

**AT THE  
CROSSROADS  
THE FUTURE  
OF THE LGBT  
MOVEMENT**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

2

## **PREFACE**

3

## **INTRODUCTION**

5

## **FINDINGS**

12

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

16

## **CONCLUSION**

17

## **APPENDIX 1**

*Charts*

19

## **APPENDIX 2**

*Snapshot of the LGBT  
Movement: Assets and Gaps*

20

## **APPENDIX 3**

*Methodology*

21

## **APPENDIX 4**

*Selected Bibliography*

## PREFACE

What a difference a year makes! The research for this report started last summer – before the November election, before the Supreme Court hearings, and before Rhode Island completed the marriage equality block in New England. Yet, the findings from the survey and interviews presented in *At the Crossroads: The Future of the LGBT Movement* become even more relevant as progress continues towards marriage equality.

*At the Crossroads* explores how local, state, and national policy advocates and organizers see the future of the LGBT movement. The findings point to LGBT leaders' desire to define movement making beyond the marriage moment. The respondents, many of whom work on marriage equality, are aware of the long road ahead, and there is a deep concern that the LGBT movement is not prepared to address a host of issues that prevent LGBT people from obtaining full equity and fairness.

Please feel free to let us know your reactions to the report and your own experiences. We can be reached at the emails below!

Best,

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# INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the LGBT movement has witnessed wins that an earlier generation would have thought impossible: from the first-ever statewide popular votes legalizing same-sex marriage to the U.S. President acknowledging LGBT rights in his inaugural address to the nation. However, as the struggle for legal equality of LGBT people in the United States continues to advance, the movement faces a series of questions about the future. How will it capitalize on the current momentum to continue to advance a broad range of issues and to influence social norms in order to make equality both a legal right and a lived reality for LGBT people? What new goals will the LGBT movement adopt? Who will be the movement's future leaders?

These are not new questions for movements at a crossroads. Any collection of individuals, organizations and efforts working to achieve broad social change will inevitably face such periods of competing issues, priorities, and power dynamics. Movements must constantly balance the need to create systemic reforms through public policy and legal action with their ultimate goal of achieving broad social change by influencing the "hearts and minds" of the general public and embedding new norms that become part of the social fabric. How the LGBT movement resolves these tensions will determine the movement's direction and future.

The crossroads facing the LGBT movement reflect the tension between its current priorities and its future direction. The movement's recent successes are largely the result of strategic investments in policy change to secure equal access to two of the most traditional institutions in America – the military and marriage. More than providing recognition and inclusion of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, breaking down

these institutional barriers has been an important avenue toward changing social norms.<sup>1</sup> The broader public has found marriage, with its symbolic and systemic advantages, a pro-gay policy agenda they can support. However, marriage has also become so identified as the movement, especially for non-LGBT allies, that it threatens to leave out other crucial issues that would ensure full acceptance and just treatment of all LGBT people. Winning marriage equality, like other single-issue fixes to the rights of oppressed groups, could mean the sidelining of other important LGBT issues and that the movement – like reproductive rights and racial equity – may stall and become vulnerable to new backlash strategies from the opposition, all of which could rollback the hard-fought progress of today.

The LGBT movement maintains significant assets which it has been able to leverage for real progress, including engaged donors and funders; strong national organizations; and political savvy, visible, and influential leaders across a variety of sectors, particularly the entertainment, media, and, increasingly, political arenas. Strategically, these assets have been deployed with a laser-like focus to address specific policy and legislative wins either nationally or in certain parts of the country. As a result, there is a growing disparity in capacity, leadership, and bench strength between groups and regions based on location, activities, and focus of the work.

Looking to the future, the LGBT movement will need to develop and invest in a broader vision that supports the aspirations of a larger number of individuals and organizations to once again make what seems impossible, possible.

<sup>1</sup> The wins in these two areas have largely not included transgender or gender non-conforming people.

## THIS REPORT

To better understand its role in supporting the LGBT movement, the Building Movement Project (BMP), in conjunction with Wellspring Advisors, sent an in-depth survey to LGBT organizations from the organizing, policy, and legal advocacy sectors; conducted interviews with a range of individuals from local, state and national LGBT organizations, movement experts from within and outside of the LGBT movement, capacity builders, and funders who support movement building; and reviewed relevant literature.<sup>2</sup>

The findings suggest that LGBT leaders recognize the important gains made and momentum generated, especially in marriage equality, but even ardent marriage supporters see the focus on marriage as a double-edged sword. The results indicate that the movement can continue to focus on legal rights, especially marriage, or it can expand its reach to include a fuller spectrum of issues preventing full equality and inclusion for the LGBT community. This finding was most clearly seen in the respondents' desire to embrace a new vision—one grounded in justice—that builds on the significant and growing number of wins but looks forward to a larger goal of attaining fairness and equity for all.

The research and analysis looked at core elements of movement building, based on social movement theory and similar movement scans conducted for other movements.<sup>3</sup> The following pages lay out

the findings and recommendations based on the information collected. Overall, the findings point to four key areas of focus.

### DEFINING THE NEW VISION:

Shifting the vision of the LGBT movement from equal rights for some to equity and justice for all.

### EXTENDING AND DIVERSIFYING BASE BUILDING:

Elevating an inclusive approach with a focus on building LGBT leadership – in the community and in organizations – to reflect the future and to continue to embed LGBT equality and justice as a social norm.

### STRENGTHENING THE INFRASTRUCTURE:

Building organizational and field capacity, especially in regions beyond the coasts and Washington D.C., to improve conditions for all LGBT people irrespective of where they live.

### DEEPENING ALLIANCES:

Joining forces within the LGBT community and with other progressive movements to address issues of racial, economic, gender, and social justice to build power for the fight for deep and inclusive social change.

2 Surveys were emailed to 63 organizations: 43 (69%) filled out the survey and 36 (58%) completed every question. We conducted 29 hour-long interviews. (see Appendix 3)

3 The research and analysis were conducted using the five core elements of movement building (vision, base building, advocacy infrastructure, leadership and alliances) developed by Masters and Osborn. Added to this core framework were elements related to diversity and connectivity. The movement building approach assumes that these elements – and the activities that implement them – are interactive and reflect an interconnectedness of people, organizations and issues. (see Appendix 2)

# FINDINGS

## I. DEFINING THE NEW VISION

Movements, unlike campaigns, have a vision greater than a single policy reform. This vision incorporates changes at all levels of society, from culture and social norms to the distribution of power. An overarching vision – informed by a shared analysis of the root causes, challenges, and opportunities – guides a movement forward. It unifies the various campaigns, strategies and tactics, and investments.

