The LGBTQ Racial Justice Fund is a landmark funder collaborative dedicated to addressing the root causes of injustice for LGBTQ people of color in the US. In its first three years of grantmaking, RJF awarded more than $2.3 million to grassroots organizations and strategic campaigns in the Southeast, the region of focus. RJF makes yearly grants to organizations working on issues such as mass incarceration, LGBTQ youth of color’s rights at school and at home, criminalization, and increasing the civic engagement of LGBTQ people of color.

At the Racial Justice Fund, we work in three key ways to strengthen cross-issue movement-building in the US: yearly core grantmaking; building the capacity and leadership of our grantees through additional funds and convenings; and donor education amongst our philanthropic peers.

The sizeable, long-term, flexible funding and capacity-building support that RJF offers helps organizations stay the course and allows for long-term planning.
SNaPCo built, from the ground up, a ‘pre-arrest diversion program.’ The program is a way for people to avoid jail for such nonviolent offenses as homelessness, sex work, and drug possession, and instead, access much-needed services that help people stay out of the hands of the police. Pre-arrest Diversion offers people the help they need to get into recovery and reduce their reliance on drug-related crime, “instead of being caught in the constant revolving door of jail, streets, and jail again,” as SNaPCo puts it. After working on the program with policy-makers and the city council for more than a year, the Atlanta City Council voted unanimously in December 2015 to implement this program. Atlanta will become the latest in a series of cities that use pre-arrest diversion programs.

SNaPCo works to build power among those who are targeted by the Atlanta Police Department – especially trans and gender non-conforming folks of color, current and former street level sex workers and formerly incarcerated people. The coalition shows how with the right support, LGBTQ activists of color are making genuine and impactful connections between low-income people, including people who have been incarcerated for ‘crimes of poverty,’ those who experience homelessness, those who engage in commercial sex work, trans men of color, and LGBTQ youth of color.

The Solutions Not Punishment Coalition (SNaPCo)

BreakOUT! and Congreso de Jornaleros have built a unique way of working together: the Vice to ICE initiative, which builds relationships among LGBTQ young people of color and low-wage workers of color in New Orleans, LA. They build understanding and mutual commitment across community, language, national origin, documentation status, and age. Vice to ICE lifts up individual cases of undocumented people facing injustice in our immigration and criminal-legal systems. They expose the struggles of undocumented people, including LGBTQ people, in order to demand and create systemic and cultural change. BreakOUT! and Congreso now have a larger base of undocumented trans youth engaged in their work, and have achieved concrete wins in protecting LGBTQ undocumented people.

BreakOUT! and Congreso de Jornaleros
Our Funding Helps Grantees Go Further

- In 2 years of RJF funding, SONG’s budget has grown from $531,482 to $1,134,731! “RJF’s support has allowed us to greatly expand and deepen our Latinx and immigrant base-building... and has provided more concentrated funding for migrant justice, which is central to what SONG does and is also an area of work that few funders have funded directly.” Active membership has increased by 408 people.

- Solutions Not Punishment Coalition’s budget has gone from $185,000 to $495,000; RJF helped them leverage new grants from Arcus, Elton John AIDS Foundation, and Foundation for a Just Society. Active membership is up by 300%.

- GSA Network, in their third year of funding, has been able to expand from 6 states to 10 states and increased the number of GSA networking organizations by 10. “We have been able to shift leadership of GSA Networks in the Southeast from mostly white adults to a strong cohort of black and brown trans and queer youth leaders.”

- Project South has been able to increase impact in 10 new counties. “We have incorporated a broader definition of family-based organizing using a queer politic. Additionally, the RJF funding has provided more space to develop alignment with queer and LGBT justice among people of color organizations in the South.”

We Build Capacity and Infrastructure

RJF’s thorough landscape-mapping in 2014 revealed that most Southern multi-issue organizations are severely under-resourced. In order to support our grantees to reach the next level of sustainability and capacity, we provide capacity-building grants. Projects funded include:

- A leadership-transition plan
- A six-month strategic planning process
- Building a new trans-youth-led leadership development initiative
- Deepened practice with generative somatics
- Purchasing simultaneous-translation equipment
Notes


Join Us!

The LGBTQ Racial Justice Fund is made up of institutions committed to economic, gender, and racial justice for all people in the United States, including LGBTQ people of color in the U.S. South.

We hope you’ll join us.

For more information, contact:
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