

2003 END-OF-YEAR REPORT TO FUNDERS

Freedom to Marry launched in January 2003 with the purpose of advancing the marriage equality movement in the United States. Freedom to Marry is focused on the necessary steps to achieve civil marriage licenses for same-sex couples in at least one state within five years, defend and build on such a breakthrough nationwide, and secure gains along the way.

We designed this unique gay and non-gay partnership, Freedom to Marry, to mount a collaborative, sustained, and affirmative campaign, bringing together diverse state and national partners and enhancing their individual and collective capacity. Underlying the design of this new campaign and organization was a commitment to not displace or duplicate the existing work of other organizations, but rather to bring the disparate parts of the work into a greater whole, facilitate the work of key partners, frame the larger debate, foster heightened outreach to the non-gay public and allies, and, when the job is done, go out of business. As the only national organization dedicated solely to the goal of marriage equality, and with our flexible approach tailored to the needs of partners and the moment, Freedom to Marry is bringing a renewed context of urgency and opportunity to this social justice movement.

In this report to our principal funders, we will summarize: (I) the *events* of the past year; (II) Freedom to Marry's *growth* from start-up to up-and-running campaign organization; (III) our successes in fulfilling the *roles* and *deliverables* we laid out for the first year, and, very briefly, some *goals* for 2004 (which we can explore more fully in the next few weeks when we begin discussions, as I hope we will, regarding the renewal of your support).

Overview

2003 was indeed a watershed year for marriage equality. From same-sex couples (including Americans) actually getting married in Canada, to the United States Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas*, to the high court freedom to marry ruling in Massachusetts, the marriage equality movement made tremendous strides in a very short time. Freedom to Marry has been a key player in preparing for and reacting to each of these historic developments through its work with partner organizations, the media, opinion-leaders, and non-gay allies. Freedom to Marry has enabled its partners to accomplish their tasks more effectively and leverage their limited resources at this crucial time.

Freedom to Marry has fulfilled all of these roles and functions this year:

1. *Assisting local and state freedom to marry efforts as a **national strategy and support center** that provides strategic planning, coordination, sophisticated message development, community organizing, trainings, and materials. Freedom to Marry helps eliminate the need to "reinvent the wheel" in each new marriage battle;*

2. *Serving as a **catalyst organization** that drives and influences the national debate on the freedom to marry, defining and reshaping the very language and focus of that debate and creating a cultural climate receptive to full victory as well as incremental successes along the way;*
3. *Building **partnerships** and **alliances** that get the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement organizations communicating and working together, and enlisting local and national non-gay allies and non-gay public support; and*
4. *Functioning as a **regrantor** and an **engine of funding** that increases the resources available to local, state, and national freedom to marry efforts. Freedom to Marry stimulates parallel funding at the local level, shapes and endorses worthy projects, and advises funders on where best to direct resources to the field. Freedom to Marry also serves as a regrantor to non-gay and gay groups working together, seeding new projects and helping with rapid response.*

I. Events of the Year

When 2003 began Freedom to Marry was optimistic about promising marriage equality battles underway to varying degrees in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and California. At the same time, there was increasing discussion of marriage equality and related matters in the national and international arenas. Freedom to Marry's 2001 blueprint [see attached "**All Together Now**" article] declared that the marriage equality movement could achieve a marriage victory in at least one state by 2006. In fact, 2003 brought transformative marriage rulings in Canada and Massachusetts, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas*, moving gay inclusion and marriage equality to center-stage in American political and cultural life and irrevocably changing the landscape for the LGBT civil rights movement.

The Supreme Court decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (brought by Lambda Legal) struck down so-called "sodomy laws" throughout the nation and established a right to sexual privacy for all Americans as well as an end to the "gay exception" to constitutional equality. *Lawrence* was particularly important for the freedom to marry movement because, as Justice Scalia put it in his dissent, the Supreme Court's language and logic left "on pretty shaky grounds state laws limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples."