Having a well-identified vision can also help resolve conflicts inherent in any movement, particularly one at a crossroads, by clearly articulating how people’s interests and fates are tied together. A cohesive vision that unites the grassroots as well as the insider advocacy organizations can also lead to better mobilization during a policy campaign.

***The current vision of the LGBT movement is grounded in policy change and marriage, but a more inclusive and expansive vision is critical to accelerating the movement***

Survey respondents and interviewees overwhelmingly described the movement’s current vision as being centered on public policy change to achieve legal, rights-based equality. Marriage equality, in particular, was cited frequently as a cornerstone of the current vision, as well as non-discrimination policies and anti-violence/bullying-related issues.

Over the last few years, with strong support from funders and donors, both proactive and defensive campaigns have been waged in many states in support of marriage equality. The pace of progress has been remarkable by any measure, including the

reversal of state ballot measure losses within five years.<sup>4</sup> But success comes with a price. We found LGBT leaders concerned that the movement will not be positioned to tackle the many barriers that will remain in place when marriage equality is secured.

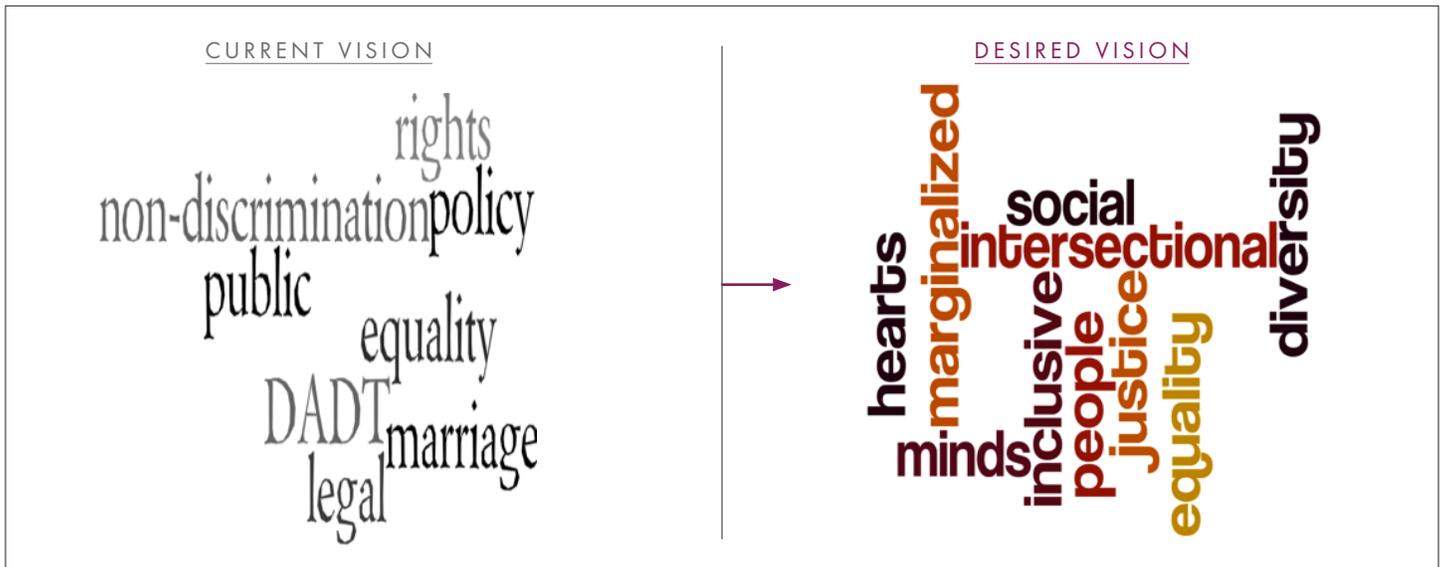
Survey respondents rated “shared values, principles, agenda, and vision” as the second most important factor (out of 14) to accelerate progress of the movement (see Appendix 1, Chart 1). Moreover, they ranked “developing a shared vision” as the most important activity that would help themselves and their organizations feel more a part of the movement.

***Different people have different priorities and so there will always be a tension. If a movement understands what it is about and what it is moving towards then you have less of that tension. But if there is not a shared understanding of what we are trying to build to, if the policy gain is just for a policy gain and we go on to the next policy, then it exacerbates the tension.***

—LGBT Funder

4 For example, Maine lost a ballot initiative to legalize same-sex marriages in 2009 and then passed one in 2012.

Figure 1.  
Word Clouds of Survey Respondents' Current and Desired Visions for the LGBT Movement



Survey respondents and interviewees described their desire for a vision that embraces a more expansive view of LGBT issues and that strives for inclusion of the full diversity of LGBT people in all aspects of

law, culture and society. Figure 1 depicts a side-by-side comparison of the major themes identified by survey respondents when asked to describe the current vision of the LGBT movement and what the vision *should* be. As one respondent noted, “Our community is bigger and broader than the current vision— and if we recognize that—I think we will only build more power and more voices for equality.”

***What the vision should be: The movement should have a more robust vision of full substantive equality, liberty, visibility, and acceptance... including equality in outcomes for income, health, welfare...the ability to live openly and freely...free from expectations to be closeted or to cover...[and] we continue to reach the hearts and minds of Americans until all LGBT children grow up in families free of homophobia.***

*—Survey Respondent*

## II. EXTENDING AND DIVERSIFYING BASE-BUILDING

A vibrant and engaged grassroots base creates political will for change and helps move the hearts and minds of the public. One of the distinguishing elements of a social movement—as compared to a policy campaign—is the presence of an authentic base, a commitment to organizing, and the continual emergence of new leaders who represent the diversity of the movement. A strong base informs the movement’s policy agenda and, in turn, can be mobilized for campaigns. Base building is often time- and laborintensive, with results accumulating over the long-term.

There has been significant mobilization of LGBT people, as well as straight allies, around the recent ballot measures on marriage. Yet, in the face of an opposition committed to restricting the rights of LGBT people, particularly in states with less supportive political leadership, ongoing base building is essential at all levels in order to sustain and build on the recent policy changes.

