

## **CREATING CHANGE EVOLUTION**

### **Actions Taken to Date**

*December 2016*

### **CONTEXT**

Almost a year ago the National LGBTQ Task Force decided to undertake a review of the Creating Change Conference so that we can learn, adapt and evolve the conference for a number of reasons. These reasons include: the conference growing significantly in size and scope; it changing from a conference of primarily LGBTQ-focused advocates to a broader social justice conference with advocates from multiple movements; and, a lot has changed in the LGBTQ movement, in progressive activism, and in the country in the last 9 years since our last adaptation of the conference. The results of this review are contained in the report by the Morten Group, *Creating Change Conference: Assessment, Adaptation, Evolution*.

The review engaged a broad range of stakeholders. It described several core strengths of the conference: the breadth of issues that affect the lives of LGBTQ people, its forward-thinking approach, its emphasis on intersectionality, and the experiential way advocates build their knowledge, skills and strategies through their interactions with others from across the country. The review also recommends several areas for improvement in both the near term and long term.

This document outlines the actions taken to date to implement the near-term recommendations of the review. The process to attend to the long-term recommendations will begin in 2017.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Key Review Recommendations - Near Term (for Creating Change 2017)**

- Review and Reduce amount of conference programming options.
- Develop strategy for implementing improved safety measures for conference attendees.

- Increase marketing, media and communications for both Creating Change and the Task Force overall.

### **Key Review Recommendations - Long Term (for the future of Creating Change)**

- Reimagine Creating Change.
- Develop a new financial model for conference operations.
- Succession Planning for Creating Change leadership.
- Change location of Creating Change office.
- Increase the use of technology.

### **ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN – NEAR TERM**

#### **Review and Reduce amount of conference programming options**

- ✓ In response to questions about the proposal selection process as well as a major increase in the number of submitted proposals, we have created a more robust and inclusive review process for programming proposals, including expanding the use of expert reviewers in all topic areas.
- ✓ Programming selection process now places more emphasis on Task Force priorities, with 75% of the 2017 conference in alignment with: Criminal Justice; Disability Justice; Economic Justice; Practice Spirit Do Justice/Faith Organizing; Gender Justice (incl. of Trans Justice); Religious Exemptions Legislation; Immigration Justice; Reproductive Justice; Racial Justice.

#### **Develop strategy for implementing improved safety measures for conference attendees**

- ✓ The security and physical safety of all attending Creating Change will be paramount. In response to incidents at last year's Creating Change, as well as the increase in violence and hate crimes towards LGBTQ and people of color since then, we'll have an increased focus on physical safety and security measures.
- ✓ All staff will receive specialized skills training to help de-escalate conflict.
- ✓ We are creating protest guidelines that takes into account both the safety of our attendees while supporting thoughtful debate and freedom of expression.

- ✓ Mutual respect will be emphasized throughout the conference.
- ✓ All conference attendees must wear their name badges while attending all conference activities including plenaries, workshops, receptions, etc. The name badge serves as a 'ticket' to conference activities.
- ✓ ALL workshops, plenaries, institutes, receptions, etc. are for conference attendees only.
- ✓ Receptions will only be hosted by the Task Force's close partner organizations.
- ✓ Reception spaces have been reviewed to better accommodate the flow of 4,000 people.
- ✓ Increased communication with attendees prior to the conference so participants can familiarize themselves with conference policies
- ✓ A Wellness Hub will be introduced for attendees. The Wellness Hub offers space to Creating Change attendees to seek support when they feel distress, overwhelmed, and need time away from the hubbub of the conference. The Wellness Hub staff and volunteers will assist with self-directed practices to regroup, reset, rest, and unwind. Spiritual support will also be available in the Wellness Hub.

## **CONCLUSION**

The National LGBTQ Task Force is looking forward to the continued implementation of the review recommendations starting with Creating Change in January 2017 in Philadelphia. With the advent of the Trump/Pence Administration, we believe that Creating Change takes on a new relevancy in the movement to preserve, protect, defend and advance progress for all. Now more than ever Creating Change must and will evolve to meet these challenges head on.