

# How the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida Approaches LGBT Funding

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## THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Lately, we've been talking a lot about community foundations and their growing support for LGBT groups in their areas. It seems everywhere we turn, we're finding another example.

When we wrote about community foundation LGBT support last fall, one of the forward-thinking funders we mentioned was the [Community Foundation for Northeast Florida](#) (CFNF). And in the wake of the state's hate-fueled mass shooting, we thought it was time to revisit this foundation to better understand how its LGBT fund got started and what it's been up to.

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So I connected with the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida's president, Nina Waters, to learn more about its support for the local LGBT community. She told me that a donor in the area requested that the fund be established at the foundation. In turn, the funder convened an "exploration committee" that spent nine months learning about the LGBT community from a wide spectrum of resources. CFNF then [commissioned research](#) to address LGBT needs in the areas of elders, workplace supports, services for children and youth, and faith communities back in 2012. Since then, it has focused its LGBT giving on three areas that are popular ones among community funders these days: LGBT seniors, LGBT youth, and LGBT families.

In its first two years of grantmaking, CFNF has [granted \\$200,000](#) LGBT-focused organizations, which are as follows:

- ElderSource - \$60,000 for LGBT Elders Sensitivity Training
- JASMYN (Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network)—\$80,000 to support a development position

- PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) of Jacksonville—\$20,000 for strategic planning and learning, as well as an oral history
- UNF LGBT Resource Center—\$36,000 to create a campus-wide education and visibility campaign
- Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida—\$5,225 to support training and piloting an Employee Resource Group for LGBTQ employees in the nonprofit sector

However, LGBT grantseekers in Northeast Florida should be aware that the foundation's LGBT Community Fund is using a negotiated process to award grants, which means it's not currently accepting unsolicited applications. But in general, the grant consideration, evaluation, and recommendations process for this fund takes place in the summer months between May and September.

But of course, as a community funder, CFNF supports much more than just LGBT causes. When I asked Ms. Waters about the other issue areas the foundation is most in tested in supporting through competitive grantmaking, she said:

*We have a number of unrestricted and field of interest funds from which we make both competitive and negotiated grants. We have a 26-year-old initiative known as Art Ventures, which funds individual artists and small arts organizations who seek to move their work forward to the next level. We have a strong commitment to Aging Adults, Early Childhood (ages 0-6), Public Education Reform, Women & Girls, Neighborhood Development and Nonprofit Capacity. Last year we made more than \$1 million in unrestricted and unrestricted grants.*

In other news, the foundation recently finished a 10-year initiative to improve the student achievement gap in local schools. The big focal points were mobilizing the community to advocate for quality education and boosting graduation rates. However, Ms. Waters said that the funder's next big focus is all about improving local neighborhoods. "After a year in thoughtful planning and discussion, we anticipate making an announcement in the coming months regarding how we can use our unique position to add knowledge and resources to this critical issue," she said.

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