***The base building capacity of the movement is considered relatively weak, given the size and breadth of the LGBT population***

As discussed earlier, respondents and interviewees felt that LGBT movement building should reflect the issues that affect the spectrum of racial, economic, cultural, social, generational and geographic diversity present within the LGBT community. A strong grassroots base keeps the movement rooted in the expression of those individual and collective issues. As one funder noted, “It’s easy to assume that the agenda for the policy advocacy groups reflects the base. We are not good about asking these groups who they are accountable to and if they are connected to a base.”

Base building means engaging, expanding, and supporting constituent leadership who can mobilize community responses to issues and campaigns. In addition to the issue of accountability, base building is about building power for the broader goals of the movement, to embed wins and advance new issues. One interviewee commented, “There is a real cost to individuals being bystanders in their very own movement.”

Survey participants spanned a range of national, state and local policy groups that engage in a wide variety of advocacy and organizing activities. About the same percent of survey respondents reported that they engage in community organizing or base building as in legislative or administrative advocacy. However, they reported important differences between their advocacy

and organizing capacities. While 76 percent reported that their legislative advocacy capacity was very or moderately strong, 54 percent of respondents reported that their base building capacity was very or moderately strong (see Appendix 1, Chart 2). Similarly, survey respondents ranked community organizing capacity and building a stronger base of support as one of the top four (out of 14) overall needs of the movement (see Appendix 1, Chart 1).

Interviewees from across the spectrum—local, state, and national—reported that investments in grassroots organizing have not kept pace with the development of expertise and skills related to advocacy, particularly at the federal level. According to a recent report,<sup>5</sup> 23 percent of all LGBTQ funding over the last 40 years has gone to advocacy, while only 5.1 percent supports community organizing.

***Our leaders are driven by issues, not by people from an organizing background. In fact, there are lots of LGBT people who are professional organizers who are active in other movements – reproductive justice, economic justice, the environment – but don’t work in LGBT movement because they feel it’s a movement that doesn’t understand organizing.***

*—National LGBT Advocate*

***The movement does not currently reflect leadership from the grassroots that embodies the full diversity of the LGBT community***

Key informants and survey respondents spoke of the importance of leadership that reflects the diversity of the movement. They viewed having diverse and truly representative leadership at various levels of the movement as critical both to developing a more expansive and representative policy agenda and to achieving a justice-based vision. An interviewee pointed out that statewide and national LGBT organizations – except those that focus on people of color – are almost exclusively white-led.

While survey respondents prioritized overall leadership development as the greatest factor for accelerating progress of the LGBT movement (see Appendix 1, Chart 1), they identified training people of color as leaders as well as developing leaders in all parts of the country as the most important leadership needs (see Appendix 1, Chart 3).

One final note on diversity: survey respondents were asked about the specific population groups with whom they worked; the highest ranking went to transgender and gender non-conforming (55%) followed by African-American (50%) and Latino (43%). However, transgender and gender non-conforming populations were rated in the bottom half of overall leadership needs (see Appendix 1, Chart 3). These paradoxical findings indicate the need for a more detailed analysis on the concerns and needs of trans people and on their leadership in the movement.

### III. STRENGTHENING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Successful public policy change is generally the result of long-term efforts to build a strong advocacy infrastructure and capacity. Advocacy capacity includes various skills, talents, and expertise such as policy analysis, lobbying, and communications, as well the ability to be nimble and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.<sup>6</sup> Although policy change has been one of the strongest drivers for the LGBT movement in recent years, progress has not been uniform across the country. State level policy change has been concentrated on the two coasts, creating a complex patchwork of state policies that leave many LGBT individuals and families without the protections, programs and services available to others.

***A tale of two regions: wide variation in organizational and advocacy capacity exists across the country***

The majority of the organizations surveyed reported having annual operating budgets of less than \$1 million and a little more than half have been in existence for 15 years or more. These organizations were primarily from the Eastern seaboard and West Coast (mainly California). Fewer organizations were from the South and Midwest. This geographic distribution of advocacy organizations in our sample seems to be indicative of the geographic distribution of the broader LGBT advocacy field, based on other reports on the LGBT movement.<sup>7</sup>

6 “What Makes an Effective Advocacy Organization: A Framework for Assessing Advocacy Capacity.” The TCC Group. The California Endowment (2009) [http://www.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/Policy/General/EffectiveAdvocacy\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/Policy/General/EffectiveAdvocacy_FINAL.pdf)

7 “2012 National LGBT Movement Report: A Financial Overview of Leading Advocacy Organizations of the LGBT Movement.” (December 2012). Movement Advancement Project. <http://www.lgbtmap.org/file/2012-national-lgbt-movement-report.pdf>

***Executive directors in the South and Midwest, in particular, are not getting paid for what they are doing in very corrosive circumstances. So there is a high turnover, which results in no infrastructure in these states. You can't have a movement without organizations. There are at least a dozen states with no LGBT organizations.***

*—National LGBT Advocate*

Beneath the surface, however, findings from the interviews revealed a tale of two regions. They reported a significant variation in advocacy capacity and organizational stability between the East and West coasts (stronger) vs. the Midwest and Southern regions of the country (weaker).<sup>8</sup>

The policy progress made in coastal states such as California, New York and Massachusetts, as well as Maryland, Washington, and others, are indicative of the access to a strong advocacy capacity and infrastructure. In contrast, the advocacy infrastructure in the South and Midwest – the “fly over” states as described by one advocate – was described as anemic and overlooked by funders, in part because they operate in hostile political environments where progress is much more difficult. Organizations in these regions were described as smaller, more fragile, and operated with few other LGBT groups as allies. The

weaker state organizations act as a jack-of-all-trades, with little to no paid staff taking on many roles. They were in need of a host of organizational development supports such as management training and board development, as well as advocacy skills building. Not surprisingly, interviewees reported a high turnover rate of Executive Directors in these regions.

#### **IV. DEEPENING ALLIANCES**

Although the term “alliance” can mean many different things, in movement building, alliances refer to two or more organizations coming together to affect broader change and transform systems of power.<sup>9</sup> Such alliances don't happen on their own; they must be catalyzed and nurtured. This requires going beyond collaboration or even coalition building, which tend to be more tactical in nature, to build relationships of trust that extend beyond a single-issue policy campaign. Moreover, alliance building with other justice movements is considered essential to building power over the long-term to advance a broad movement for justice and equity.

***The movement is siloed by region and issue, and lacks sufficient communications channels and collaboration opportunities***

Interviewees described the LGBT movement as being fragmented by issue area and geographic reach. Where collaboration occurs, it is generally with groups operating at the same level – local with local, state with state, or national with national. For example, one advocate pointed out that there is important advocacy occurring locally on issues such as prison policies and homeless LGBT youth, but because it is

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Because of the survey and interview sample, the Midwest and South were highlighted in this research; other regions of the country, such as the Southwest may experience similar patterns.