Winning marriage equality in Canada (where Freedom to Marry worked with partner organizations and lawyers) enabled American same-sex couples to get legally married for the first time in history. Hundreds of couples are now role-modeling for their non-gay neighbors throughout the U.S. what the reality of marriage equality looks like. As these couples now experience a *patchwork* of respect for and discrimination against their lawful marriages by local, state, and federal government agencies as well as in the private sector, the marriage movement will advance, establishing the legitimacy and familiarity of same-sex married couples.

A cascade of important developments coincided with the June milestones in Canada and the Supreme Court:

- passage of a sweeping “all but marriage” partnership law in California (following the movement’s success in rallying from a seeming marriage defeat in the 2000 state ballot initiative) and the right-wing’s current effort to roll back even this recognition of gay families;
- the international ferment arising from the Episcopal Church’s ordination of an openly gay bishop and creation of a liturgical blessing for same-sex unions;
- the adoption of non-discrimination and/or domestic partner benefits policies by Wal-Mart and others;
- the surge in gay visibility on television; and
- the ongoing debate among the White House, Congress, the Vatican, the media, presidential candidates, religious and community leaders, and the public, with the dawning awareness that the freedom to marry and gay equality generally will be central themes in the next election cycle.

The Massachusetts high court’s decision in *Goodridge v. Dep’t of Public Health* (brought by Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders) declared sex discrimination in marriage unconstitutional. The eloquent decision set the state on track to be first in the nation to grant same-sex couples the right to a civil marriage license, perhaps as soon as May 17, 2004 (the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*). While much remains to be done urgently in Massachusetts and throughout the country, this epochal victory has put our civil rights struggle in an entirely new place; as Senator Joe Biden, who in 1996 voted for the federal anti-marriage law, stated: marriage equality is now “inevitable.”

These advances met with a huge degree of support, acceptance, and “thinking anew” throughout the nation, including support from conservatives, as well as resistance and a fierce wave of attacks from right-wing opponents. In the year ahead, Freedom to Marry and its coalition partners face three crucial, *concurrent* tasks:

- secure the civil marriage licenses in Massachusetts, thereby definitively transforming marriage for same-sex couples from a hypothetical to a reality;
- repelling attacks -- federal as well as state; constitutional amendments as well as legislation, ballot measures, or electoral wedges; anti-marriage as well as broader anti-family and anti-gay measures aimed at barring any protections for gay or unmarried families; and
- enlisting new voices and allies in the national debate.

II. Freedom to Marry's Organizational Growth

Structure and Governance

While the above events made our workload take off like a rocket, Freedom to Marry had to meet these challenges as a brand-new entity that literally had to invent, assemble, and establish itself while tackling the work. Freedom to Marry not only had to unite the movement groups, enlist allies, and shape the message, but had to create its internal organizational structures and protocols and hire staff at the same time.

The staff of Freedom to Marry **[see attached bios]** is led by Executive Director Evan Wolfson, formerly senior attorney and marriage project director at Lambda Legal and the leading authority on the freedom to marry struggle. Program Director Harry Knox oversees our communications program and handles our work in the field, building on his experience as Executive Director at Georgia Equality, the statewide gay group, Equality Florida, and the American Cancer Society, as well as his divinity school training. Development Director Tandeka Moleah brought her fund-raising experience from Safe Horizon, the nation's largest victim services agency. Senior Managing Editor Barbara Todd Kerr has wide-ranging experience in journalism, television production, and web development, and is charged with creating Freedom to Marry's online-communications capacity, which is integral to our functions as a platform for voices, resource, message-shaper, and showcase for our coalition partners' work. The team is rounded out by Administrative Assistant Noran Camp.

The Freedom to Marry Steering Committee **[see attached bios]** is composed of volunteers who bring their expertise and commitment to the organization. The Steering Committee serves as the “braintrust” on key programmatic, financial, and strategic decisions.¹ Nine of the intended twelve members are already on board. The Steering Committee works through its Executive, Development, and Communications committees, as well as specific project teams. Members have made significant contributions to Freedom to Marry this year, including for example:

- budgetary oversight by Cherry Spencer-Stark and others;
- recruitment of Voices of Equality by Rev. John Buehrens and Cherry;
- Andrea Batista Schlesinger's and Tracey Conaty's help in developing the organization's brand and website and implementing the media and educational outreach plans.
- Mandy Carter's work in helping develop the new National Black Justice Coalition, an effort to enlist and deploy African-American voices in support of marriage equality (most recently providing a platform for civil rights leader Julian Bond to speak out).

