



Returning Grantee Application

**"Pride in the Park: Advancing LGBTQ Inclusion at
Center in the Park"**

September 15, 2021



Proposal Overview:

Center in the Park is respectfully requesting **\$11,475** to support the second phase of CIP's LGBTQ inclusion project, originally named, *"Rainbow Connections: Advancing LGBT Inclusion at Center in the Park."* This new proposal is a continuation of the project outlined in the proposal submitted on September 15, 2020. Consistent with our mission, which values the voices of our participants, we are now referring to our project as *"Pride in the Park,"* a name coined by our inaugural LGBTQ advisory committee. We have also added the letter "Q" to our use of the LGBTQ acronym understanding that we are programming for several generations of older adults (age 55+) and that among younger generations the term "queer" has been reclaimed as an empowering identity. In Phase 2 of this project, CIP proposes to build on the successes and lessons learned from Phase 1 with an emphasis on sustaining volunteer and staff capacity to serve LGBTQ older adults, and a focus on the implementation of the *Pride in the Park Outreach & Program Plan*.

- **Has the identified problem changed?**

The problem on which CIP is focused continues to be to realize the potential of Center in the Park to serve as an institutional ally for LGBTQ older adults in Northwest Philadelphia and to cultivate individual allyship among our staff and participants. Ultimately, we want more LGBTQ older adults to participate in CIP programs. When we applied last year, we proposed a two-year project and have successfully met goals and objectives for year 1 (see attached report) in which we focused on strengthening CIP's organizational capacity to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ older adults, including the creation of an LGBTQ advisory committee which named itself "Pride in the Park". We are now requesting funding for Phase 2 through which we hope to provide meaningful programming for LGBTQ older adults and to cultivate allyship among CIP participants, as well as build connections between CIP and other community organizations serving the LGBTQ community.

The realities of COVID-19 have indelibly altered service delivery landscape while heightening the urgency to be inclusive. According to the National Institute on Aging (NIA), social isolation and loneliness are associated with higher rates of a variety of physical and mental health conditions (NIA, 2019). The necessity of social distancing and health implications of social isolation are particularly alarming for LGBTQ older adults who may already experience social isolation, loneliness, and health and mental health concerns (Salerno et al., 2020). COVID-19 potentially exacerbates existing health disparities for LGBTQ older adults who already experience social isolation at disproportionate rates as compared to heterosexual and cisgender peers, are twice as likely to live alone and four times less likely to have children (Espinoza, 2011), often relying on families of choice. Despite the challenges of the past year, opportunities for collaboration and alliance have also arisen as both senior centers and LGBTQ service providers adapt to the post-COVID service environment.

- **Have your objectives changed?**

Our objectives in the coming grant period build on our successes and lessons learned in Phase 1 (year 1) of the project and reflect our 2-year logic model (see attached) with a few modifications. In the first phase of our project, we were focused on strengthening our organizational capacity to work with LGBTQ older adults through staff training, the development of an LGBTQ advisory committee, and the creation

of an outreach plan. While we were successful in accomplishing year 1 objectives, we also realize that there are ongoing objectives related to sustaining our volunteer and staff capacity and therefore have prioritized those in Fall 2021. Additionally, our original projections for the number of participants we will reach in Phase 2 were a bit ambitious. Given what we have learned about participation rates generally in programs post- COVID (both virtual and in-person) we have decided to err on the side of being conservative in our participant objectives as opposed to being overly ambitious. Therefore, our objectives for Phase 2 include:

- Sustaining a Pride in the Park committee of 4-5 LGBTQ older adults annually.
- Maintaining SAGECares certification through ongoing staff training.
- At least 40 LGBTQ older adults will participate in Pride in the Park programs, activities, and workshops aimed specifically at LGBTQ communities.
- At least 30 CIP participants will participate in activities designed to increase allyship.
- At least 50 community members will participate in an LGBTQ community engagement event.
- **Will your efforts/actions to impact the problem change? Describe.**