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“Connecting at the Crossroads: Alliance Building and Social Change in Tough Times.” (December 2010). USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity. [http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/documents/connecting\\_at\\_the\\_crossroads\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/documents/connecting_at_the_crossroads_final_web.pdf)

occurring “unsystematically” it is not being elevated or coordinated beyond the local setting. In addition, it is not clear that there is interest in or support of these issues by national groups and funders.

As is often the case, one of the biggest challenges is connecting local base building groups to state and national groups in ways that are mutually informing; communication channels were often described as top-down, and national organizations were criticized for “parachuting in” to states and localities without notification and coordination with local groups.

***State and locally-based LGBT organizations have begun to develop alliances with other issues and movements, but it takes commitment, resources, leadership and time***

Throughout the survey and interviews, participants in this study voiced strong interest in alliance building with other movements and across issue areas. Partnering with other movements or organizations that work on issues other than LGBT-specific issues was ranked third overall (out of 14) in terms of the most critical needs of the LGBT movement going forward (see Appendix 1, Chart 1).

The data also indicate that this type of alliance building is already occurring, but it occurs primarily at the local and state level. Overall, state and local LGBT groups had a broader social justice policy agenda and engaged in an array of policy-related partnerships. More local and state-based survey respondents reported developing such partnerships with organizations that work on immigrant rights, economic justice and labor/workers’ rights movements, compared to national organizations (see Appendix 1, Chart 4).

Despite a growing awareness and interest in alliance building by a number of leaders, many interviewees reported that there is not widespread support for, understanding of, nor funding for alliance-building efforts. One state advocate noted that “racial justice groups bring different perspectives...but LGBT organizations don’t always have the infrastructure to have stakeholders like that at the table.” Another advocate observed that “some of the groups begrudgingly do this because they have to but I’m not sure there is a deeper level of understanding of the power that can be gained from building alliances.” Survey respondents also identified learning how to build alliances with non-LGBT organizations as an important leadership need, out of 13 potential leadership needs, while leadership skills to work with non-LGBT leaders was ranked third overall (see Appendix 1, Chart 3).

Similarly, although some LGBT funders have supported alliance building, interviewees noted more leadership on how to work with funders from other movements could help organizations participate in alliance building on the ground.

***We’ve gone as far as we can go on our backs alone. Only way is with alliances – which is a two-way street.***

*—LGBT Funder*

## CROSS-MOVEMENT ALLIANCE BUILDING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Interviewees cited two recent ballot measure campaigns as examples of alliance-building. Although the fight against a constitutional amendment banning marriage equality lost in North Carolina in 2012, the campaign engaged a wide range of organizations. Groups ranging from the NAACP and those working on immigrant rights joined the campaign to take a stand against discrimination of any kind. Alliances were built across economic justice and racial justice organizations, and, in the words of one activist, “it has changed the way North Carolina will forever work in terms of coalitions and alliances.”

Similarly, in Mississippi, a national LGBT advocate reported that they worked with the reproductive justice movement to defeat the so-called Personhood Amendment, which sought to ban all abortions and many forms of contraception. “We saw it as critical to our work around HIV, but more broadly to change views to meet the needs of young people. We may have different angles but we recognize that it’s about all people having control over their bodies.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**T**he LGBT movement is at a critical juncture. There have been hard-fought policy victories on the state, national and international levels, but there is still much work to be done. The current momentum in the fight for legal marriage equality presents an opportunity to strengthen and build the power of the movement. While continuing the fight on specific policy and legal issues, like marriage, the movement can start to broaden and deepen its focus and to embed the successes already in place. Staying on the current course that focuses on significant but limited policy wins makes the movement vulnerable to future tactics that would undermine legal gains. As a result of our findings, we offer the following recommendations and examples that we hope will help set a direction for the future.

### I. EXPAND THE CURRENT VISION

#### *Create Opportunities to Develop a Shared Vision*

Expanding the current vision of the LGBT movement is a key to setting the agenda for the future and transforming hard-fought policy wins into newly established norms. The most powerful tool for enabling the development of a movement's vision is convening. As one funder described, "It takes time and a deliberate convening process. You have to help folks understand why a shared vision is important. Funders can give people the space to allow people to dream together and share together." Strategically designed convenings can also lift up new policy priorities, catalyze new relationships and collaborations, promote learning and strategy development, and foster a greater sense of cohesion across the movement.

Other movements at similar crossroads are engaging in systematic visioning processes. For example,

the reproductive rights and justice movement is in a process to engage a wide range of groups in order to create a new vision that will refresh and reenergize the movement. Begun as an effort to align disparate sectors, CoreAlign – an independent project seeking to build a network of leaders to catalyze a 30-year plan – is focused on creating a new unifying vision for the movement. Based on months of research, convenings, and discussion, the vision for a renewed movement is: "A future where all people have the resources, rights, and respect to make their own sexual and reproductive decisions." CoreAlign will use this vision as a starting place to engage new people and organizations, provide ongoing opportunities to build on and refine the vision, and create a 30-year strategy to implement the vision.

***[It] gets back to both/and rather than either/or. We need movement building and campaign organizing...Without movement building, we are not building long term political power.***

*—LGBT Advocate*

#### ***Movement Vision and Campaign Strategy: Both/And***

Campaigns for policy change are critical to advancing and codifying social change, but they must align with and move toward the broader vision of the movement. Funders and activists alike encouraged a "both/and" approach to help ensure campaign efforts achieve policy wins *and* are in service to the goal of building a movement for longer-term social change. Such an

approach is not simply defined by the timeline of a policy campaign but rather by the vision of the movement. The LGBT movement can build and expand on policy efforts and victories while also building and expanding the movement and its power.

## II. STRENGTHEN THE INFRASTRUCTURE

### *Build Organizational Capacity with an Emphasis on the “Fly Over” States*

Targeted capacity building support is needed in the Southern and Midwestern parts of the country. As momentum for equality grows, LGBT organizations in those and other overlooked regions will need more support to build the infrastructure for future success and sustainability of the movement. Efforts to strengthen and build the capacity of the “fly over” states should consider the operating needs of these organizations such as board development, leadership and management training, and development support. Efforts should also focus on building advocacy capacity, which can include a range of activities from linking them with peers in other states who can act as coaches, to targeted trainings and convenings, to more systematic efforts to strengthen capacity on a regional level.

