



CATALYST

*Transgender
Leadership Program*

WELCOME TO Catalyst. Basic Rights Oregon's transgender leadership development program addresses the personal, cultural, civic and professional needs of emerging transgender leaders in Oregon. Catalyst works to centralize the leadership of transgender people and build empowered leaders who hold a lifelong commitment to fighting for transgender justice and creating lasting change in both the LGBTQ and wider communities.

Catalyst is a year-long program for a selected cohort of 15-20 transgender Oregonians. Participants will attend weekend retreats where they will work to hone their leadership skills and build community with fellow participants and other transgender leaders. Between retreats, participants will have opportunities to receive further training, engage directly with the work of Basic Rights Oregon, and more.

The Catalyst Leadership Development Program is one part of the solution to our movement's need for a national network of training opportunities for transgender leaders, which is crucial to advancing social, transgender, and queer justice movements intersectionally. We expect all Catalyst participants to remain committed to creating lasting community change.

Overview

In 2007, Basic Rights Oregon (BRO) worked in coalition with other social justice organizations across Oregon to pass the Oregon Equality Act. With this legislation came broad legal protection from discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity as well as sexual orientation. BRO has since worked to recognize and center the needs of the transgender community, who have too often been pushed to the margins of the wider LGBTQ movement. Toward this goal, in 2010 BRO and Basic Rights Education Fund (BREF) launched the Transgender Justice Program. Through this work we envision:

- *A vibrant transgender community that can support and advance transgender justice.*
- *A broader LGBTQ community that is truly invested in transgender justice.*
- *A group of empowered transgender leaders who are committed to a common agenda.*
- *A transformative shift in the discourse around transgender issues and identities.*

In order to meaningfully advance this vision, it is critical that transgender people hold decision-making power in both professional and advocacy spaces, as those most deeply impacted by injustice are also those best equipped to effect meaningful change. When transgender people are not positioned in leadership roles, the needs and priorities of the transgender community are inevitably overlooked and ignored, furthering the cycle of transphobic discrimination.

In its inaugural year, the Catalyst program received more than 65 applications from aspiring transgender leaders across the state. When asked to describe how a transgender leader had impacted them, most applicants reported that they had never known a transgender person in a leadership role. This sample serves to reinforce that there is a dearth of transgender leadership in both LGBTQ and broader social justice movements. We know that this is not due to any shortage of dedicated, powerful transgender individuals with leadership potential, but rather to the transphobia that permeates our dominant culture. This transphobia systemically prevents transgender people from advancing professionally and personally into roles where they can access leadership opportunities and develop the skills to organize and advocate for transgender justice. Further, emerging leaders often have no community of role models and

mentors who can guide their work and combat the isolation experienced by many in our community.

Catalyst participants will join a growing network of transgender leaders. Through training, fellowship, and project-based learning Catalyst members will spend 12 months exploring what it means to be an advocate and leader for transgender justice. Participants will also gain skills to support and expand work they are doing in their communities. Specific elements that will be addressed include:

- deepening participants' analysis of transphobia through nuanced discussion with peers
 - understanding political strategy and advocacy tools rooted in a social justice framework
 - building a multi-generational network of peer leaders that includes participants, facilitators, community members and alumni
 - building resilience and power by meaningfully navigating conflict, including offering and receiving feedback
 - developing skills to participate in advocacy spaces that have historically excluded transgender voices
- approaching transgender justice work intersectionally, in order to build a movement that centers the experiences of those who endure the magnified impacts of transphobia in relation to racism, classism, ableism, sexism, xenophobia and other forms of identity-based discrimination.

Key Activities

- *Planning and executing projects that address the specific needs of transgender people and work towards creating the world we envision:*

Participants will have opportunities use the skills and resources provided to identify solutions to issues impacting transgender people throughout Oregon and build and launch projects for transgender justice movement building.

- *Building skills, growing community and developing analysis through intensive weekend retreats:*

The training offered at retreats will be responsive to the needs expressed by members of the cohort, and may include the following areas: community organizing, self-care, power analysis, community building, issue analysis, legislative advocacy, navigating conflict, and more. Participants will also be invited to offer peer-led workshops featuring content on which they have expertise.

