

Causes in Common First Annual National Meeting

Causes in Common, the national coalition organized by The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City, bringing together reproductive justice and LGBT liberation movements, held our first annual national meeting in Chicago the day before the conference of SisterSong, a Coalition partner, which allowed a number of people to attend our conference in conjunction with their plans to attend SisterSong's meeting. With the Overbrook Foundation's support for the Coalition's work, we were able to subsidize a number of people's travel and accommodations for the meeting, which ensured a larger representation of Coalition partners than might have been possible otherwise. Seventy-seven participants attended the annual meeting on Wednesday, May 30, 2007.



Personal and professional relationships are at the heart of strengthening cross-movement work and coalition building. These relationships require innovative ways to cultivate understanding and trust among the many coalition partners. This first annual meeting was designed to help build the strong, intimate connections among people working towards related goals as well as those working closely geographically that bind this coalition together. Thus, the organizers of the meeting worked hard to provide as many small group encounters as possible, with the constitution of these groups paying heed to geographical connections or issue areas.



The Causes in Common staff created a fun and informative icebreaker in the form of a bingo game. As a strategy to cover a lot of thematic ground, the meeting was designed to intersperse fun exercises with large panel presentations and small group discussions, each intended to illuminate an aspect of the coalition building work.



The three panels briefed the participants on the national legislative landscape and statewide ballot briefings, introduced (for the first time for many attendees) the topic of assisted reproductive genetic technologies (ARGT), and shared lessons from the ground on examples of successful coalition work as well as challenges faced. The political briefings give crucial perspective on the work that many of these groups are doing on the ground in their local and regional environments.