***We’re constantly pushing on issues without building the strength of our organizations. Lots of leaders who are issue-oriented, but don’t realize that to build power to win on those issues, we’ve got to build the strength of organizations.”***

*—National Advocate*

The Public Welfare Foundation used a regional strategy in the South to build health policy advocacy. The Foundation fostered “systems of advocacy” by strategically aligning organizations at the state level across the region. Each system had a “flagship” organization that served as a hub to coordinate the work. Legal and health advocates, organizers, and fiscal policy groups were regularly convened to foster the development of the regional system. Funding supported capacity building for the region on fiscal analysis, communications, organizing and health policy.<sup>10</sup>

### *Enhance the Overall Movement’s Advocacy Capacity*

Movement capacity building support must be aligned with the stage and needs of the movement’s development. All movements have shared or collective advocacy capacities necessary for advancing their work and vision. These capacities may include communications and messaging, policy analysis, legal advocacy, legislative advocacy, and research and data. Key informants raised concerns that advocacy capacity building was focused in a few organizations and was not benefiting the field. Movement capacities should be identified and built to ensure their utility and accessibility to organizations within the movement.

The LGBT movement has numerous hubs that can serve as platforms for facilitating greater connectivity in the movement. These organizations provide technical assistance, resources, coaching, capacity building and convening support to other groups in the movement. Building on existing “anchor” or “hub” organizations can facilitate and support information exchange and connections across the movement, link

10

“A National Foundation Undertakes a Regional Strategy in the South.” Terri Langston, Ria Pugeda. GIH News From the Field.

grassroots and state organizations, and strategically bring groups together based on policy opportunities, shared issues and interests, as well as advocacy and capacity needs.

The Security and Rights Collaborative, a funder collaborative, provided an effective approach to building the communications capacity for the field of national security and human rights. By creating a new “Communications Hub,” they were able to centralize and coordinate all advocacy communications activities and build the communications capacity of all the organizations in the field.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Promote Greater Inclusion of Communities of Color and Cultivate Diverse Leadership***

The limited attention given to the particular needs and concerns of LGBT communities of color has been a long-standing concern of many movement leaders. Increasing the focus on and investment in LGBT communities of color can give voice to these communities and increase their ability to shape the movement’s agenda. This can be done by supporting the non-profit and organizing infrastructure in these communities, building alliances with other non-LGBT organizations serving communities of color, and developing individuals of color as leaders at all levels of the movement.

The LGBT movement has programs such as the Pipeline Project to ultimately increase the level of diversity in movement leadership, but more efforts are needed to maintain and advance this leadership as well as cultivating youth, people of color and individuals from under-represented parts of the

country. Additionally, key informants spoke of the importance of leadership that values the grassroots and comes from the grassroots. Such leadership engenders a deep understanding of the needs of the LGBT community and creates leaders who are “driven by people and not by issues.”

### **III. CONNECT WITHIN THE LGBT MOVEMENT AND WITH ALLIES**

#### ***Foster Grassroots – Treetops Connections Within the Movement***

The LGBT movement needs a concerted effort to both grow and connect the grassroots through base building and community organizing. Local grassroots groups are typically small and fragile and need operating support to enable them to stabilize and engage in base building over the long term. Ideally, these efforts would lead to the development of alliances with other social justice efforts on the ground. In addition, existing direct service groups, including LGBT community and health centers, are well positioned to play an important role in base building.

***Movements need real grassroots engagement to take hold. They can’t be engineered. But you can seed relationships, capacities, and sparks to bring forth movements.***

*—Movement Building Expert*

11 “Building a Field-Wide Communications Hub: Lessons Learned.” Security and Rights Collaborative. <http://www.proteusfund.org/src/reports>

The second step in supporting grassroots efforts is to link them to state and national policy advocates. Relationships between these groups should be reciprocal and mutually informing. This can be fostered by supporting collaborative opportunities to work together, creating an on-going means to elevate and incorporate the voice of the grassroots into state and national advocacy discussions, and promoting opportunities for interaction and mutual engagement. This requires state and national advocates supporting local advocacy efforts and being informed by local issues, as well as working with the grassroots to mobilize them on state and national advocacy issues.

### ***Promote Cross-Movement Alliance Building***

The LGBT movement can be made stronger if it continues to build alliances with other social change movements. This requires time, relationships, and resources. Many strategies to catalyze, promote and strengthen alliances already exist; these include identifying shared interests across issues for collaboration, funding cross-movement projects, using leadership development programs and trainings to promote relationships across movement leaders, and designing conferences and convenings that identify common ground among organizations working on different issues.

One approach is the establishment of the Strategic Opportunities States within the State Equality Fund, a collaborative supported by the Gill Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, an anonymous donor, and Ford Foundation, in conjunction with Tides Foundation. Among other things, the investment provides two states with additional resources to create alliances with other powerful forces in that state, such as the African American and Latino communities, and labor unions.

Alliance building also requires developing new kinds of leadership skills that emphasize collaboration and an outward-looking perspective.<sup>12</sup> Following the passage of several anti-gay ballot measure campaigns and similar attacks on immigrants and communities of color, Basic Rights Oregon (BRO) embarked on a long-term effort to build solidarity among allied communities. One of BRO's three main programs is the Racial Justice and Alliance Building program, which is structured around two activities: lifting up LGBT leadership who are people of color and engaging more white LGBT Oregonians on issues of concern to people of color. That commitment has led BRO to support policy accountability work led by the African American community and participate in immigrant rights campaigns. BRO was able to access training through the Western States Center that emphasized the skills needed to partner with organizations of color. Subsequently, the Basic Rights Education Fund developed an anti-racist toolkit for LGBT Equality groups, entitled, "Standing Together: Coming Out for Racial Justice."<sup>13</sup>

12 "Catalyzing Networks for Social Change: A Funders Guide." Monitor Institute & Grantmakers for Effective Organizations [http://docs.geofunders.org/?filename=Catalyzing\\_Networks\\_for\\_Social\\_Change\\_2011.pdf](http://docs.geofunders.org/?filename=Catalyzing_Networks_for_Social_Change_2011.pdf)

13 This resource can be downloaded from the Basic Rights Oregon website at <http://www.basicrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/StandingTogether.pdf>

## CONCLUSION

The remarkable progress and momentum of campaigns for marriage equality has brought the LGBT movement to a crossroads. It can continue to have a laser sharp focus on policy wins only or it can integrate a long-term movement-building strategy. We hope this report extends the conversation and spurs actions to ensure lasting equality for all LGBT people including social, economic, and political equity. From our findings, movement advocates and organizers are ready to deepen and expand their work, both separately and together.

