



# Oakland

## LGBTQ COMMUNITY CENTER

### MEDIAL RELEASE

#### **Oakland LGBTQ Community Center Fighting To Survive**

*The Center faces a hostile federal government and unprecedented cuts from federal grants, corporate donors, city, county & state funding sources.*

**May 21, 2025**

**For inquiry: [joe.hawkins@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org](mailto:joe.hawkins@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org)**

OAKLAND, CA — In March of 2024, the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center began planning to open its East Oakland satellite site due to critical health needs facing low-income LGBTQ people and communities of color in the area. The site includes a new health clinic and a trans wellness center. Grants were received to rent space at the City of Refuge, purchase equipment, furnish the new sites and hire staff to offer start-up services. However, with just a few weeks until the grand opening, the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center is fighting for its survival.

Since January, when the Trump administration came into power, the nation was thrown into chaos after all federal funding was frozen, causing extreme uncertainty. Trump's executive orders declared war on funding for immigrants, DEI efforts, and the LGBTQ+ community.

"Everything has been downhill for our Center since Trump took office," said Joe Hawkins, co-founder and CEO of the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center. "I don't know if people understood just how immediate the damage would be to LGBTQ+ organizations. We now know four months in, the impact of Trump's actions is devastating to LGBTQ direct service organizations. "

#### **Major Funding Cuts**

"Major corporations that previously supported our Center have stopped donating following this administration's public attacks on our community," he said. Hawkins shared a statement from a representative of Amazon who has been a funder for the past two years: *[Amazon's] giving this year is primarily focused on cities with large employment centers (as we've brought everyone back to work 5 days a week), which in the Bay Area is San Francisco and Silicon Valley.*

In addition to losing corporate partners, the Trump administration has cut over \$600k in funding from the Center, leading to staffing cuts and program closures. "The elimination of this funding midstream has devastated the Center's ability to serve our community and limited our ability to apply for additional funding because our organization is deemed 'not in alignment' with Trump administration policies," Hawkins said. "It is clear that we are being targeted and defunded by this administration, and some corporations are falling in line with this hateful ideology."

This is not just a federal issue as state funding is also being eliminated. Last week, Governor Newsom released his [revised state budget proposal](#) that eliminates funding for two critical programs within the California Department of Public Health's Office of Health Equity (OHE): the Gender Health Equity Section (GHES) and the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP).

This is a dangerous sign for all non-profits, under-represented communities, and those perceived as not in alignment with the Trump administration.

### **Community Support**

Since the Center opened in 2017, it has grown into a multi-site organization serving thousands of LGBTQ people and others with vital services to include clinic services, STI testing and treatment, PrEP, Gender Care scholarships, linkage to primary care, rental assistance, elder support, mental health subsidies, substance use disorder support, food pantry, case management, support groups and more. In addition, the Center has been a lifeline and fiscal sponsor to community-based organizations including Oakland Pride, Pride-fest, TranScend, and the newly established Lakeshore LGBTQ Cultural District to name a few.

"We are grateful that our landlord, Jack Dudum, has given us a twenty-eight percent discount on the rent at our main site on Lakeshore and our IT firm ICE Consulting, gave us a forty percent monthly discount on services as well. I am also cutting at the top. I have cut my salary and decided to lay-off our COO," Hawkins said.

However, the Center is vulnerable due to a drastic drop in individual donors and the over \$600k funding gap with additional cuts on the horizon at the federal, state, county, and city levels. It is up to community leaders, individual allies, and all those who are willing to stand against the targeted hate flowing out of DC and support the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

[According to a recent needs assessment produced by Alameda County Public Health Department in November of 2024](#), LGBTQ residents face severe health disparities and discrimination across multiple categories, yet funding for our community doesn't reflect this reality. LGBTQ organizations are historically under-resourced and underfunded. This is compounded when those organizations, like the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center are Black founded and led and serve a vastly diverse community that includes nearly every ethnic group, immigrants, youth, families, and elders.

Some people have asked the question, if the Center is in such a dire financial position, why are they opening the East Oakland site?

Hawkins responded, "As I have stated earlier, well before Trump was elected and before the executive orders were issued in January of 2025, the Center received grants to build out our East Oakland satellite site. It is now done. I recall when we first opened the Center in 2017, there were no government grants. In fact, there was little to no money at all. But there was community support from many volunteers, community groups, and individual, foundation and corporate donors. With their support, we opened the doors to Oakland's first ever all-inclusive LGBTQ Community Center and transformed the service provision network in the City of Oakland and throughout the Bay Area. Funding for services supporting LGBTQ residents of the City of Oakland or in Alameda County has either been non-existent or severely lacking," said Joe Hawkins. "We need our city, county, and state officials to step-up or face the loss of critical services to our underserved community. They must act now!"

*The Center's satellite site grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, June 7, 2025, from 12pm-4pm, at City of Refuge located at 8400 Enterprise Way in East Oakland. For more information about how you can donate to the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center, please contact Johanna Holden at [johanna@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org](mailto:johanna@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org). To learn more about the Center, please visit our website at [www.oaklandlgbtqcenter.org](http://www.oaklandlgbtqcenter.org). For media inquiries contact [joe.hawkins@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org](mailto:joe.hawkins@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org)*