Our efforts and actions will not substantively change. We will, however, continue to prioritize strengthening volunteer and staff capacity as this is critical to year-to-year sustainability of LGBTQ inclusion at CIP (as indicated by the arrow in the logic model looping back from Year 2 to Year 1). The programs to be implemented will not be different than what we originally proposed for Phase 2, but we have adjusted the timeline. Rather than offering programs throughout the year using a “spring/fall” model as originally proposed, we will target delivery specifically during LGBTQ Pride month in June 2022. The following is an updated description of our planned actions:

Strengthening Volunteer & Staff Capacity (Present - January 2022):

One of the major lessons from year 1 is that ongoing resources are needed to sustain organizational capacity. We were very successful in recruiting 4 LGBTQ older adults to join our inaugural LGBTQ advisory committee which named itself “Pride in the Park.” Unfortunately, we recently learned that 2 of the members are unable to continue due to health-related reasons and personal circumstances. A key lesson reinforced was the need for ongoing volunteer engagement and recruitment to maintain the capacity of the committee. Also related to organizational capacity, CIP has had some turnover in staff recently, largely related to staff moving on due to health and/or personal life circumstances amid the COVID-19 crisis. New staff will need to complete SAGECares training. Additionally, to maintain SAGECares certification staff who completed training in January 2021 must complete one hour of continuing education through SAGE annually. Therefore, CIP has the following objectives:

- CIP plans to devote Fall 2021 to volunteer outreach and recruitment to expand the Pride in the Park Committee to include 5-8 LGBTQ older adults so that we can plan more effectively for turnover year to year with a goal of retaining a core group of 4-5 volunteers year to year.
- In January-February 2022, CIP will offer LGBTQ cultural competency training for new staff and continuing education for those who previously completed SAGE training in order to maintain our SAGECares platinum level LGBTQ cultural competence certification and ensure a welcoming environment across all aspects of CIP’s programming.

LGBTQ Program Planning & Implementation (January 2022- June 2022)

In year 2, the Pride in the Park committee will work in collaboration with CIP staff to implement the *Pride in the Park Outreach & Program Plan* (attached). Programs will be developed by the Pride in the Park committee in consultation with CIP staff and our partner, the LGBT Elder Initiative which will continue to collaborate as an outreach and recruitment partner. The Pride in the Park committee has recommended all programs be held in June 2022 as part of an LGBTQ Pride month celebration. “Pride in the Park” programs will remain the same as originally proposed:

- *Delivery of 2 educational/social activities specifically targeting the LGBTQ community to be held in June 2022.*
- *Delivery of 2 educational/social activities to cultivate allyship between among CIP participants.*
- *CIP will host an LGBTQ community engagement open house event either at CIP or online, depending on conditions, inviting both LGBTQ service providers and local aging services organizations.*

As a result of our unanticipated pilot programming in Year 1 (see attached report) which included a week of LGBTQ focused events coordinated by CIP’s Pride in the Park committee during Pride month in June 2021, the committee has proposed to build on the success and lessons learned from the June 2021 Pride in the Park week events and again offer programming specifically during Pride month in June 2022. The committee believes that the visibility afforded by Pride month is a key component of successful outreach. In addition, we will have much more lead time to plan activities and engage in strategic outreach, including identifying 5-8 key community outreach partners who can help inform their respective communities of CIP’s programs in general, and Pride in the Park programs specifically, as well as taking advantage of various media outlets to promote our activities.

Evaluation and Future Planning (July 2022-September 2022): CIP and the Pride in the Park committee will review outcomes against the project logic model. Based on successes and lessons learned, CIP and the Pride in the Park committee will review and revise the *Pride in the Park Outreach and Program Plan* for the following year (2023). CIP anticipates a continued model that includes the following components: 1) volunteer capacity building (fall); 2) staff capacity building (winter); 3) program outreach, coordination and delivery (spring); and, 4) evaluation, review, and planning for new year (summer).

