

# MEETINGS

## CAMPAIGN FROM THE SOUTHERN EQUALITY

We're working to build communities across the South where everyone can thrive - no matter who you are, no matter what your ZIP code is, and no matter where you go. Our work touches so many areas of LGBTQ Southerners' day-to-day lives. Here's how our work is showing up in different spaces in our communities - and how your support is making a tremendous difference.

### In Schools...

Our Supportive Schools team fields messages from parents and students about issues that queer youth are experiencing at school, providing resources, tools, and care in the face of hardship. At the same time, we also strive to address macro, systems-level marginalization by organizing against anti-LGBTQ legislation and working with state policymakers on tangible changes that create safer school climates. This year, after years of advocacy, we secured a major victory when the North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction agreed to make changes to the state's student information system that will make school safer and more inclusive for transgender students.

### In Creative Spaces...

We believe that art can be a powerful catalyst for social change, a belief at the core of our Southern Equality Studios program, which expanded in 2021. Every week dozens of queer Southern artists convene online to share their work, learn from each other, and get involved in social justice-related projects. Our staff have exhibited interactive art pieces at Black Mountain College & Museum, the Durham Arts Council, and in public spaces across Asheville. And we've been proud to financially lift up the work of BIPOC queer Southern artists through a special Southern Equality Fund grant round.

### In Our Inner Lives...

Our Healing & Resilience program focuses on equipping the CSE community - including staff, partners, and advocates - with the necessary tools to care for ourselves while doing the work to secure justice and equality for LGBTQ Southerners. CSE has helped to provide wellness-focused aftercare spaces for advocates following public testimony on anti-transgender bills, worked with young leaders on resilience-building strategies, and explored the practice of somatics to strengthen our internal team.

### In Research & Policy Settings

A huge part of advocating for LGBTQ Southerners starts with understanding our community's unique needs and challenges. But less than 10% of LGBTQ-focused research focuses on the South. That's why this summer we launched the Southern Equality Research & Policy Center and immediately embarked on a major new data collection project, surveying thousands of LGBTQ people in the South about their lives, health, and experiences.

### In Courthouses & Statehouses...

CSE's Legal Equality Project is dedicated to ensuring that LGBTQ people across the South are guaranteed equal justice. That involves attending public hearings in state legislatures, county commissions, and city councils to support steps forward or push back against dangerous bills. It involves marshalling hundreds of messages to lawmakers at every level of government about LGBTQ equality. And it involves being a part of landmark litigation, including serving as a plaintiff in a case challenging anti-transgender healthcare discrimination and signing "friend-of-the-court" briefs to take a stand. We won't stop working until all LGBTQ people are treated with dignity under the law.

### In Redistributing Resources...

A critical element of being able to thrive is having the financial support to address your needs - and at the start of the pandemic, the financial crises of LGBTQ Southerners became more apparent than ever. Through our Southern Equality Fund we've provided \$425,000 in emergency grants, supporting thousands of LGBTQ people and their families in paying for groceries, medication, childcare, and more. We know how dire the need continues to be. Every time we open up a new round of grants, we receive hundreds of applications in minutes.

### In Health Care Settings...

Our Community Health Program aims to ensure that every LGBTQ person in the South is able to access LGBTQ-friendly health care locally. Each year we train hundreds of providers and staff members on LGBTQ-friendly treatment and expand access to LGBTQ-friendly primary and HIV care at Southern community health centers. Plus, our "Trans in the South" directory, which we revamped this year in an all-digital, searchable platform, helps thousands of trans Southerners get in touch with affirming legal and health service providers.

### In Public Spaces Like Restaurants & Businesses...

No one should face discrimination because of who they are - but in too many cities and states across the South, LGBTQ people are vulnerable to harassment and abuse in public spaces like restaurants, shops, and businesses. By advocating for LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinances at the local level - as we did alongside our partners at Equality NC in the NC is Ready campaign - CSE is working to close the gaps in our nondiscrimination policies in the South.



**Want to Support?**  
Visit us online at [www.SouthernEquality.org/Donate2021](http://www.SouthernEquality.org/Donate2021) and make a donation to fuel these programs and many more that are making a positive impact on the daily lives of LGBTQ Southerners.