it is only men and they do not tend to mix with others or get involved in the community generally. The Calamus facility is offering a gay environment for seniors to live – but so far it is growing slowly. The Area Agency on Aging is attempting to outreach to LGBT seniors who need or serve as caregivers -- but it is finding LGBT seniors a difficult group to identify and reach.

Recommendations for Future Projects, Community Improvements, and Funding Priorities

A number of interesting ideas and proposals emerged from the assessment activities. They grew out of discussions of issues and concerns – and most are aimed at solving problems or filling gaps in existing services and programs. Below is a list of these ideas and proposals – they are not presented in any particular order or priority.

Leadership Summit

A summit of leaders of all LGBT organizations in the Valley could be organized either annually or periodically. This would enable the community to develop a plan that would address common priorities, encourage communication and coordination across groups, and increase collaborative initiatives. A large project such as the development of a community center or physical space for the community could be addressed in this format. It was stressed that representation from all groups in the Valley would be important.

Outreach on Community Services and Resources

This would involve assessing the current methods community members use to get information on services and resources, determining the gaps, and identifying the best methods to reach different groups in the community. The idea would be to review the current directories and information sources, fill-in the gaps with up-to-date information on LGBT programs, services and resources and develop a comprehensive source of information. Then, a dissemination plan would be needed in order to inform people of the availability of information and how best to access it. Methods of dissemination would likely vary for different community groups particularly those harder to reach groups such as youth, transgendered people, and seniors.

Community Forums

A series of forums could be organized on specific topics to promote dialogue among different groups and greater understanding on issues.

Leadership Development

A focused effort to promote leadership development could involve a number of different initiatives including scholarships for young people to attend leadership training programs, LGBT organizations sponsoring leadership trainings and promoting them to their members, groups developing leadership succession plans, and diversification of board members.

Building the Capacity of Organizations

A number of LGBT organizations would benefit from efforts that strengthen their capabilities in management, staffing, governance, fundraising, marketing, planning and overall organizational infrastructure. This could help the groups reach out to greater numbers in the community including more marginalized

people, improve their ability to seek funding from diverse sources, become more responsive to community needs, and improve their long-term viability. Capacity building grants could be one form of help in this area.

Feasibility of a Central Place for LGBT

Just about every person in the community assessment agreed on the need for a place that the LGBT community could call its own. There was disagreement however on exactly what type of place is needed. Many mentioned the need for a community center – although such a place opened in Phoenix a few years ago and closed its doors fairly quickly. A few mentioned the need for a different, non-traditional place – perhaps a building where organizations share space and resources and serve as a one stop shop for the community. The main point is that a feasibility study would help determine the type of facility or space the community needs (all of the community, not just the needs of a few) and where the resources to finance and operate such a facility would come from.

Issue-Based Projects

There are many issues impacting the community that could be addressed through special projects – youth homelessness, housing for older members, service needs of transgendered people, health care issues for women, mental health concerns of LGBT people, drug prevention and intervention needs, to name just a few.

One service provider cautioned that a new funding source should not be used to pit one group against another but should be an opportunity for collaboration. It was suggested that a different issue be funded each funding cycle. This would keep the entire community from further division due to fighting over a single pot of money. All grants should encourage collaboration among LGBT groups.

Community Boards Must be Diverse

A broad-based membership comprised of all key groups within the community is essential for community boards involved in or making funding decisions. No one group represents the entire community, rather the opinions and outlooks of people differ depending on the group one belongs to. Consequently, it is critical that a decision making body include, at the least, representatives of the following groups:

- Gay men
- Lesbians
- Leaders of major LGBT organizations
- People of color
- Bi-sexual people
- Transgendered people
- Youth or youth workers
- Older LGBT people

A representative group, along the lines stated here, is key for the community board that will assist in allocating funding for the Arizona Community Foundation. If the group is to have credibility in the community and make funding decisions based on community needs – it is imperative that this board represent the various groups comprising the LGBT community in the Valley.

Encourage Collaboration Among LGBT Groups

Funding programs should encourage collaboration among LGBT organizations. All too often, groups are working in isolation from one another – whether or not the work involves similar issues or activities. A new funding stream may provide an opportunity for disparate groups to come together, open lines of communication, and truly work as one community.

FUTURE ASSESSMENT WORK

The next phase of the LGBT Community Assessment should focus on three specific areas:

- Holding additional focus groups to elicit the perspectives of people in the marginalized community groups -- people of color, youth, and older people
- Gaining consensus on community priorities based on the issues identified in phase one
- Organizing a community workshop to share the findings of the consultation, discuss and refine community priorities, and identify strategies and actions for addressing the areas of priority
- Developing a community action plan

If funded, phase two would enable completion of the LGBT Community Assessment.

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