



Advancing social justice  
for LGBT communities  
in the Upper Midwest

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## New Report Highlights the Importance of Training Providers of Aging Services to Meet the Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Older Adults

*Local study finds that Area Agencies on Aging are willing to provide services and outreach but need training resources*

(Dec. 13, 2010) PFund Foundation, the only Minnesota foundation dedicated exclusively to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality, and the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development, , today released a report that studies the readiness of aging services providers in the Upper Midwest in meeting the specific needs of the growing numbers of older LGBT adults in the region.

The report, *Ready to Serve? PFund Foundation Report of the Aging Network and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Older Adults*, presents findings from a survey in PFund's Upper Midwest region of area agencies on aging and their current work with LGBT older adults. In doing so, the report highlights the critical need to train staff members working in agencies that provide direct services to older adults, and suggests that such training is the key to ensuring they meet the needs of LGBT elders.

This report draws on data gathered from a national study that was conducted in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA), the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE), PFund Foundation, and the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development (U of MN CEHD).

The national study is the first of its kind in more than a decade, and the first to survey non-urban areas and includes questions related to bisexual and transgender older adults. It provides a detailed picture of aging providers' experiences and capacities to serve LGBT older adults.

The PFund report captures responses from 15 agencies in PFund's region and 320 agencies nationwide. Some of the report's key findings include:

- More than half of agencies have offered or funded some type of LGBT aging training to staff, and nearly all agencies are willing to offer training in the future.
- Very few agencies offer LGBT-specific programs or outreach, and about half of the agencies support the idea of offering LGBT-specific services.
- While two thirds of agencies in PFund's region believe LGBT older adults would be welcomed by local aging services, only one agency had received a recent request to help a lesbian, gay or bisexual person, and only two had received a request to help a transgender person.

"Because many LGBT older adults have faced a social stigma and prejudice much of their lives, they often fear they will be unwelcome in traditional senior settings, or will encounter aging

providers who are unfamiliar with their needs, “ said Susan Cogger, PFund director of development and communications. “People who fear discrimination need reassurance at the front end in order to make their way through an agency’s doors.”

Moving forward, the PFund report recommends legislation that mandates service to LGBT older adults, prohibits discrimination in aging services based on sexual orientation or gender identity and makes available sufficient funding to provide welcoming, appropriate care to LGBT older adults.

“As the saying goes, ‘dollars follow data.’ We hope this research guides future investments and action from community, business and philanthropic leaders to examine and advocate policies that ensure all LGBT people have equal access to and safety and security at senior serving agencies,” said Lupe Castillo, PFund board president.

In the Twin Cities, Training to Serve, a nonprofit, is currently providing training and resources for mainstream senior service providers on working with LGBT older adults.

Copy of Report: *Ready to Serve?* is available to download at [http://www.pfundonline.org/pdf/Ready\\_to\\_Serve\\_PFundReport.pdf](http://www.pfundonline.org/pdf/Ready_to_Serve_PFundReport.pdf)

For more information about the organizations that created this research, please refer to:

- Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging: <http://www.tcaging.org>
- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a): <http://www.n4a.org>
- PFund Foundation: <http://pfundonline.org/>
- Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders: <http://www.sageusa.org/index.cfm>
- University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/>

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#### About PFund Foundation

PFund Foundation is a community foundation that advances social justice for LGBT communities in the Upper Midwest by providing hands on assistance to organizations, funding systems change work, developing leaders, inspiring giving, and convening & reporting on issues of importance for our communities. Established in 1987 as Philanthrofund Foundation in Minneapolis when four friends pooled \$2,000, PFund is now supported by thousands of individuals in dozens of states who have created a vibrant and vital community foundation that celebrates and strengthens our communities. PFund is one of only a handful of foundations in the nation created specifically by and for LGBT communities. PFund envisions a time when LGBT people are celebrated and live free from discrimination, violence, invisibility and isolation. Today, PFund manages nearly \$1 million in assets, enjoying the support of committed donors and dedicated volunteers from LGBT and allied communities. More at [PFundOnline.org](http://PFundOnline.org).

#### About Training to Serve

Minnesota has a significant effort in place to train and identify LGBT service providers: Training to Serve. This grew out of the Metropolitan Aging Service Providers Study. This study, a joint partnership between the University of Minnesota, the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging and GLBT Generations, surveyed 152 Twin Cities metro area service providers to identify their

competency to work with LGBT seniors. Importantly, the majority of those surveyed (75 percent) would offer training to their staff on LGBT issues if that training was available. The results of this research served as the foundation for a new organization aptly named Training to Serve (TTS). TTS utilizes a two- and four- hour training curriculum (development funded in part by a PFund Foundation grant) to assist providers of aging services with education and tools to help them meet the needs of LGBT persons as they age. <http://www.trainingtoserve.org/>