

Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund Awards \$1.2 Million to Support National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

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The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Foundation** has announced a two-year, \$1.2 million grant from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund to support the work of the Task Force's **Institute for Welcoming Resources** (IWR) and help build the capacity of five partner organizations.

The grant will be used to expand the number of churches that are welcoming and affirming of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. To date, more than 3,100 congregations have welcomed LGBT people to full inclusion in the life and ministry of their congregations, in large part due to the efforts and support of these partnering organizations, most of which have worked together for years to build the foundation of the "welcoming church" movement. **"A sea change is under way in faith communities across the country," said IWR director Rev. Rebecca Voelkel. "The day is fast approaching when people will hear the word 'Christian' and associate it with justice, equality, and support for all, including LGBT people."**

In addition to the institute, which works with the welcoming church movement in thirty Christian denominations, the grant will provide support for Integrity, which works within the Episcopal Church; Lutherans Concerned/North America; More Light Presbyterians; the Reconciling Ministries Network, which works within the United Methodist Church; and the United Church of Christ Coalition for LGBT Concerns.

"We are excited that this grant will help the Institute for Welcoming Resources realize its vision to significantly increase the number of local congregations and parishes committed to the full inclusion of LGBT people," said Haas Fund program officer Randall Miller. "We're convinced that this unique partnership among the task force's IWR program and denominational advocacy organizations holds the potential to transform the larger LGBT movement by greatly expanding its supporters and extending its reach."