



IT GETS BETTER®

50 STATES
50 GRANTS
5000 VOICES

2024–2025 CYCLE
IMPACT REPORT

Since the launch of **50 States. 50 Grants. 5000 Voices.** in 2022, **It Gets Better** has distributed more than \$1.3 million

in funding to student-led projects in schools and communities across the United States that help make life better for LGBTQ+ youth. From leadership summits and gender-inclusive libraries to rural Pride events and mentorship programs, we're putting power and funding directly into the hands of emerging young leaders.

We know that when LGBTQ+ youth have access to resources and the opportunity to lead, they don't just transform their schools and communities, they begin to see themselves as powerful agents of change. This work is a direct response to rising hostility,

censorship, and isolation facing queer youth across the country. Each project sends a message: *We're not waiting for permission. We're creating the world we need, right now.*

One project at a time, these students are reshaping what's possible in their schools, bringing us closer to the world we envision: one where all LGBTQ+ youth are free to live equally, connect to their communities, and know their power as individuals.

50 States. 50 Grants. 5000 Voices. is made possible with the generous support of American Eagle, Aerie, MAC VIVA GLAM, Humble Bundle, and Tumblr, with additional support from generous individual donors.

* In March 2025, we rebranded the program to **It Gets Better. Changemakers** to better reflect the current environment LGBTQ+ youth are navigating in the United States. Certain graphics and announcements might include this updated name. However, we will refer to the 2024–2025 cycle as *50 States. 50 Grants. 5000 Voices.* throughout this document.

GRANT MAKING

The beating heart of our program continues to be the outstanding LGBTQ+ student leaders, educators, and allies who have dedicated hours outside of AP tests and grading papers to transforming their schools and communities for the better. **During the 2024-2025 grant cycle, we distributed 25 grants up to \$10,000 – including 3 Queer Proms and Homecomings sponsored by MAC VIVA GLAM Fund – representing 20 of the United States, including Florida and Idaho for the first time.** Each grantee continues to impress with the diversity and uniqueness of their initiatives, aligning with five primary focus areas:

STORYTELLING + MEDIA

Offering diverse and meaningful outlets for LGBTQ+ youth to express themselves and see themselves represented in media. Projects included afterschool art programs, author mentorship workshops, community murals, and theater projects.

EVENTS

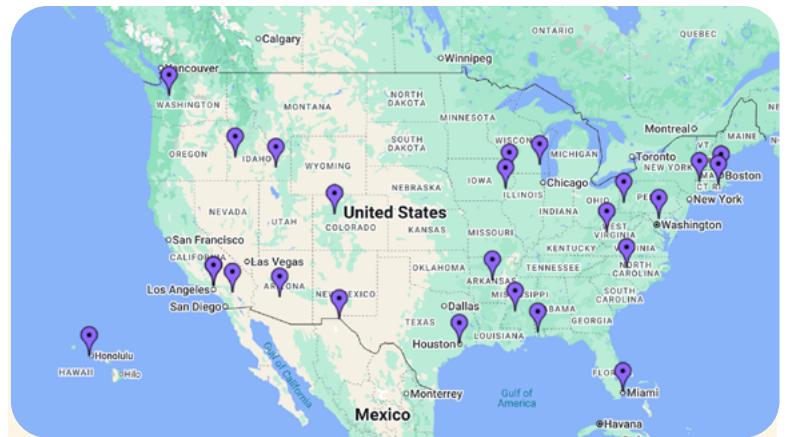
Organizing joyful and educational events that resonate with LGBTQ+ students. Projects featured youth empowerment summits, Pride celebrations, and LGBTQ+ proms, all designed to celebrate and uplift the community.projects.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Providing students and educators with the tools to become informed and confident advocates. Initiatives included developing educator resource hubs, mental health awareness campaigns, and even an opportunity for students to present at the United Nations.

GSAs + OTHER COMMUNITY SPACES

Creating affirming and safe environments where LGBTQ+ students can connect and build a sense of belonging. This included year long opportunities for GSA network connection, establishing gender-affirming closets, dedicated LGBTQ+ centers and rooms, and strengthening GSA networks.



The map above shows the distribution of our grantees across North America.

Grant projects funded during the 2024-2025 grant cycle directly impacted more than **15,500** students, with indirect impact (students who were aware of or exposed to projects but didn't participate) estimated at more than **21,000** students. Over and over in their reporting, grantees expressed the challenges they experienced in making their projects happen. In some cases, state laws threatened restrictions against funding inclusive libraries, GSA expansion, and gender neutral bathroom projects. Still, many students expressed concerns for something far more basic – their safety, and the added visibility accepting a grant from It Gets Better might bring to their schools. Despite facing fear, hatred and in many cases, less than supportive administrations, these incredible LGBTQ+ youth and their adult allies showed up daily with creativity, bravery, and drive, making for some truly life-changing work.