We are not the first group to call attention to these issues; however, these findings and the movement's current momentum indicate the time is right to move forward in new ways.

There are three areas that can help extend this work and contribute to future direction setting.

- Although this report focused on those working on policy change and organizers, we believe that hearing from more people working on a broader array of LGBT issues would give a fuller picture of the landscape and opportunities to extend the vision for change. This includes LGBT service providers who have a deep reach into the community and could be sites of base building and mobilization, LGBT activist groups that are not formal organizations, and LGBT-focused work within progressive organizations that address multiple justice issues.
- The LGBT movement has traditionally drawn on and compared itself to other progressive social movements. However, there is little research on the relationships between progressive movements, including an analysis of the opportunities to work together. It is important to document new and established collaboratives among LGBT and other movements as well as to develop a deeper understanding of how to bridge these movements in ways that create long-term alliances.
- To move forward, it would be useful to have further investigation of the obstacles to implementing the types of activities we recommend, such as the relative absence of leaders of color, the need to broaden the vision of the movement, and the limited capacity of organizations in the middle of the country to extend the movement.

The current energy in marriage equality has helped spur so many important changes in action, opinion and acceptance. Now we need to plan for the next twenty years as we move towards a just and equitable society for all people.

## APPENDIX 1

Chart 1. Top Six Critical Factors for Accelerating Progress of the LGBT Movement

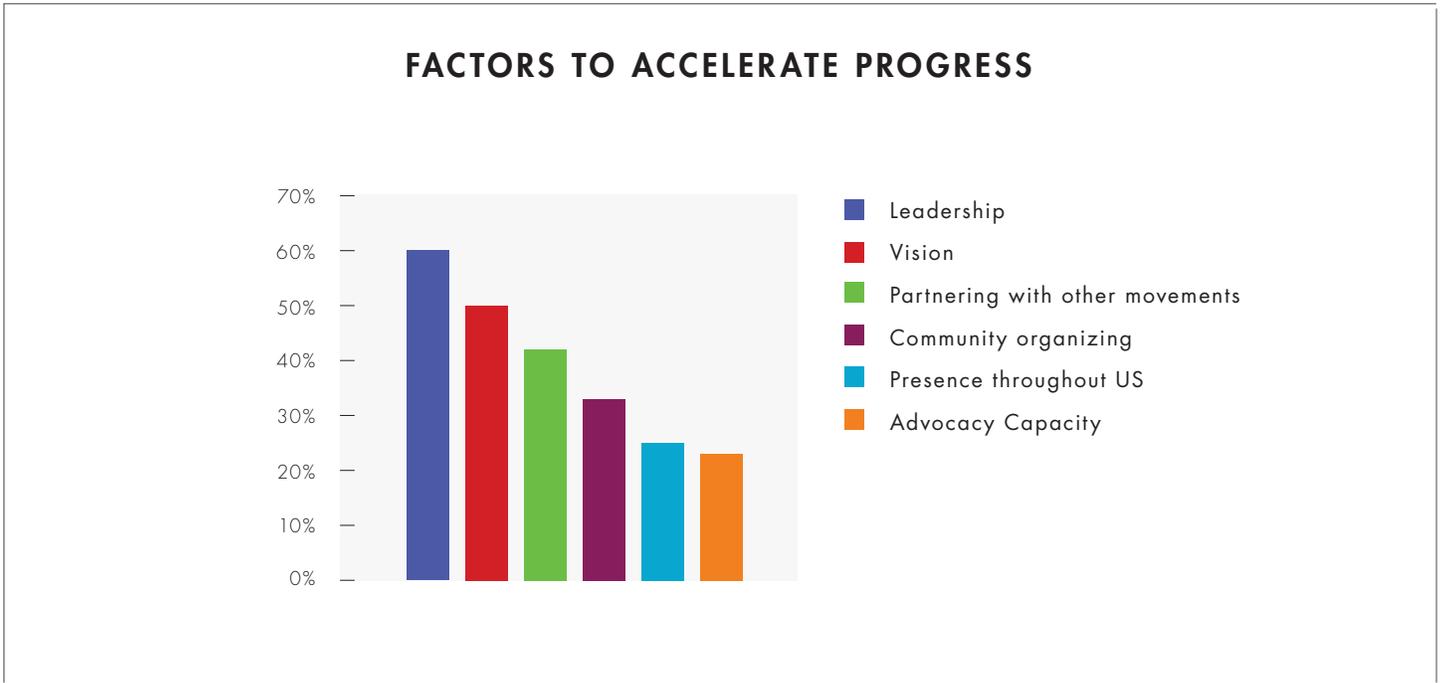
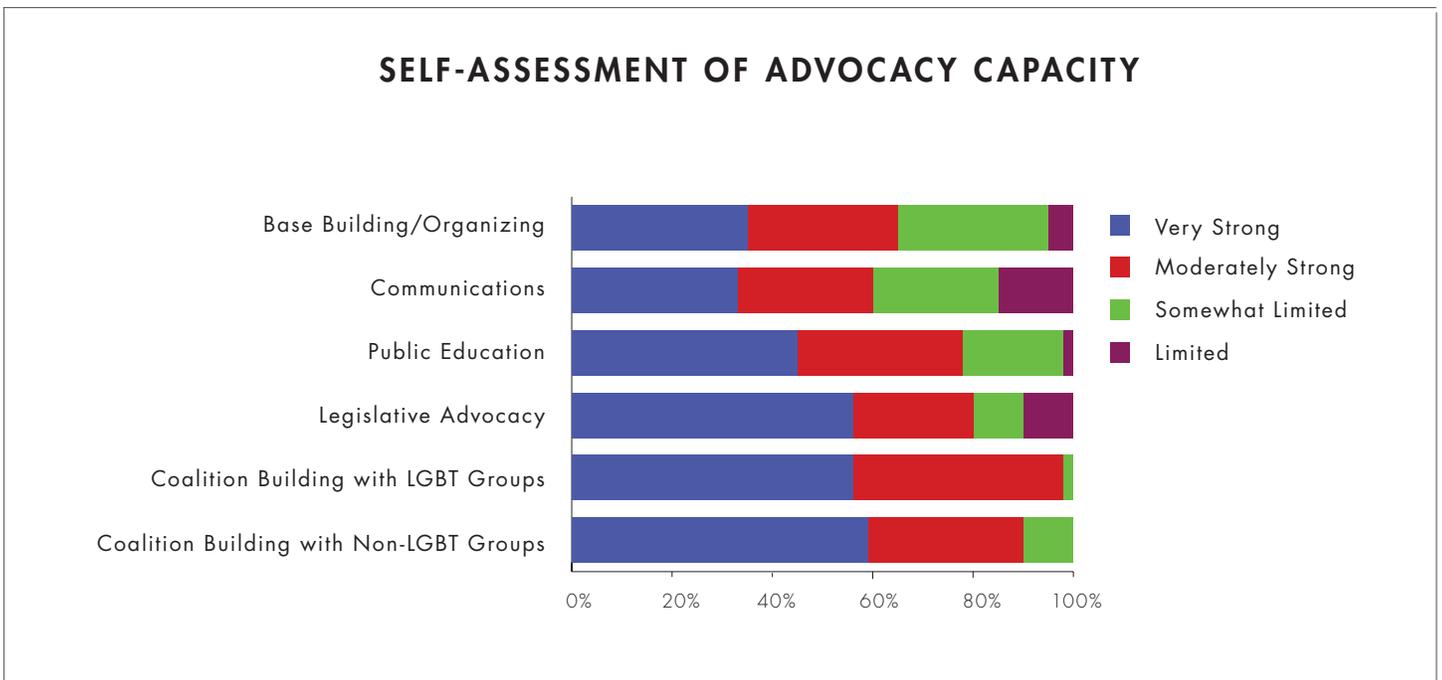


