INTRODUCTION

POWERON, A PROGRAM OF LGBT TECH, DESIGNED TO FORGE COMMUNITY THROUGH EQUITABLE ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY.

PowerOn, a program of LGBT Tech, is a first-of-a-kind program that distributes technology to LGBTQ+ individuals who are isolated, disadvantaged, and at risk of homelessness across the country through our network of LGBTQ+ grantee organizations. LGBT Tech is a diverse team of experts that develops programs and resources that support LGBTQ+ communities and work to educate organizations and policy makers on the unique needs LGBTQ+ individuals face when it comes to tech.

PowerOn was created to address the disproportionate digital divide for the LGBTQ+ community. Since the foundation of the program, ever-developing uses for technology and a physically isolating pandemic have expanded the integration of technology into daily life at an exponential rate. The program has continuously grown to adapt and pivot to meet the ever-changing needs of the LGBTQ+ community when it comes to access to technology. In 2022, we continued our work of granting technology to individuals as well as to LGBTQ+ community centers across the country through our PowerOn grant, the Mini Grant, and, for the first time, internationally through a new partnership with Safe Place International. Through our years of work with the community we know that access to technology can no longer be considered a luxury, but instead has become a basic necessity to not only survive but thrive in the world today.

PowerOn is built on the foundation that digital rights are human rights, and our mission is to bridge the digital gap in the LGBTQ+ community. We provide technology, resources for internet access, and connection to vital information, research, and advocacy to both LGBTQ+ organizations and individual community members. We empower the LGBTQ+ community to transform their lives through technology.
MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last year presented a tumultuous landscape for the LGBTQ+ community. As each month unfolded, we found ourselves navigating an ever-changing maze of challenges. This year, an unprecedented number of anti-trans legislative measures emerged across local, state, and federal arenas. Beyond that, the introduction of anti-drag and anti-abortion laws further strained the fabric of our community. However, amid these adversities, the resilience and achievements of our organization stood out as a beacon of hope. I want to express my profound gratitude to the dedicated team at LGBT Tech for their unwavering commitment and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community, not just in 2022, but consistently over the years.

Despite the hurdles:
• Our outreach saw an unparalleled surge
• We awarded grants, enabling trans individuals in remote regions to avail themselves of gender-affirming telehealth services
• Our support initiatives linked senior members of our community to dependable housing solutions.

While we may currently be engaged in one of the most defining struggles in our history, 2022 underscored a pivotal truth: our community is strongest when we unite, support, and empower each other with the resources we need to thrive. It is with immense pride that I present the 2022 PowerOn Impact Report. Within these pages, you’ll discover the narrative of how, through our tech grants, we became a pillar of support for our community during this challenging year. If there’s one sentiment that resonates from this report, it’s this: we are unwavering in our commitment to our community, and united, we will surmount the challenges ahead.

“...we will overcome the challenges before us.”

Christopher B. Wood
Executive Director

“We always show up for our community, and together we will overcome the challenges before us.”
We are committed to meeting our community where they are and expanding the social impact of the PowerOn grants.

162% increase in those who applied for a job
730% increase in those who completed schoolwork
225% increase in those who earned a GED or applied for school
100% increase in those who found stable housing

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, the PowerOn Tech Grant has achieved the above increases in social impact.

When we asked partner centers what impact the granted technology had and for testimonials from the users of the technology, the overwhelming majority of answers mentioned supporting youth, supporting the community, and increasing access to technology. The following visualization displays the most frequently used words in larger font.
We are fortunate to have program supporters who understand the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community when it comes to technology. Because of this support, we have been able to not only continue our work in providing access to technology, but are continuously expanding this work to reach more of our community impacted by the digital divide. The support provided by our sponsors in 2022 made a tangible difference for PowerOn program participants.