- *Maintaining connection through virtual webinars:*

Short monthly webinars will be offered between retreats. The content of these webinars will shift throughout the year. Webinars will be opportunities to receive additional training, host peer-led discussion, share updates on projects, hear from Catalyst alumni, and continue building relationships.

- *Staff-Supported leadership opportunities*

Throughout the year participants will be offered hands-on leadership opportunities with the support of Basic Rights Oregon staff. Opportunities may include: participation in working groups and committees convened by Basic Rights, partner organizations, state agencies and others; offering or supporting transgender justice trainings as a part of Basic Rights Oregon's Fair Workplace Project; adopting leadership roles in Basic Rights Oregon's volunteer programming (e.g., facilitating phone banks, managing event tabling); and attending community events and meetings as a representative of BRO.

Calendar

The primary time commitments for Catalyst participants will be 4 weekend retreats over the course of 12 months. Retreats will begin on Friday evenings and end on Sunday afternoons. Selected applicants must be available to attend all four weekend retreats. The first three retreats are scheduled (see below). Dates for the remaining retreat will be confirmed with participants when finalized.

Please note that many retreat centers are affiliated with a religious denomination. Basic Rights Oregon will strive to minimize the impact this may have on participants and will never ask Catalyst members to engage in any type of religious observance. We ask that applicants consider whether convening in a space managed by a religious denomination will be a substantial barrier prior to applying.

Monthly webinars will be scheduled by participants during retreats.

RETREAT DATES:

Spring: April 26th-28th

Summer: July 19th-21st

Fall: November 22nd-24th

Winter: February, Date TBD.

Cost

All materials, room and board are provided. Reimbursement for childcare is available. Participants who are able to drive a carpool vehicle will be reimbursed for mileage. Transportation will be arranged for individuals who do not have access to a vehicle.

Participant Criteria

To Be Eligible:

- identify as a transgender, nonbinary and/or gender-nonconforming person¹
- Reside in Oregon²

¹ Here "transgender" is used as an umbrella term to refer to anyone whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term is **inclusive** of nonbinary, agender, and otherwise gender-expansive individuals.

² People who reside in the Vancouver, WA area or otherwise outside of Oregon but within driving distance of the Portland metro area are also welcome to apply. Please be aware that much of the content of trainings will focus on Oregon.

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Hold an interest in building a movement for justice that is united across identities
- Commit to full participation in program trainings, events and activities

Ideal Candidates will possess:

- experience working with transgender and/or LGBTQ communities – for example: participation in a school GSA, participation in an LGBTQ employee resource group, a social service role that serves LGBTQ clients.
- Previous entry-level community, student, electoral or other community organizing experience – as a volunteer or in a paid position
- Willingness to engage in verbal and written communication.
- Dedication to building strong relationships

A note about the selection process:

In addition to the qualities listed above, the Catalyst Selection Committee will consider several demographic factors in order to select a cohort that represents the breadth of lived experiences of transgender people in Oregon. Specifically, at least 25% of cohort members will reside somewhere outside the Portland Metro Area and 50% of cohort members will be people of color. Beyond these two targets, the Selection Committee will strive to establish a cohort that is intergenerational and includes the voices of transgender folks who hold multiple marginalized identities.

To Apply

Please complete [this application](#) to be considered for *Catalyst*. The information you provide will help us determine whether you are a good fit for this program and make sure that the training and other features of *Catalyst* meet the needs and experiences of participants. Please upload your responses to the written questions as a word document or PDF. If you would like to upload a current resume to be considered in your application, you are welcome to do so; however, a resume is not required in order to apply. Letters of reference are encouraged but not required and may be uploaded on the application page or sent separately to Kieran@basicrights.org.

Applications are due no later than **February 18th 2019**. Following an initial application review, finalists will be invited to participate in a phone interview in March, and final decisions will be released on March 26th.

If you have any questions or concerns or need this application provided in a different format, please email Kieran@basicrights.org.

About Basic Rights Education Fund

Basic Rights Education Fund (BREF), is affiliated with Basic Rights Oregon, a 501(c)4 organization that grew out of the community response to anti-gay attacks that began in Oregon in the late 80's. In 1999, BREF, a 501(c)3 organization, was established to conduct education and advocacy to ensure LGBTQ Oregonians experience equality. More information at: www.basicrights.org.