The Steering Committee meets in person once a year for a two-day gathering in New York, and quarterly by conference call. The Executive Committee (Prof. Barb Cox, chair; Cherry Spencer-Stark; Rev. John Buehrens; Tim Sweeney) holds a conference call with Evan Wolfson once a month (or more, as needed), and Evan e-mails a detailed monthly report to the full Steering Committee.

The Grantmaking Advisory Committee is composed of three experienced funders together with our Steering Committee liaison, Mandy Carter, who also has grants-advisory experience at the Funding Exchange. The committee vets proposals presented by the staff, assessing a group's capacity, identifying deliverables, and advising the staff on the technical assistance that could accompany the grant, etc. After review by the

¹ Since Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice is Freedom to Marry's fiscal home, the Astraea Board of Directors **[see attached list]** has ultimate oversight responsibility for the organization. Astraea's board selects its members through a nomination process open to the entire Astraea community of grantees, funders, volunteers, and friends.

committee, the Executive Director brings proposals to the Executive Committee for discussion and then, barring objections, submits the proposals to the full Steering Committee for approval. The staff then works up a Grant Letter and detailed Grant Agreement based on our templates developed in consultation with Astraea, incorporating specific conditions relevant to the particular grants and the ongoing working relationship between Freedom to Marry and its partner/grantees. Astraea then does a final review of the materials and sends the documents to the grantee. Once the grantee signs and returns the Grant Agreement, Astraea issues the Freedom to Marry check.

Freedom to Marry's Partners and Coalition

Freedom to Marry works closely with over 30 partner organizations throughout the United States ranging in size and capacity from small grassroots groups to large state or national organizations. These include key state grassroots organizations such as the Freedom to Marry Coalition (MA), Love Makes a Family (CT), and Marriage Equality California; and the Federation of Statewide LGBT Groups (Federation). Our national partners include Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Lambda Legal, Log Cabin Republicans, National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and Souforce. Non-gay allies include the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Organization for Women (NOW), People for the American Way (PFAW), and Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG).

Although Freedom to Marry's partners have different missions and employ different methodologies, all are now working toward securing marriage equality, whether through legal and political action or through public education and outreach to LGBT and/or non-gay people. As illustrated below, Freedom to Marry has succeeded in getting the gay organizations talking and working together in coalition (as well as in smaller groupings), including organizations that have not traditionally cooperated consistently with each other, while also bringing non-gay allies into the movement.

In addition to our success to building a national coalition, Freedom to Marry focused this year on four key states (Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, California) where a mix of litigation-centered and legislative-centered affirmative campaigns were already underway, varying significantly from state to state. Freedom to Marry is now working with Empire State Pride Agenda and other partners to move forward affirmatively in a fifth state, New York.

Also this year, Freedom to Marry provided direction and resources such as polling data, templates, and trainings to allies and a next wave of partners such as Civil Rights Now in Colorado, Maryland Free State Justice, New Hampshire Freedom to Marry Coalition, Coalition for Equality New Mexico, and others.

III. Fulfilling the Roles and Providing the Deliverables

In fulfillment of the principal roles outlined on pp.1-2, Freedom to Marry pledged a set of deliverables or goals for its first year. Here is how Freedom to Marry met these goals, with some specific examples:

Goal 1 - Enhance the capacity of established and new local and national partners to mount multi-methodology freedom to marry campaigns in at least four states.