2022 AT A GLANCE...

- **563** devices granted
- **$92,948** worth of technology granted
- **80,975** people reached by PowerOn technology

- 124% increase in devices granted over 2021
- 94% increase in dollar amount of granted technology from 2021.
- 695% increase in reach over the past four years
DEMOGRAPHIC OF POWERON USERS

It is no secret that digital literacy is a requirement in the world we live in. Banks are downsizing front-line employees and physical branches, older adults need to complete an online application for Social Security Income (SSI), and most landlords require online applications for tenant consideration. Current generations grew up with wide access to digital literacy, but our community’s older adults are often left behind when it comes to these skills. That is why we are proud to share that PowerOn technology reached 410 older adults (65+) in 2022. Among those older adults was a 78 year old Puerto Rican lesbian who used the technology to find better housing, access benefits, and connect with community. Waves Ahead, our partner center, provided her with a tutor and upgraded technology to achieve this.

According to a study conducted by the UCLA Williams Institute, nearly half of LGBTQ+ people of color live in low-income households, and 36% of LGBTQ+ people who identify as white live in low-income households. There is no question that the LGBTQ+ community faces economic barriers not experienced by non-LGBTQ+ individuals. In a world where technology has a hefty price tag and a life-saving impact, PowerOn moves to have a lasting impact across all demographics and combat the financial burden of purchasing tech.
“Our Center serves a broad rural geographical area with significant barriers to accessing our direct or physical services. Web-based communication allows us to easily connect folks to affirming referrals, education and resources – that might not be otherwise possible. We have clients that access our virtual support group from outside of our immediate vicinity as well.”

— Shenandoah LGBTQ Center, Staunton, VA

LGBTQ+ individuals living in rural America face many of the same challenges as those living in urban areas, however many of these issues can be exacerbated by lack of access to resources and community. According to research, living in smaller communities may mean a lack of alternative options in the face of workplace or housing discrimination, limited access to safe and informed healthcare, or increased vulnerability to legal discrimination. Rural LGBTQ+ communities may need to travel farther to access support from LGBTQ+ community centers and social service providers, and may not get to enjoy spaces for community joy and celebration such as Pride parades, queer nightlife, or LGBTQ+ social clubs.

Technology can help to bridge this gap through online queer spaces where individuals can connect with other community members and access information about their identities and lives. The development of telehealth services has helped bring essential services to rural LGBTQ+ communities, such as gender-affirming healthcare and more variety in healthcare providers so that individuals can make sure they are receiving informed, safe, and affirming care.

PowerOn granted technology has empowered many of our partner centers to expand their reach and stay connected with rural LGBTQ+ communities.
CONFRONTING GENDER DISPARITIES

Across the board, women within the LGBTQ+ community face higher levels of depression, and also report higher levels of fair or poor health. There are many factors that contribute to this, but some of the most pressing and impactful contributing factors are:

- Economic opportunities
- Employment and housing
- Chronic stress
- Discrimination
- Victimization

40% of LGBTQ+ women reported having depression, compared to 26% of LGBTQ+ men, and 9% of the general U.S. population. LGBT Tech acknowledges these disparities, and is committed to ensuring a diversified reach of the technology we grant.

In 2021, the PowerOn grant reached more cis men and trans men in each age category than cis women and trans women. In 2022, the PowerOn grant reached more trans women and cis women than trans men and cis men for the first time in the program’s history. PowerOn had an impressive 18.5% growth in reach to trans women and cis women in 2022, resulting in an additional reach of 11,000 women in only one year. The PowerOn tech grant is used by partner centers to connect the LGBTQ+ community to telehealth services, mental health services, therapy and much more.

PARTNER CENTERS

The number of PowerOn partner centers has more than doubled since 2019. We are excited to share that PowerOn continues to grow its reach on a national scale, and now for the first time, PowerOn is also reaching LGBTQ+ individuals on an international level as well.
In 2022, 315 discriminatory anti-LGBTQ+ bills were introduced across the U.S., many of which specifically targeted transgender and nonbinary youth. While the majority of these bills failed to pass, our community still suffered a reduction of our human rights and for many, access to crucial services became a challenge. These political attacks continue to threaten the LGBTQ+ community, and navigating a politically hostile climate also has serious implications for community members’ mental and physical well-being. It is more important now than ever that LGBTQ+ individuals have access to social services such as mental health services and housing support, as well as community spaces for peer support and queer joy. PowerOn is proud to support our partner centers as they work hard to empower the LGBTQ+ community through programming, both in-person and virtually.

