“Men and women are harassed, beaten, subjected to sexual violence, even killed, because of who they are and whom they love...in some places, violence against the LGBT community is permitted by law and inflamed by public calls to violence; in others, it persists insidiously behind closed doors...These dangers are not “gay” issues. This is a human rights issue. Just as I was very proud to say the obvious more than 15 years ago in Beijing that human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights, let me say today that, human rights are gay rights and gay rights are human rights, once and for all.” – Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton

Global Equality Fund

Launched by Secretary Clinton in December 2011, the Global Equality Fund supports programs advancing the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons around the world with more than $3 million from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. As administrator and manager of the Fund, the Department of State is also pursuing partnerships with foreign governments, foundations, and corporations in this important effort.

Mechanisms of Assistance

Civil society organizations access funds through:

- **Requests for Proposals:** The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) conducts open competitions for proposals based on the bureau’s program areas and target countries and regions.

- **Small Grants:** Through the Department's embassies and consulates and in close coordination with partner governments, the Fund will support a select number of local civil society organizations with small grants to implement short term projects.

“Dignity for All”

“Dignity for All,” the Fund’s rapid response mechanism, aims to uphold the dignity and fundamental freedoms of the most at-risk and LGBT people worldwide. Building on DRL’s existing emergency assistance mechanisms for human rights defenders and NGOs, “Dignity for All” provides emergency and preventative assistance to civil society organizations under physical threat or unable to operate freely without serious harassment or threat of retaliation due to their work related to LGBT human rights issues. Implemented by a global consortium of organizations, “Dignity for All” enhances the capacity of organizations to respond to security concerns and enables advocates to respond quickly to events that signal a backsliding in human rights. Support will include emergency assistance to civil society groups and victims of abuse and small grants for advocacy initiatives as well as assistance to enable a long-term security plans.

**Programming Areas**

- Emergency funding for advocates, civil society organizations and LGBT people;
- Technical assistance in the areas of human rights documentation and legal assistance;
- Institutional capacity building and development;
- Protection from violence;
- Combating societal discrimination.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

The Fund currently supports programs that provide technical assistance and capacity building to local and national civil society groups. In sub-Saharan Africa, the Fund is supporting projects to enhance the ability of local groups to monitor, document and address human rights violations targeting LGBT individuals and communities. The Fund also plans to support programs that strengthen legal protections for LGBT people, including through efforts to decriminalize consensual same-sex conduct; protect LGBT people from violence, and address societal discrimination. The Fund will support groups around the globe including in the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Partners Committee

A Partners Committee comprised of Fund contributors will be established to advise the Department of State on the Fund's activities and focus. Contributors to the Global Equality Fund will also receive regular updates on project implementation.