

EXCERPT SAMPLE

**Arkansas LGBTQ+ Advancement Fund administered by Arkansas Community Foundation
Fully Funded**

Organization Background

Mission and organization history - please describe your organization's mission and a brief summary of your organization's history, including such milestones as when you were founded, when major programs were established, etc. (1242/1250 char)

The Equality Crew exists to create safe spaces for PreK-12 LGBTQ+ youth to gather and have fun being their true selves. We dream of communities across Arkansas where all LGBTQ+ youth are loved, appreciated, and welcomed in all spaces.

The Equality Crew was founded in April 2021 by a 14-year-old transgender Arkansan. Phoenix May recognized the need for young LGBTQ+ Arkansans to have a strong and supportive community. He recalls, "I realized there are tons of organizations that support LGBTQ+ adults but very few focused on youth. Instead of waiting for it to happen, I decided to take it into my own hands because I believe that everyone deserves to live in a world that is equal." Phoenix rallied the support of community leaders to create an LGBTQ+ led board and officially launched The Equality Crew at Siloam Springs Pride 2021 in June, and then welcomed over 75 LGBTQ+ youth and allies for its first event in July. The Equality Crew established the state's only Affirming Teacher and School Staff Database ahead of the 2021-22 school year so LGBTQ+ students could identify and connect with affirming teachers in their school building, with over 200 teachers and staff joining the database within the first quarter of the school year.

Which of the following services does your organization provide for LGBTQ+ Arkansans - select all that apply:

- **Legal services**
- **Health services**
- **Education**
- **Advocacy**
- **Other**

If you selected Other, please specify (max 250 char): Out-of-school time social enrichment and support services for LGBTQ+ youth PreK through 12th grade

Request Description

Amount Requested (max \$25,000): \$25,000

Grant term (max 2 years): 2 years

What is the need your organization is seeking to fill with this grant? - please share any background information that would be relevant to helping us understand the key issues your organization is working on. (1246/1250 char)

LGBTQ+ youth in Arkansas are historically underserved and often do not have access to safe spaces where they can grow and flourish. In a 2019 survey, GLSEN found that nearly three-

quarters of students reported experiencing at least one form of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and at least 90% of LGBTQ+ students in Arkansas did not have access to in-school resources and supports. The 2021 legislative session specifically put trans youth in the state at significantly increased risk of self-harm.

While many organizations have attempted interventions for young LGBTQ+ Arkansans, none have found success in designing, implementing and sustaining programs for a duration or in a manner that advances the systemic changes needed to improve their quality of life. The inconsistency and instability of programming for PreK-12 LGBTQ+ Arkansans perpetuates the inequalities they face daily.

It is critically important to understand the current and desired state of young LGBTQ+ Arkansans' quality of life and the specific barriers to achieving an improved quality of life. A needs assessment will provide a systematic process to guide decision making in the development and capacity building of a sustainable PreK-12 pipeline of support for LGBTQ+ Arkansans.

Please describe the demographics of the clients or communities you serve - include the estimated number of individuals served per year, if available. Include services your org provides to these communities. (1229/1250 char)

The Equality Crew provides outreach and resources to LGBTQ+ youth, from PreK through high school, and their allies, including parents/caregivers, near peers, LGBTQ+ adults, teachers, and community members in Northwest Arkansas and surrounding areas. Our inaugural in-person event took place in July 2021 with over 75 individuals in attendance.

The Equality Crew's Affirming Teacher and School Staff Database is comprised of over 200 individuals from all regions of the state who have agreed to be available as a safe person and to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ students during the school day. LGBTQ+ students and parents/caregivers contact The Equality Crew to connect with teachers in their school building.

The Equality Crew has continued building online connections and resource referrals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our online resource library consistently has over 150 unique visitors each month, with over 1,200 social media followers. We are hosting online gaming and community activities for spring semester 2022, with several youth currently signed up within the first month.

A main goal of our capacity building efforts is focused on developing infrastructure to better capture and report participant demographics.

What are some of the key activities your organization will carry out during the grant period? How will these activities improve quality of life for LGBTQ+ Arkansans? Who will lead and oversee these activities? (2485/2500 char)

With support from the Arkansas LGBTQ+ Advancement Fund, the Equality Crew will collaborate with qualitative researchers to conduct a multi-pronged, multi-phased project centered on answering questions which are critical to developing and sustaining emergent programs focused on improving the quality of life for PreK-12 LGBTQ+ Arkansans:

1. What is the current quality of life for young LGBTQ+ Arkansans?
2. What do LGBTQ+ youth in Arkansas need in order to achieve improved quality of life?
3. What are the barriers or gaps to achieving that?

Throughout this project, Camille Richoux, Doctor of Public Health Leadership graduate assistant at the UAMS' Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, will be supervised by Dr. Alexandra Marshall, Associate Professor of Health Behavior & Health Education and Co-Director of the PhD Program in Health Promotion & Prevention Research, with support from community assessment and program design expert Kerry Moll, EdD. The project will be led and overseen by The Equality Crew CEO, Danielle May. The team will develop and pilot an online survey tool which will be promoted across digital platforms, print and in-person events from April to August 2022 to collect data on LGBTQ+ youth ages 12 and up in Benton and Washington Counties. The survey tool will be designed in a way that it can be refined and replicated for other regions of the state, while capturing accurate and reliable data on the initial representative sampling of LGBTQ+ Arkansans.

The team will also conduct 1:1 interviews of key stakeholders in the region, allowing for more in-depth conversation and community engagement. Participants will include parents/caregivers of LGBTQ+ Arkansans (specifically including those under age 12), LGBTQ+ adults who experienced at least a portion of their childhood in Arkansas, school representatives, mental health therapists and primary care clinicians, LGBTQ+ and youth serving organizations, and community leaders.

The discovery phase will conclude in late 2022 with comprehensive landscape analysis and program design recommendations. These findings will be compiled in a report which will be publicly disseminated by The Equality Crew. The results and recommendations will immediately inform the implementation phase centered on developing The Equality Crew's comprehensive strategic plan including a program implementation plan, a robust marketing and communications plan, and a fund development plan with creative revenue generating opportunities.

What will success look like? If your organization is successful in achieving the activities described above, what will be different/better? (1237/1250 char)

Our long-term goal is to provide safe spaces and programming for LGBTQ+ youth in targeted communities across Arkansas. The proposed survey and interviews will generate a clear understanding of the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth in Arkansas and proposed solutions to improve their quality of life. Successful completion of the proposed discovery and implementation phases will provide actionable data (not just generalized statistics) to inform the design and funding of sustainable programs aimed at improving the quality of life for young LGBTQ+ Arkansans. A future evaluation and replication of successful programs will eventually create a statewide continuum of care for LGBTQ+ Arkansans.

The promotion and dissemination of the survey and results provides organic community building amongst LGBTQ+ organizations and leaders and invites broad community buy-in, as well as expanded outreach to potential donors, volunteers, and program participants. The production of the report will position The Equality Crew as a trusted partner in the region and around the state, providing a solid foundation for the development and implementation of collaborative programs that help make Arkansas an appealing and safe place for the LGBTQ+ community.