“Thanks to PowerOn technology, we held a National Trans-Survey fill-out party day, which allowed 25 people to fill out the national trans survey.”

—New Haven Pride Center
New Haven, CT

“IT’S HARD TO FIND PLACES TO MEET PEOPLE BECAUSE OF MY DISABILITIES. I CONSIDER MYSELF BISEXUAL AND IT’S GREAT TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS. EVERYONE IS INVITING HERE.”

—Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
Allentown, PA

LGBTQ+ workers earn 90 cents for every dollar their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts earn.

“The technology provided by PowerOn has enabled Youth Oasis to expand the services we offer to our community. We provide tablets to youth to help them with job applications, group, individual therapy, and classes. Our staff members have also used laptops provided by PowerOn to provide assessments, manage client records and connect with youth virtually. This has enabled us to provide more meaningful support and assistance to the individuals in our community.”

—Youth Oasis, Baton Rouge, LA
Less than 1 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth found their home to be gender-affirming.

27% of LGBTQ+ individuals reported lack of funds for sufficient food.

20% of 1 in 5 LGBTQ+ individuals has dealt with workplace discrimination.

In 2022 the Mini Grant achieved record growth with a 32% increase in the program's reach.

$42,000 total value granted.

Same grant dollar amount as 2021.

Almost 7,000 LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas reached in 2022.

CHALLENGES

60% LGBTQ+ youth who wanted mental health care were not able to access it.

45% LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered suicide in 2022.

28% LGBTQ+ youth face housing instability or experience housing instability.

2022 MOBILE MINI GRANT

The Mini Grant was created as an emergency response to COVID-19, and has since transformed into an annual grant that continues to be centered around community, advocacy, and connectivity. Staying true to its roots, the Mini Grant provides partner centers with access to critical technology that empowers them to combat the day-to-day crises and emergencies our community members face.

In 2022, the Mini Grant made huge strides. Thanks to support from T-Mobile, LGBT Tech was able to grant technology, increase the reach and impact of that technology, and support more LGBTQ+ individuals in accessing services that are technology dependent.
In 2022, our partner centers leveraged PowerOn technology grants to provide community members with access to mental healthcare, support/social groups, food bank services and much more. The Mini Grant directly supported LGBTQ+ individuals in accessing resources that supported them in combating the unique challenges our community faces.

The donut chart to the right shows the distribution of the services provided through use of Mini Grant technology.

**SERVICES DISTRIBUTION**

We want to highlight the great work our partner centers are doing. Without them, the impact of our technology would not be the same. We cherish the relationships we have established, and feel very fortunate to work with such a great pool of centers that go above and beyond for the LGBTQ+ community each day. For each device we distribute, they provide the tutors to learn how to use it, organize the telehealth appointments to leverage it, and create the virtual safe spaces that keep our community flourishing and thriving with it. It is because of their grit that our granted devices can have the lasting impact they have made. The services these centers provide are so much more than percentages. For every single service provided, there is a team of talented individuals coordinating, organizing, and connecting people and resources. For that reason, we want to highlight the outstanding numbers behind each service provided using PowerOn technology.

**USER DISTRIBUTION**

**AGE DISTRIBUTION**

**MINI GRANT 2022**

**3,191 clients accessed mental health service.**

**564 clients accessed primary/clinical healthcare, including gender-affirming healthcare.**

**1,653 Support Groups and Social Events held**

**528 clients accessed emergency services.**

**217 clients attended technology classes.**

**65% of Partner Center case loads were managed using granted tech.**

**1,512 engaged in leadership development.**

**696 clients accessed food bank services.**
The reach of both the LGBTQ+ community and the importance of technology extends far beyond borders. However, for many in the LGBTQ+ community, their lives are defined by the borders that either confine them into countries that criminalize their existence or shut them out from accessing safety or a better quality of life. That is why in 2022, LGBT Tech piloted its first international distribution of PowerOn technology to LGBTQ+ asylum seekers globally through our partnership with Safe Place International. Through years of work and building expertise, we understand the unique uses and reliance on technology by the LGBTQ+ community. Through our partnership with SPI, we are expanding this work internationally to include some of the most vulnerable members of our community, connecting them with life-saving devices.