Our work in this area over the past year has helped to establish the organization's role as a strategy- and support-center that brings the national freedom to marry movement together, facilitating collaboration and particular projects. Some examples:

- Freedom to Marry worked with our national partner organizations such as GLAD, HRC, and NGLTF to create a template campaign plan **[see attached]** for adaptation by different states. Program Director Harry Knox presented the plan, along with a menu of public education activities and resources **[see attached]**, to 20 statewide groups at the summer meeting of the Federation of Statewide LGBT Organizations.
- On June 10, 2003, the day of Canada's marriage breakthrough, Freedom to Marry sprang into action and immediately convened the legal groups to hammer out and publish a Joint Advisory on the legal consequences of getting married in Canada **[see attached]**. We then brought all the political and organizing groups onboard, helped them to understand the magnitude and meaning of the events, got them all on message, and built the coalition described below.
- Freedom to Marry collaborated with both local and national partners, Massachusetts Freedom to Marry Coalition and GLAAD, to provide training for media representatives in Massachusetts, helping them to present a common message and to effectively shape how marriage equality is presented in the media. In November, Freedom to Marry, along with partners GLAAD and HRC, offered a similar training to executive directors of LGBT advocacy groups in southern states.
- Freedom to Marry funded the facilitator for a California Freedom to Marry Coalition retreat, at which the member organizations learned about effective cross-cultural organizing and coalition-building. We contracted with Deborah Johnson, an African-American expert in the field, to lead the retreat and our Program Director flew out to be one of the trainers. Other trainers came from Lambda Legal, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the California Coalition leadership.

Freedom to Marry has done a great deal of work as a catalyst, both through our partners and directly with the media, helping shape how events are presented to the public and

how our movement and allies responds to the opposition, while preparing for the next stage of the struggle. Some examples:

- Freedom to Marry has shaped the message adopted by virtually all the key groups, shared with state partners, and reflected in much of the media. Whether through our own materials such as the “Advice to Candidates” on our website; our backgrounders and talking points broadcast by us or given to partners for their incorporation into their own lead materials; our editing of others’ materials, briefs, op-eds, and presentations; our work with key groups to develop and analyze polling and focus group data; or our near-constant on- and off-the-record discussions and e-mail with activists and media, Freedom to Marry (as the insertion of its name into any meeting or article symbolizes) has framed the terms of the debate.
- Freedom to Marry enlisted a civil rights hero, Congressman John Lewis, to be a Freedom to Marry Voice of Equality. Our first ask of Rep. Lewis – made at the request of a key partner (GLAD) in a key state (MA) at a key moment (when the court needed to hear a message of encouragement and readiness on our part to defend a ruling) – was to place an op-ed in the *Boston Globe*. We then circulated the op-ed widely and are now focusing on cultivating African-American media and organizations to reprint the piece or put forward similar voices.
- Freedom to Marry funded a set of polls done jointly with our partners in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The polls reported very favorable results – released strategically – that indicated that the majority of voters in both states support equality in civil marriage. The poll results were helpful in our campaign to create the climate necessary for the high court’s historic ruling and shape ongoing discussion, and were part of a larger mosaic of polling data we have begun to assemble in tandem with partners such as HRC and the ACLU.
- Freedom to Marry has also spurred other groups to develop their own marriage equality programs and profiles. Often behind the scenes (consistent with our commitment to build coalition and help our diverse partners, rather than trying to be a “one-stop marriage shop”), Freedom to Marry has helped shape and promote the excellent work of key national and state partner organizations, for example:
 - Only in 2003 did HRC, the largest LGBT organization in the country, develop a Civil Marriage Center website and a \$1,000,000 national ad campaign, both of which we helped edit and shape;
 - Freedom to Marry provided similar assistance to GLAAD’s “Announcing Equality” campaign around marriage announcements in newspapers, as well as the beefed-up marriage resources on GLAAD’s website;
 - Equality California’s revised strategy to promote partnership legislation within the framework of a broader marriage message was developed and implemented in consultation with Freedom to Marry;

- Log Cabin Republicans' firm marriage stance and unabashed leadership from its perspective has been assisted by Freedom to Marry's resource-sharing, guidance, and editing; and
- Freedom to Marry has worked closely with NOW's national and local leadership, contributing to NOW's strong and enhanced incorporation of a pro-marriage-equality theme on its website, in its presentations, and in its policy stances.

