

Messaging Research Brief: Fundraising in a Challenging Political Environment

The LGBT Giving Project is a national effort to increase giving from LGBT individuals to LGBT causes. We recently commissioned quantitative and qualitative research across the country to uncover **effective messaging and explore LGBTQ people's cares, concerns, and priorities – particularly in the post-election environment – that will move them to donate.** Here's what we found.

Now's the Time to Ask

- 31% of prior donors to LGBT organizations **had increased their giving** to LGBT organizations since the election.
- 37% of prior donors to LGBT organizations **planned to increase their giving** to LGBT organizations over the next two years.
- Among those who had never given to an LGBT organization, 35% said they **would consider giving** over the next two years.

Winning Message

The prejudice, hatred, and violence toward LGBTQ people that the election of Donald Trump unmasked are stark reminders that our community is still under threat. That's especially true for transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ immigrants. The fear and ignorance behind these threats are deeply embedded in this country and won't go away on their own. We must fight for change, locally and nationally, because none of us will be truly safe until we all are.

What Worked?

The prejudice, hatred, and violence toward LGBTQ people that the election of Donald Trump unmasked are stark reminders that our community is still under threat. That's especially true for transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ immigrants. The fear and ignorance behind these threats are deeply embedded in this country and won't go away on their own. We must fight for change, locally and nationally, because none of us will be truly safe until we all are.

Urgency.

Acknowledgment that today's challenges reflect long-standing prejudice.

Clear rallying cry for the community.

Focus on the importance of an intersectional movement.

Attention to the need to make change on a local level as well as a national one.

Key Principles

As you consider how to adapt this winning message to your organization's donor communications, keep in mind the following tips:

- Create a sense of **urgency** by using strong, active verbs that speak to the **determination** and **anger** many supporters feel.
- Put **donors in an active role** using inclusive language that positions them as part of the solution and makes clear how philanthropic support will make a difference.
- Draw on **specific examples** that are likely to motivate support—such as discriminatory policies, proposed legislation, hate crimes, or bullying—ideally **sharing a story** of how one of these issues has impacted an individual or family locally. Where appropriate, connect these issues as directly as possible to your work.
- Incorporate **intersectional** language, adapting the specific mention of transgender people, people of color, and immigrants – assuming your organization is engaging and working on behalf of these communities. If this language feels out of sync with your work, consider undertaking an assessment of your organization's approach to equity and inclusion.
- Place **local challenges in a national context** by featuring issues or events that are prominent and timely in your community or state that also reflect the broader national surge in discrimination and violence.
- Determine whether mentioning Donald Trump by name is in your best interest, based on your understanding of your support base and your organization's comfort level **with overt political language**.

We encourage LGBTQ organizations to operationalize these principles and this messaging internally and share them with allied organizations. We are currently conducting some real-life testing with partners and will share those results when they're in. For more information, contact Beth Strachan (bstrachan@metgroup.com).

The LGBT Giving Project is generously funded by Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Horizons Foundation, Kevin J. Mossier Foundation, Pride Foundation, Small Change Foundation, D-5 Coalition, Henry van Ameringen Foundation, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, and an anonymous donor.

We hope these research findings and recommendations will help LGBTQ organizations to engage current and new supporters in meaningful, mutually rewarding relationships.