COVID CONSIDERATIONS: CIP is currently open for some on-site programs with COVID safety policies and procedures in place (i.e. social distancing, masks required, temperature checks, limitations on # of people in program spaces), yet we also continue to offer some virtual classes as we recognize that some participants may be unable to participate in person due to ongoing risk and/or being homebound. Ideally, we envision offering the programs outlined in this proposal in person if conditions permit but remain flexible and prepared to adapt to hybrid or online methods. There is also the potential to take advantage of CIP’s location in Vernon Park to provide some activities in an outdoor setting, particularly since they will be held in June. Given ongoing COVID uncertainty and the heightened vigilance necessary in response to new variants, programs outlined in this proposal may be offered online via Zoom.

Over the past year both CIP and the LGBT Elder Initiative have had some success with online program delivery for older adults. CIP offered over 170 instances of online classes, activities, and events in FY201 with incremental growth in participation. CIP also gained experience planning larger scale virtual events, including a Thanksgiving Luncheon in which 75 older adults participated, a virtual open house, and a virtual health fair. Yet, both CIP and the LGBTEI are also sensitive to ongoing issues of technology access among older adults as well as the realities of “zoom fatigue” for those who are participating in online

programs regularly. Finally, should we offer programs online, CIP has established an iPad lending library for older adults who want to participate in CIP programs but do not have access to a tablet or smartphone to do so virtually.

- **How will you know if the program is successful?**

The attached *Pride in the Park Outreach & Program Plan* and the attached logic model will serve as the Pride in the Park committee's blueprint over the next year. Achievement of key activities and milestones relative to objectives will be one measure of success. These activities will contribute to CIP achieving the immediate, mid-range, and long-term goals outlined in the attached project logic model which serves as the organizational roadmap for the overall sustainability and success of the project.

Workshop attendance and participation will be tracked using the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's (PCA) touchscreen sign-in system and sign-in sheets. Alternately, for online classes attendance is tracked by CIP staff who monitor Zoom sessions and create a sign-in sheet to be entered in the PCA database. PCA is CIP's primary funder (65% of annual revenue) and CIP is required to use the touchscreen and client by client system to record attendance for all activities. Community engagement event attendance will be tracked using a sign-in sheet for both organizations and community members who attend.

Workshop and LGBT community engagement event participant outcomes will be measured through a program evaluation survey and participant testimonials. CIP currently uses a standard program evaluation survey across all programs that measures the extent to which participation helped participants to feel more socially connected, increase knowledge, know how to make healthy behavioral changes, feel more positive, and, for online workshops, feel more confident using technology. CIP has adapted its evaluation form so that it can also be used in online classes via the polling feature in Zoom. CIP, in collaboration with the LGBTEI and Pride in the Park Committee, will adapt CIP's existing form to measure participant outcomes for LGBT specific workshops and LGBT ally workshops. CIP will specifically incorporate "the straight for equality ally spectrum" developed by PFLAG (<http://www.straightforequality.org/allyspectrum>) into the program evaluation survey for LGBT ally workshops. Finally, participant testimonials will also be an important measure of success. Participant outcomes will include the following short-term outcomes:

- At least 85% of LGBT workshop participants will report feeling more socially connected and included as a result of participating. We also anticipate that 75% of LGBT participants who participate in workshops through this grant, will also participate in additional CIP classes or programs.
- At least 75% of participants who attend workshops/activities designed to foster LGBT allyship will report they learned at least one thing they will do to be an ally to LGBT peers at CIP.
- At least 75% of community engagement event participants will report increased knowledge of resources available through LGBT and aging services organizations.

The above outcomes will collectively contribute to our long-term goal of increasing LGBT participation at CIP. We hope to increase our LGBT participation by 10% within one-year post grant following the implementation of this project and establishment of a participation baseline. We also believe that the goals of increasing LGBT participation and cultivating allyship among CIP participants are interrelated and that in the long-term LGBT participants will report feeling support by peers at CIP.

- **Program Budget:** Please see attached budget.