



COVID-19 Grantee Spotlight: Equality Florida



Equality Florida is the largest civil rights organization dedicated to securing full equality for Florida's LGBTQ community. As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to compel social distancing and physical isolation, LGBTQ youth sheltering at home need our support. **Many Florida youths are at home with unsupportive families and are cut off from support networks at school.**

Equality Florida's Safe and Healthy Schools program is increasing protections and health factors for LGBTQ youth during the Coronavirus crisis through:

- Convening LGBTQ youth-serving agencies to identify needs and strategies for supporting youth in unsafe family environments and facing heightened social isolation.
- Convening school district officials across all Florida districts to identify needs and strategies for supporting youth during the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Communicating weekly with LGBTQ youth-serving agencies statewide, ensuring that our Safe and Healthy Schools team is aware of the exact challenges youth are experiencing both at home and in schools, and relaying this knowledge directly to school district officials in districts statewide.
- Connecting school districts to LGBTQ youth-serving agencies to create a continuum

"We are hearing nightmare stories of young LGBTQ people being forced back into the closet.

Unable to even talk with friends on the phone because their parents will overhear, many are making desperate plans to run away or worse."

Hal Trejo,
Grant Writer, Equality Florida

of support for youth everywhere in the state.

- Utilizing our close connections with school districts to push for integration of affirmed names for transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming students using “student information systems” to decrease dysphoria in virtual learning environments.
- Launching a Gay-Straight Student Alliance (GSA) Club Survey to all GSA point persons in school districts to gauge adult advisors’ and GSA students’ needs during the pandemic, when youth isolation and the need for GSA clubs is prominent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare societal inequities that Southern Partners Fund has fought since its incorporation. SPF’s capacity for enabling its grantee partners to build coordinated rapid response teams in their communities is well documented. SPF’s grantee organizations rely on Justice Fund for Disaster Relief and Renewal grants to identify their most vulnerable populations and connect them to agencies and services that can help. In turn, vulnerable populations in these communities trust SPF grantee organizations to provide them with the best support available. In many communities, our grantee partners are their first responders.

COVID-19 is currently the primary focus for the Justice Fund for Disaster Relief and Renewal while SPF aggressively seeks new funding partners. To date, SPF has raised over **\$4M out of a \$10M funding goal** and is already issuing its first round of grants to partner organizations throughout the rural Southeast.

For more information on Equality Florida or on contributing to SPF's Justice Fund for Disaster Relief and Renewal, please click [Donate](#) to visit our website or contact us by phone with the contact details provided below.

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