In July, September, October, and December, Freedom to Marry convened what are now the regular meetings of a coalition that includes more than 30 representatives from key national gay and non-gay collaborative partners. No other group has brought these organizations together and kept them cooperating on a sustained, affirmative campaign. In between the meetings, we have succeeded in getting these colleagues to join in working groups, conference calls, smaller gatherings, and the concerted enlistment of new non-gay allies.

Freedom to Marry organized a training institute on "Winning Marriage Equality" at this year's NGLTF Creating Change Conference, the largest gathering of LGBT activists in the country. The training was attended by over 70 representatives from key LGBT groups from 20 states around the country – including all of our target states and all the states we hope to develop further over the next 18 months – and is helping to build the field and bring in a new wave of states. Participants were brought up-to-date on the national movement for marriage equality by GLAD, HRC, and Freedom to Marry. In specialized break-out technical-assistance sessions, state leaders learned models for success from presenters representing Love Makes a Family (CT), Lambda Legal, California Freedom to Marry Coalition, Southerners on New Ground, and the Freedom to Marry Coalition of Massachusetts. Freedom to Marry arranged for a briefing from Bob Meadow of Decision Research, the company that did polling in Connecticut and Massachusetts funded by our regranting, and also a "how-to" training session on web-based communications, in addition to subsidizing attendance by some state participants.

Currently, Freedom to Marry is reaching out to a new wave of potential non-gay allies, laying the groundwork for their coming onboard as working members of the coalition, either in support of the marriage equality cause or, at least, in opposition to attacks on gay families. Some of this work is quiet behind-the-scenes one-on-one discussions, while other efforts involve joint work with partners such as HRC and People for the American Way. Freedom to Marry has achieved a clear consensus among all the key national partners that there must be a much more concerted effort on this front in 2004.

Thus far, Freedom to Marry has awarded nearly \$170,000 in grants. These first grants reflected several factors, including the need to establish collaboration with key partners already doing critical work in the first-wave states and our desire to support a variety of methodologies and elements (i.e., public education, message-development and polling, outreach).

We have already earmarked another \$109,000 for the next wave of grants, and will complete that set in early 2004.² These grants will focus on outreach and public education to target constituencies such as faith-based groups, labor, and people of color, and will also include a likely grant to New York to be made as soon as possible to lay the groundwork for a campaign in a fifth state.

The Freedom to Marry grants already awarded are as follows:

State(s)	Organization(s)	Purpose	Amount
Massachusetts	Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders	<u>Marriage Initiative</u> - the development of a communications plan in anticipation of the high court ruling in GLAD's freedom to marry case. Elements of the plan reflected lessons learned from Lambda Legal's highly successful town hall meetings campaign in New Jersey, phase two of which was also partially funded by a Freedom to Marry grant.	\$51,000
Massachusetts Connecticut	Freedom to Marry Coalition of MA, Love Makes a Family (CT)	<u>Polling Project</u> - The results of this work with partners and Decision Research were released in October and indicated strong support for marriage equality in both states. Support was particularly strong among several key constituencies including Catholics, women voters, and people under 65. Our partners also gained experience in working with pollsters, drafting the instruments, etc.	\$28,750
New Jersey	PFLAG of Bergen County, NJ	<u>Zogby poll</u> on support for marriage equality in the state. The poll results were terrific (as reported in the <i>New York Times</i> and key New Jersey papers), showing majority support for our freedom to marry (55%-41%), with even better results among select demographics such as	\$15,000

² In part because we are a start-up and had to do some foundational work with our partners as well as setting up our own systems, and in part because we want to do the next set of more innovative grants especially carefully, it has taken us time to issue the remaining grants we have in mind for our first year's regranting program.

		young people, women, suburban voters, Democrats, and Independents.	
New Jersey	Lambda Legal	<u>Public Education and Organizing</u> - supporting "phase two" of a field/public relations/organizing strategy that implemented more than ten town hall meetings, created a database of more than 4000 attendees and a local coalition exceeding 90 organizations, and generated huge, favorable public education. Freedom to Marry funded the pivotal consultant who, under Lambda Legal's leadership, continues to execute the agreed-upon plan.	\$50,000
California	California Freedom to Marry Coalition	<u>Coalition Building</u> - expanding the state coalition among people of color groups, religious allies, and non-gay allies. We also helped redirect the leaders toward setting clear attainable goals, then strategizing workable approaches to outreach (which resulted success in their bringing in new allies such as the California Council of Churches).	\$23,000

Goal 2 - Develop a multi-year communications strategy for the marriage equality movement.

