



SAGE and Task Force Awarded \$500,000 Grant for LGBT Aging Advocacy

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By Chrys Hudson

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force received a \$500,000 grant from the Arcus Gay and Lesbian Fund earlier this week to support a joint national advocacy and policy effort around lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) aging.

SAGE and the Task Force will collaborate on a series of ventures that push public policies that address LGBT aging concerns and enhance support, protections and quality of life for LGBT seniors. The grant will fund two new staff positions—one at each organization—and related program expenses.

"As the one organization that focuses on the full gamut of LGBT aging issues both locally and nationally, SAGE is thrilled to partner with the Task Force on this national effort to improve the lives of the senior members of our community," SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams said in a release. "This initiative serves a critical need: in the next 20 years the number of LGBT people age 65 and above will grow by 70 percent—from approximately three million now to roughly five million over the next quarter century. This demographic tidal wave, combined with the endemic invisibility, marginalization and discrimination faced by LGBT older people, lends an added urgency to this first-of-a-kind national advocacy effort. Thanks to this funding from Arcus, we will be able to launch a strategic and focused effort to increase visibility, awareness, policy protections and support for LGBT older people."

Adams added that the new initiative is especially timely since SAGE will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year, just launched an online community of LGBT aging advocates and service providers nationwide and plans on hosting its fourth national conference on LGBT aging next fall.

"We are grateful to the Arcus Foundation for funding this innovative partnership between the Task Force and SAGE," added Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "This project will combine the Task Force's federal policy and research expertise, SAGE's unparalleled understanding of the needs of LGBT elders, and the energy of activists across the nation to shape a better future for all our seniors."

The Task Force's existing aging initiative, headed up by Amber Hollibaugh, a Task Force senior strategist and specialist on LGBT aging issues, convenes and coordinates the National LGBT Aging Roundtable, worked successfully with SAGE to gain the first-ever specific inclusion of LGBT elders in the *Final Report of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging* (which will guide federal aging work through 2015) and will be issuing a second edition of *Outing Age*, a seminal report on policy issues affecting LGBT elders, issued in 2000.

The new SAGE-Task Force collaboration has four main goals: to build and provide leadership to an action-oriented national LGBT aging network; to win strategic policy victories for LGBT older people at the federal and state/local levels; to build the capacity for LGBT aging policy advocacy in communities across the country; and to ensure that LGBT aging issues are a focus in broader aging policy discussions. SAGE and the Task Force will carry out this work in close collaboration with local LGBT aging organizations, as well as “mainstream” and “minority” senior organizations.