In 2010, a group of concerned community members came together with a vision: create a powerful, strategic, statewide organization dedicated to advancing equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Coloradans.

So One Colorado Education Fund was born.

In just two years, the organization has built tremendous support for equality in every corner of the state—changing hearts and minds and winning groundbreaking victories for LGBT Coloradans.

Starting With Community

Following its founding in 2010, One Colorado Education Fund launched a survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people to learn more about their experiences, needs, and priorities.

More than 4,600 people responded to questions about how LGBT people live and what issues are most important to them. Our community’s answers show our aspirations, hopes, and dreams.

Like all Coloradans, LGBT people seek the opportunity to fully participate in American life. But unlike other Coloradans, LGBT people face obstacles and challenges to living healthy and thriving lives—from not having the protections they need to care for their families to hiding their identities from healthcare providers for fear of discrimination.

Our survey of LGBT Coloradans created a road map for the work of One Colorado Education Fund, which has focused on the top four priorities identified by our community: relationship recognition, safe schools, health and wellness, and alliance building.

Protecting Our Families

Despite significant advances in state law meant to offer some level of protection to LGBT families—we remain vulnerable. And with 52% of LGBT Coloradans living in committed relationships and 20% raising kids statewide—relationship recognition is a critical need for our community.

Given the state’s Constitutional ban on marriage for same-sex couples, One Colorado Education Fund built incredible statewide support and momentum for civil unions legislation, which would provide our families with the critical legal protections to take care of the ones we love.

Although civil unions legislation has not yet been signed into law, One Colorado Education Fund—and its thousands of active supporters—have achieved incredible incremental victories.

Through our work in the 2011 legislative session, we won the endorsement of every major newspaper in the state, built a diverse coalition representing more than 1 million Coloradans and 150 faith leaders, and generated 18,000 constituent contacts into legislators through LGBT Lobby Day, phone calls, e-mails, and in-person visits. We engaged the business community, created awareness among Coloradans from all political parties, and told our stories to win hearts and minds.

In the coming months and years, we will continue to educate the public and engage our supporters to ensure that our families have equal protection under the law. Civil unions are not a matter of “if,” they’re a matter of “when.”

We won’t stop fighting until our vision becomes reality: LGBT families are fully recognized, validated, and treated with dignity and respect.

Creating Safe & Inclusive Schools

Nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students experience bullying and harassment in our schools—impacting their academic success, attendance, and wellbeing. But time and time again, research has shown that comprehensive policies, gay-straight alliances, and supportive school staff help to end bullying and harassment in schools. That’s why the work of One Colorado Education Fund is so vital.

POLICY

During the 2011 legislative session, we developed and led a coalition to successfully advance a statewide anti-bullying law specifically protecting LGBT youth. We built bipartisan support and engaged every major education association in the state. While this law is an important first step, we continue to work to ensure full implementation at the district level.
GSA DEVELOPMENT

Many young people are eager and ready to create real change in their schools. So we’ve been empowering and equipping them as they start Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). In just one year of work, we helped to grow the number of GSAs by 14%, and in the coming months and years, we’ll continue supporting young leaders as they grow and develop their clubs.

EDUCATOR TRAINING

Trained educators who know how to respond to the needs of LGBT young people are vital to ensuring that schools are safe. Through our partnerships with statewide education associations, we’ve trained more than 650 educators on law and policy, bias-based bullying, transgender inclusivity, and more.

One Colorado Education Fund’s vision is clear: LGBT students are out, respected, and affirmed in safe and supportive schools throughout Colorado. We’ll continue our work until we’ve achieved just that.

Expanding Access to Health Services

All across Colorado, people struggle to gain access to the affordable, quality healthcare they deserve. But the stories we’ve heard from our community underscore the unique obstacles that LGBT people face when seeking care.

In 2011, One Colorado Education Fund formed a steering committee of healthcare experts and implemented a study of the health needs and beliefs of LGBT Coloradans. Nearly 1,300 LGBT folks shared their personal healthcare stories and experiences with us.

Like most Coloradans, LGBT people worry about paying for their healthcare needs and struggle to finance their care. But LGBT Coloradans also report challenges to accessing LGBT-friendly care from providers, and some of us decide to hide our sexual orientation or gender identity to ensure we will be treated with respect by healthcare professionals.

Obstacles to accessing friendly care are particularly difficult for transgender Coloradans, more than 50% of whom have been refused care. With health plans consistently refusing to cover transition-related care—transgender Coloradans are blocked at every turn from accessing the care they need to live authentic and healthy lives.