In addition to helping foster unified and effective messaging for partner groups and allies, part of Freedom to Marry's mission is to brand the collective work of the various groups as a larger whole – a *movement* for marriage equality. Now that the dimensions of the struggle have taken on much greater clarity and come to center-stage, we hope to move beyond specific tasks and moments to developing a sustained affirmative campaign plan with our coalition, including a communications plan that could entail paid-advertising. Some examples of 2003's successes:

- Within our national coalition, we created a working group on media/message. The working group develops and shares talking points, polling data, and concerns, and has vetted joint statements as well as the HRC ads. Freedom to Marry also convenes a weekly check-in call of a core group of organizations, which deals with breaking developments as well as brainstorming where we are going. Freedom to Marry has made its polling data available to state and national partners, and has

promoted sharing of additional data collected by partner organizations such as HRC and the ACLU. We have edited or guided many of the materials put out by our colleague organizations, from press releases and statements to ads, websites, and op-eds.

- As a start-up, Freedom to Marry had to develop essential communications tools such as a logo, a message statement, and a brand from scratch. Freedom to Marry staff worked with an outside designer to develop an organizational logo that communicates our basic precepts, resonates beyond our base, and provides supporters with a strong visual symbol of the organization *as well as the cause*. A new consultant team, Bizvox Marketing Communications of Atlanta, has begun to assist us in media outreach activities; we continue to explore creative and targeted communications and outreach vehicles.
- Freedom to Marry has launched a website, *freedomtomarry.org*, to be the user-friendly entry to the marriage equality cause, the site where newcomers to the debate go first to find out "what's all this fuss about 'gay marriage'"; a site that gay and non-gay activists consult to find out what's happening, what's best available where, and how to get involved; and a showcase for the best materials and for the diverse partners and voices in support of the freedom to marry. We intend this as a shared platform for our partners, with a 'look and feel' for the site that is not legalistic and, we hope, appeals beyond LGBT insiders to a crucial audience: gay and non-gay Americans who make up the "moveable middle."
- In addition to behind-the-scenes counseling of colleagues from other organizations on their media strategy and appearances, Evan Wolfson has been in numerous media outlets promoting the marriage equality movement and creating a sense of the moment, providing information about the important developments, and countering our opponents' efforts to stampede or sway public opinion against us. Evan and/or Freedom to Marry were mentioned in more than a hundred news stories this year, representing broad geographic and demographic coverage. [See **attached sample media placements**].

Goal 3 - Secure civil marriage equality endorsements from major religious denominations and professional and civic organizations as well as diverse opinion-leaders.

Freedom to Marry and the movement we are fostering are now poised to cultivate new endorsements and alliances. Some examples:

- We are working with diverse likely allies such as Human Rights Watch, which issued a policy paper strongly supporting marriage equality; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, now weighing its position following briefings by Freedom to Marry; and other organizations in the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, where our coalition partners at HRC and PFAW play a leading role.

