

Black Queer Equity Index

Living at the intersection of the marginalized identities of Blackness and Queerness, Black LGBTQ+ Chicagoans face risk factors for adverse health, economic, and social outcomes. The Black Queer Equity Index (BQEI) seeks to alleviate these factors by helping organizations live up to their values of anti-racism and equitable service of Black LGBTQ+ people.

THE BQEI EXPLAINED:

The BQEI is both population-based and place-based, foregrounding the needs of Black LGBTQ people and the organizations serving them in Chicago. Inspired by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index, BQEI will define key measures of Black Queer equity to be applied industry-wide to entities serving Black Queer people, propose tangible recommendations for improvement, and provide tools to monitor and measure progress. Creating a culture of equity and inclusion will increase employment opportunities, quality of life, and access to resources for Black Queer people living primarily on Chicago's South and West sides of the city, ultimately helping to mitigate risk factors facing Black Queer people throughout Chicago.

THE PLAN:

1. Invite LGBTQ+ Organizations

Lighthouse Foundation has invited AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Center on Halsted, Chicago House, Equality Illinois, and Howard Brown Health to join the first BQEI cohort. These five organizations are among the most influential and well-funded LGBTQ+ serving institutions in Chicago. Together, they control a combined \$186 million in funding, which translates to 1,000+ jobs and tens of thousands served.

2. Create the Survey

Lighthouse Foundation will convene an Advisory Council with representatives from top LGBTQ+ serving organizations in Chicago, Public Health and Public Policy experts, and anti-racism, social justice, and equity experts representing the full Black LGBTQ+ spectrum. Lighthouse Foundation has partnered with the UIC Graduate Public Administration Capstone course, and the UIC Urban Studies Senior Capstone course to create a qualitative and a quantitative survey to collect information from organizations. The Advisory Council will generate content and data priorities for each survey based on their lived experiences as stakeholders in Chicago LGBTQ+ nonprofits and beyond. Lighthouse Foundation will be responsible for general project oversight and public promotion of the BQEI, as well as building structure for continuous community feedback through the Advisory Council.

3. Convene a Taskforce

Lighthouse Foundation will convene an Equity Taskforce and hire a Racial Equity Consultant. The Equity Taskforce, comprised of respected leaders from philanthropy, social services, Northwestern's EDIT Program, and the LGBTQ+ community and led by the Racial Equity Consultant and Lighthouse Foundation, will interpret the survey results and present each participating organization with an assessment of where they are on the indicators of equity for Black Queer people and recommendations for changes to implement in the next year. Lighthouse Foundation will publicly release the results with an opportunity for Q&A.

4. Expand Our Impact

Each subsequent year, participating organizations will be given a report card grade that will summarize the equity indicator assessment. Additionally, Lighthouse Foundation will invite new organizations to join the index and will continue to scale the BQEI to address other institutions within Chicago and beyond.



We are a Black Queer-led, multiracial social justice organization that advances justice for Black LGBTQ+ people across Chicagoland through empowerment, education, and entertainment.