Chart 2. Self-Assessment of Advocacy Capacity



## APPENDIX 1

Chart 3. Top Seven Leadership Needs of the LGBT Movement

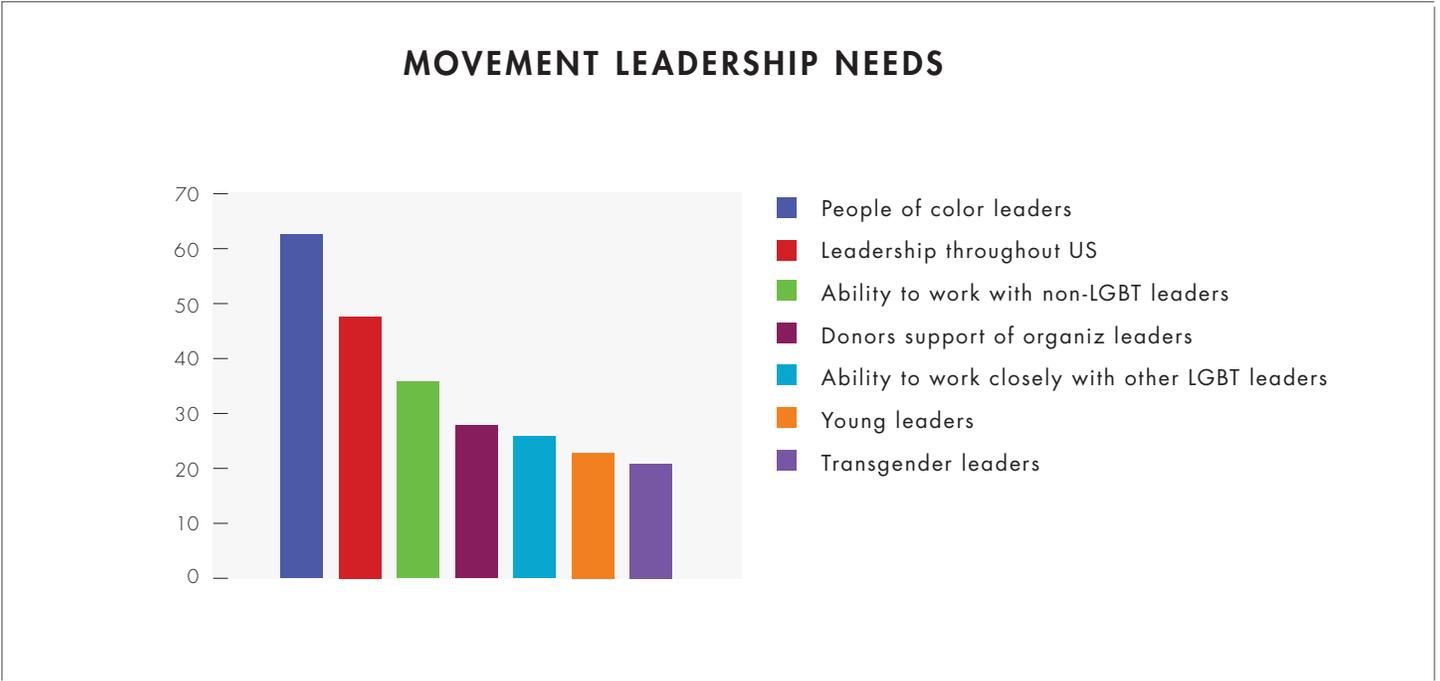
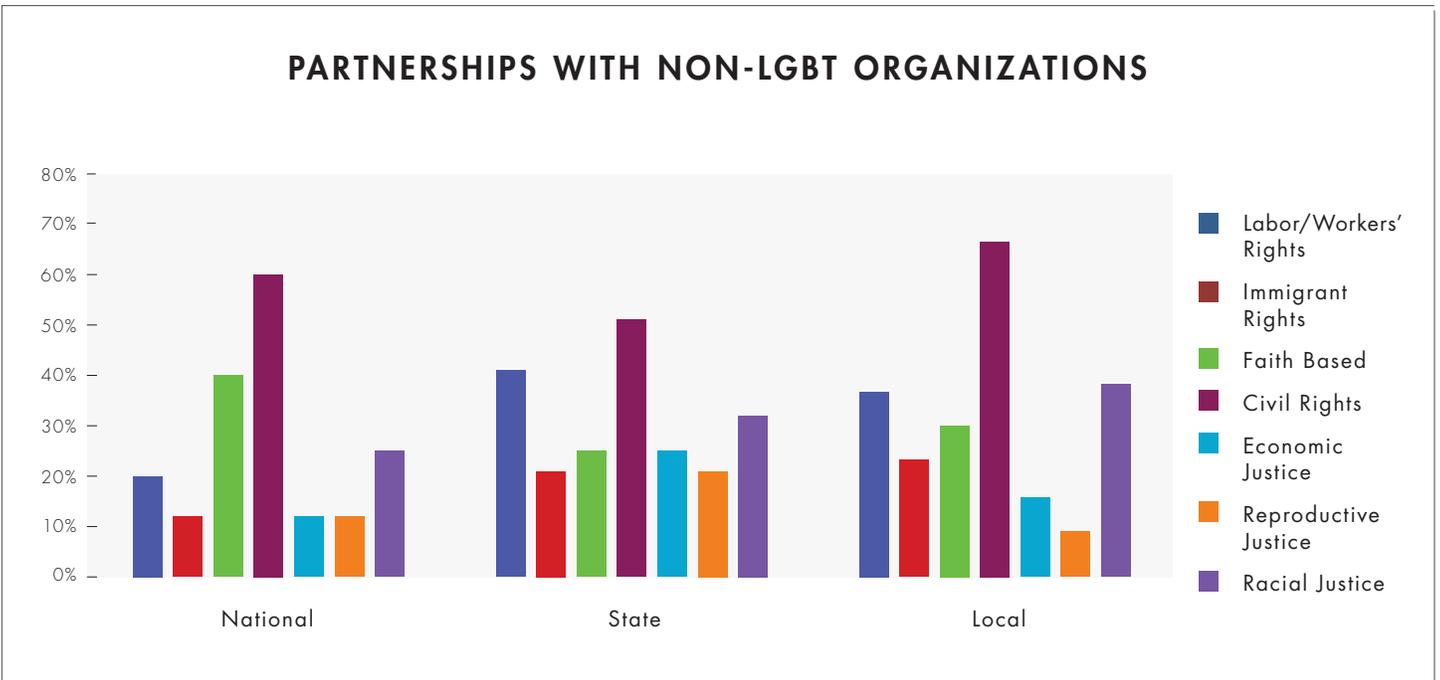