- Freedom to Marry has begun laying the groundwork for innovative regranting/outreach projects that will engage significant new, primarily non-gay, constituencies. Our likely initial targets include religious leaders and communities, labor, and Latina/o communities, with the hope that models developed in those milieus will be replicable among other constituencies. Freedom to Marry ultimately hopes to fund positions housed in non-gay organizations to develop networks of public champions, internal allies, and target organizations within that community. Toward that end, Freedom to Marry has developed Latina/o and African-American advisory committees for these projects, is recruiting labor advocates for a similar project team, and is considering using consultants as a necessary first step toward funded positions.
- With our new website and communications structure, Freedom to Marry is poised to roll out the Voices of Equality and deploy additional champions. We have already recruited a number of other prominent Voices of Equality such as Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, a non-gay mom from Skokie, Illinois; Bishop Steven Charleston, the Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School; State Senator Sam Zamarripa of Georgia, a Latino business leader; Mayor Rocky Anderson of Salt Lake City, Utah; author Tony Kushner; and Rev. Elder Troy Perry of the Metropolitan Community Church.
- Responding to the right-wing's disingenuous use of some African-American clergy and our opponents' deliberate effort to denigrate the civil rights elements of our effort to end sex discrimination in marriage, Freedom to Marry has worked closely with activists of color. For instance, we provided counsel and financial support for a December press conference at the National Press Club to showcase African-American couples and leaders. We are now working with these activists on an ongoing campaign as well as working with coalition partners such as the Latino Gay & Lesbian Organization (LLEGO), NGLTF, and HRC on approaches to groups such as the NAACP, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, and clergy networks.

Goal 4 - Raise \$1-2 million for year-two operations, while promoting parallel funding at the local level to stimulate resources into the marriage field.

Freedom to Marry began operations in January 2003 with a first-year budget of \$1.1 million -- short of our \$2 million target, but enough to enable us to function as a catalyst and national coalition-builder while offering our partners in the field technical assistance/training, program support, and regranting. The inaugural round of fund-raising showed that Freedom to Marry can bring new resources to this civil rights movement from both non-gay and gay sources, including some multi-year funding.

Freedom to Marry's funding model is to secure relatively large contributions from a small number of institutional and individual funders in order to minimize competition with our partners and keep this campaign-organization lean and focused. Consequently, the

substantial majority of our support (60%) has come from our three lead foundation funders – the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Columbia Foundation, and an anonymous donor – and the second largest chunk of our first-year budget (25%) came from 10 other major individual contributions **[see attached sources of income pie chart]**.

During the first year of operations we significantly increased the number of individual donors, from 10 to over 300, thus building a broader base of support for the organization and campaign in 2004. One of these individuals came onboard at the higher-end lead funder level, making a \$400,000 two-year grant. From both individual and institutional funders, we have raised a total of \$475,177 in new funding for fiscal year 2003-04 and fiscal year 2004-05. We are now working to secure renewal grants or commitments from a number of our current funders, many of whom see this as a multi-year project, in addition to seeking additional funders for Freedom to Marry and the marriage field.

Freedom to Marry has also held a few events that created buzz and reinforced support for marriage equality as well as raising some money. For instance, our inaugural reception in Washington, DC in October featured as hosts the DC-based Executive Directors of Freedom to Marry's major gay and non-gay partner organizations as well as leaders such as Rep. Tammy Baldwin, Rep. Barney Frank, and NOW President Kim Gandy, all of whom attended and gave inspiring talks about how this is the right time, the right cause, the right organization. **[See attached invitation]**. The message of unity and presence to our Washington friends were as important as the \$10,000 we raised.

Finally, at the request of the Open Society Institute and other lead funders, we helped develop informational materials for a funders briefing on marriage that OSI hosted on September 30. The briefing hopefully will lead to an enhanced “funders collaborative” pool of new money for state-based marriage equality work, with Freedom to Marry most likely connected in an advisory capacity. We will continue our work to bring new funding into the marriage field -- seeding and pioneering new marriage work, strategically supporting our partners, and enlisting new allies -- nationally and in the states.

Conclusion

Your support helped make it possible for Freedom to Marry to achieve all of these accomplishments and to push the marriage equality movement forward in significant, tangible ways. Along with victories on the international and national fronts, we have seen public support for gay people's freedom to marry rise from 27% as recently as 1996 to near-majority support in national polls and outright majorities in key states and population groups, including young people. We have proven that our campaign can and will be successful, but we must seize the moment and build on these triumphs in order to secure full marriage equality throughout the country. As the freedom to marry movement tackles the three concurrent tasks described on page 3, your continued support will be crucial in accomplishing this civil rights transformation and shaping history.