Following our research, we’re working to address the overwhelming disparities we uncovered. Going forward, we’ll be advocating for full inclusion of LGBT Coloradans in the Colorado Health Benefits Exchange, working with public and private insurers to address the challenges our community has experienced, and advancing nondiscrimination policies among health institutions.

Through this work, we seek to get closer to our vision: LGBT Coloradans and their families are physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy and thriving.

Building Alliances

It’s simple: LGBT people won’t be free until all people are free. That’s the guiding principle behind our alliance building work at One Colorado Education Fund.

JUSTICE FOR LGBT PEOPLE OF COLOR AND TRANSGENDER COLORADANS

For decades, the hopes and experiences of LGBT people of color and transgender people have been excluded from the movement for LGBT equality. It’s a sad history—one that One Colorado Education Fund is working to re-write. In collaboration with our People of Color Caucus, our Trans* Caucus, and our White Allies for Racial Justice Caucus—we are working hard to address racism and transphobia within the LGBT community.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

LGBT immigrants live in a world that treats them unjustly, both because they are LGBT and because they are immigrants. We need to change our laws to ensure that we treat all people fairly, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status. At One Colorado Education Fund, we’re doing our part by building support for immigrant rights among the LGBT community, as a part of a joint organizing program with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition.
For far too long, the faith community has been pitted against the LGBT community. But hundreds of faith leaders and thousands of faithful Coloradans from across the state support equality. In partnership with the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, we’re working to organize within faith communities, to build support among faith leaders, and to engage LGBT people of faith in creating change within their own places of worship.

Supporting Our Work

One Colorado Education Fund depends on support from people like you. We couldn’t do our work without the generosity of a variety of institutional and individual donors, who believe in our vision and are willing to invest in it.

We are incredibly thankful for the thousands who have invested in One Colorado Education Fund and supported our work to protect our families, create safe and inclusive schools, expand access to healthcare, and build alliances.

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Tides Foundation
Tyson Homes
WaterCourse Foods
Wells Fargo
Western Equality
Women's Lobby of Colorado

Organizational Supporters
9 to 5 National Association of
Working Women
ACLU of Colorado
AFSCME
Alaris Properties
Andrus Hood & Wagstaff PLC
Anti-Defamation League–Rocky
Mountains
ARC Thrift Stores
AXA Foundation
Babes Around Denver
Bohemian Foundation
Borax
Boulder Pride
Brett Family Foundation
Bryan Cave HRO
Carson L. Spencer Foundation
CH2M HILL
Colorado Education Association
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Latino Forum
Colorado Lesbian and Gay
Law Association
Colorado Organization for Latina
Opportunity & Reproductive Rights
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Congregation Emanuel
Denver Business Council INC
By the Numbers

In 2011, One Colorado Education Fund:

- Identified 18,211 supporters statewide with 3,936 members on Facebook and 831 followers on Twitter
- Cultivated 78 major donors and 106 monthly donors
- Engaged 661 individual donors, 36 corporate contributors, and 10 institutional donors or foundations
- Hosted 16 donor cultivation events with more than 1,500 attendees
- Built a coalition of 120 organizations representing 1 million Coloradans in support of civil unions
- Identified more than 150 faith leaders in support of civil unions in partnership with Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
- Generated nearly 18,000 contacts with elected officials through email, Lobby Day, and in-district visits
- Trained 125 messengers in target communities to talk with the media
- Developed and led a coalition of 30 organizations in support of safe schools for LGBT youth to successfully advocate for a comprehensive anti-bullying law
- Started 14 new Gay-Straight Alliances in high schools – a 14% increase to a total of 92 GSAs statewide
- Increased the number of students with access to a GSA by 18% – 130,211 students now have access to a GSA in their school
- Trained 683 educators to better meet the needs of LGBT students
- Collected nearly 1,300 respondents to an LGBT health study and developed a comprehensive report on LGBT healthcare
- Engaged 3,172 supporters through 100 townhall and community events
- Trained 120 people at the first annual LGBT People's Caucus
- Collected 2,543 petition signatures at Pride festivals in support of immigration equality

One Colorado Education Fund Financial Summary For 2011

Funding by Source

- Grant Income - Restricted, Program: $300,000 (40.3%)
- Grant Income - General Operating: $267,000 (35.9%)
- Individual Donations: $115,678 (15.5%)
- Event Revenue: $48,988 (6.6%)
- Corporate Donations: $13,100 (1.8%)

Total: $744,766 (100%)

Expense Detail

- Program Expenses: $427,513 (75.6%)
- Fundraising: $84,066 (14.9%)
- Administration: $53,703 (9.5%)

Total: $565,281 (100%)