Chart 4. Partnerships with Non-LGBT Specific Organizations by Geographic Reach of the LGBT Organizations



## APPENDIX 2

### Snapshot of the LGBT movement: Assets and Gaps

Movement Element	Organizational Level	Movement Level
<b>Widely-Shared Vision and Analysis</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Widespread consensus that equality-focused vision guides the current movement; individual organizations see themselves as part of a broader movement</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Insufficient opportunities to break down organizational silos to enable a broader vision to emerge through the work</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Increasing agreement about the need to broaden the movement's vision</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Tension between a strategic focus on marriage equality and a desire to develop a broader vision that is more inclusive of social justice goals; time and space to promote collaboration and develop a vision</p>
<b>Mobilized Based</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> The incorporation of LGBT issues in non-LGBT grassroots groups</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Few volunteer-driven and base-building organizations at the local level, and they're mostly on the coasts</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> LGBT individuals are prominent throughout society</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Limited investments in organizing the base; the base and base building organizations are not well connected to state and national LGBT organizations</p>
<b>Advocacy Infrastructure</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Strong anchor organizations, particularly at the national level, regarding communications, legal advocacy, policy research, legislative and administrative advocacy</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> High priority organizational capacity needs to include communications and social media skills</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Political and policy sophistication at the national level and in some states (mostly on the coasts); several foundations dedicated to supporting LGBT advocacy</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Major gaps in states located in the middle of the country and south; overreliance on a few funders and donors</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Many committed LGBT leaders on the state and local level, who operate with limited resources and under challenging circumstances</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> High turnover of state LGBT advocacy leadership; insufficient support in terms of TA, coaching, and training for these leaders.</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Politically connected and savvy leadership of national organizations; growing number of LGBT leaders in business, entertainment and politics</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Leadership does not reflect the diversity of LGBT population</p>
<b>Strategic Alliances</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Many state and local level LGBT organizations express a willingness and need to develop alliances with other movements, particularly immigrant rights and economic justice</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Little funding or support to devote time and resources, including development of needed skills, for alliance building with non-LGBT organizations</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Increasing understanding – particularly among local and state groups – about the strategic importance, and mutual benefits of alliance building between LGBT and non-LGBT organizations</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Less agreement about the value of alliance building at the national level, and a lack of a systematic way, including infrastructure, to facilitate the development of alliances over the long term</p>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Local and state-based organizations focus on the needs of specific LGBT populations, such as transgender, African Americans and immigrants</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> National organizations generally focus less on the needs of specific LGBT populations</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Leadership programs designed specifically for LGBT people of color</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> LGBT people of color and their issues are not well represented in the movement or leadership</p>
<b>Connectivity</b>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Awareness and knowledge of different organizations, leaders and players in the movement</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Lack of reciprocal communications (between local, state and national) and flow of information—often top down; insufficient information being pushed out from local and state organizations</p>	<p><b>Assets:</b> Well-established convenings and conferences provide opportunities for movement activists to come together</p> <p><b>Gaps:</b> Fewer formal structures or mechanisms to connect organizations across the movement on an ongoing basis, particularly for strategy purposes</p>

## APPENDIX 3

### Methodology

#### SURVEY

A comprehensive survey was used to gather data on:

1. Movement building capacities at both the organizational and movement levels related to the seven movement elements – shared vision, mobilized base, advocacy infrastructure, leadership, strategic alliances, diversity, and connectivity.
2. Views about the LGBT movement as a whole – providing information on the breadth and depth of LGBT movement-building.

The survey was sent to 62 organizations recommended by Wellspring Advisors and had a 58 percent completion rate while 69 percent of recipients partially completed the survey.

#### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Survey results were analyzed to inform and complement in-depth interviews with LGBT movement leaders and organizations as well as movement building experts and leaders from outside of the LGBT movement. Interviews had three primary purposes:

1. Develop a deeper understanding of the capacities assessed in the survey,
2. Develop a roadmap of the relationships between the grantees and how they interact, and
3. Gather information on effective capacity building and grant-making strategies to support organizations and the LGBT movement.

A total of 29 interviews were conducted with the following breakdown by organization type:

INTERVIEWS	
ORGANIZATION TYPE	NUMBER
<b>LGBT MOVEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
• LGBT organizations and movement leaders	13
• Foundations and affinity groups	4
<b>NON-LGBT ALLIES</b>	<b>12</b>
• Movement building experts	3
• Networks and capacity building	6
• Foundation and affinity groups	3

#### ANALYSIS

Data from both the survey and the interviews were triangulated with relevant documents and a literature review (see Appendix 4, Selected Bibliography). While analysis and findings reflect the views of the sample of LGBT movement organizations surveyed and interviewed, they also have implications for the broader LGBT movement.

## APPENDIX 4

### Selected Bibliography

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