



LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION

SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 2019:

20+

Partner Organizations

3,700+

Participants at 88+ Community Events

THE 1ST

Black Queer Equity Index in the U.S.

Lighthouse Foundation is a Black LGBTQ+ led, multiracial social justice organization that advances justice for Black LGBTQ+ people across Chicagoland through empowerment, education, and entertainment. We envision a Chicagoland in which Black LGBTQ+ people are safe, resourced, empowered, liberated, and flourishing.

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OUR WORK

THE ARTS

The arts are an integral medium of self-care, healing, and justice, and so we infuse them throughout our work. Our signature art program is Voices of Light (VOL), a collective of musical performers that celebrate the Black LGBTQ+ talent, resilience, and joy. VOL provides artistic and professional development opportunities while paying Black LGBTQ+ artists a thriving wage.

SPIRITUALITY

We understand spirituality broadly, as fostering emotional well-being and encouraging healthy communal practices. Our Black LGBT(Q)+ Caucus meets monthly to design community programming. We've offered over 50 events ranging from LGBTQ+ Family Day to a Pride Skate Party and Self-Care Events - all to build self-worth and community as a social determinant of health.

RACIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZING

Our racial justice organizing began in response to a series of racist incidents that unfolded in Chicago's gayborhood and culminated in removing a racist security firm from the largest LGBTQ+ center in the Midwest. Now, our flagship program is the Black Queer Equity Index (BQEI), a participatory action project to improve how nonprofits treat Black LGBTQ+ board members and staff. We are evaluating workplace cultures through publishing an annual report card and offering actionable interventions. BQEI works towards collaborative accountability, improves employment opportunities, and addresses the root causes of systemic inequity.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

BQEI respondents emphasized the need for culturally responsive tools to foster Black LGBTQ+ mobility within the IL nonprofit sector, which employs over 600,000 people. In 2023, we piloted our first annual Workforce Development Conference, an event to convene Black LGBTQ+ staff and unemployed job seekers for interactive workshops, resume development, interview prep, networking events, headshot services, and an award-winning keynote speaker.