PowerOn Technology Reach by Country
LGBT Tech granted technology to LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in 11 other countries this past year through an important partnership with Safe Place International. The following map shows the countries that received tech, and LGBT Tech’s reach by country.
SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS INTERNATIONALLY

Through LGBT Tech’s partnership with Safe Place International, PowerOn technology reached an international audience for the first time. This technology supported refugees and asylum seekers, who are some of the most vulnerable in our community. Many recipients responded sharing they would use the technology for connecting with community, sharing resources, and LGBTQ+ advocacy.

“How grantees are using PowerOn technology

When grantees were asked how they would use the technology they were granted by LGBT Tech, they shared the following responses.

- Social Media
- Communication
- Advocacy
- Skills
- Project
- Business
- Presentation

“My dream of running a safe house for rescue of the people who have been chased from home by either their partners or parents…”

—Safe Place International tech recipient

KEY TAKEAWAYS, SUCCESSES, AND CHALLENGES

Overall, 2022 was an exciting year for LGBT Tech and our partner centers. We look forward to continuing to grow our grants and expand our reach and support the LGBTQ+ community. However, it is important to remember and acknowledge that our community continues to face unprecedented legislative attacks, and we have our work cut out for us these upcoming years.

SPI PARTNERSHIP

The PowerOn tech grant reached an international population for the first time in 2022.
- 430 refugees and asylum seekers reached
- Had an impact in 11 countries in year one.

SOCIAL IMPACT

PowerOn social impact highlights from 2022:
- 410 LGBTQ+ elders reached
- 2X increase in those who found stable housing in the last four years

TELEHEALTH SUPPORT

Telehealth was a huge need for our community in 2022, and our technology grants delivered.
- Trans individuals in rural areas were able to access gender-affirming care
- Center members were able to access mental health services

“As the LGBTQIA+ community’s reliance on access to technology grows, so does PowerOn. As we continue to expand our reach into the community and deepen our understanding of the issues that our community faces, we continue to build and update the program, made possible thanks to valuable community feedback and continued support from PowerOn sponsors.”
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our achievements would not be possible without the support of our generous sponsors who continually invest in our work and program outreach.

CONTACT US www.poweronlgbt.org

FOLLOW US @Poweronprogram @Poweronprogram

We thank you for your continued support of our efforts to close the digital divide for the LGBTQ+ community.

PATHS
PATHS is a program to inspire and empower LGBTQ+ youth and young adults interested in careers in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) fields through storytelling by current LGBTQ+ STEAM professionals, and connection to the resources needed to pursue STEAM careers. LGBT Tech’s PATHS program offers grants and mentorship opportunities for students, and a web series featuring interviews with current LGBTQ+ STEAM professionals. Learn more at www.lgbtech.org/paths

DIGITAL NAVIGATOR
LGBT Tech’s Digital Navigator Program dismantles barriers to digital access and empowers LGBTQ+ communities through the FCC’s Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). By tapping into our PowerOn program’s vast network of LGBTQ+ partner centers, spanning 37 states and territories, the Digital Navigator Program aims to raise awareness and participation in ACP. Integrating PowerOn’s expertise in device provision, this program ensures ACP registrants are aware of device accessibility options. Together, through digital skills workshops, advocacy, and impactful reporting, LGBT Tech’s Digital Navigator Program is propelling digital equity and empowerment for the LGBTQ+ community.

XR LGBT
LGBT Tech is exploring the ways that extended reality, augmented reality, and virtual reality provide new opportunities for the LGBTQ+ community, and understand the risks associated with these developing technologies.

AI
LGBT Tech is exploring the implementation of artificial intelligence at the intersection state laws and cutting edge technology. Through use of AI, LGBT Tech is creating a state law tracker that flags anti-LGBTQ+ laws, and breaks down complex legal jargon into accessible vocabulary for any individual engaging the tracker. Our fundamental belief is that knowledge is power, and by empowering our community with accessible vocabulary, we are able to break barriers to to what is going on in our country’s states. We hope this results in more movement towards action that empowers and protects our community’s human rights.