Photo from 2024-2025 Grantee-Alabama



50 STATES
50 GRANTS
5000 VOICES

2024-2025 GRANTEE SHOWCASE

We are proud to spotlight six outstanding grantees from the 2024-2025 grant cycle whose remarkable work exemplifies the impact and importance of 50 States. 50 Grants. 5000 Voices. Each of these initiatives reflects a deep commitment to fostering safe, supportive, and vibrant spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. Clockwise from top row: Alabama, California, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, and Wisconsin.



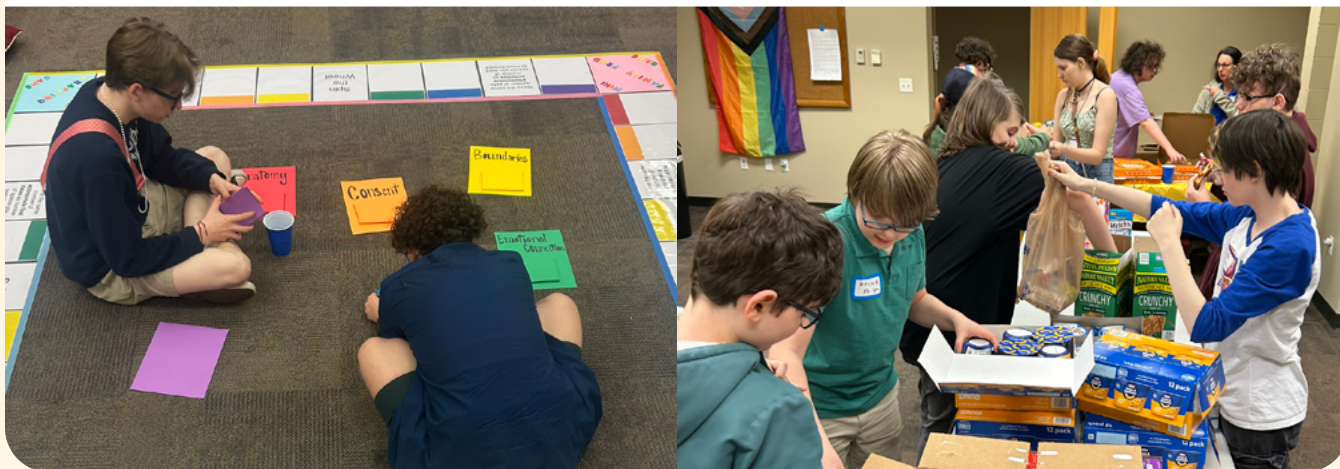
ALABAMA

Queer stories deserve to be accessible, inclusive, and read by queer youth. Despite rising political pushback forcing them to adapt, the LGBTQ+ youth of Pride Pages made sure their mission never strayed. These youth leaders collaborated to curate a collection of queer books to donate to supportive libraries and fill the Little Free Libraries they designed and built themselves to install throughout the community. Hundreds of books were purchased to distribute to the attendees of their queer prom – all with handwritten notes affixed on library checkout cards. Every student left the event knowing they are seen and they are loved. Their project culminated with Open Book, a community storytelling night that turned a local art gallery into a showcase of queer youth storytelling. This project empowered students to take “ownership of their stories and advocate for lasting change, even in the face of adversity.”



ARKANSAS

What topic does every LGBTQ+ young person want to talk about with their guardian? Did you guess... sex and dating? For a second year in a row, this grantee held their annual “Clutch Your Pearls” event, a game-show style event where four teams of youth and adults competed against each other in discussing various topics surrounding sexuality and safe dating. Embarrassment and learning – so high school! They hosted a Holiday Mental Health Workshop, an all-day mental health fair with professionals to give LGBTQ+ youth the tools and resources they need to navigate a particularly challenging time of the year. To make Pride season even more joyful, they developed the Pride Elves for students to create LGBTQ+ pride goodie bags to drop at houses around town displaying Pride flags or signs. “The youth LOVE this project because they like these little acts of kindness that bring joy, not only to the unsuspecting recipient, but also themselves.”



CALIFORNIA

The loud, diverse, and colorful community at this small arts high school in Los Angeles regularly supported their LGBTQ+ students through programming like National Coming Out Day, Pride events, and the Day of Silence. Educators at the school wanted to provide their students with one more joyful experience to round out their high school careers – a Queer Prom. With the National History Museum rented, catered dinner ordered for over 200 attendees, an LGBTQ+ DJ hired, and a few WeHo drag performers, the space was transformed into an explosion of queer joy. MAC makeup artists turned the stunning students into fabulous ones. For one brilliant night, students experienced a bespoke space created simply for them.



IDAHO

Ceiling tall windows illuminate the LGBTQ+ student safe space in this Boise high school's library in brilliant light. Powerfully, this space is not hidden away – it is impossible to miss, with its rainbow flag garlands, colorful books, and comfortable spaces adorned with students looking for a safe space to land. With the continued rise of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in Idaho, this student group took on the behemoth to create this essential space. When Idaho passed a book ban targeting queer stories, they added titles to their high school's library that highlighted LGBTQ stories along intersectional identities. The opening event for their new space hosted a conversation with author Aiden Thomas, who spoke with the students about his experience as a queer author. Aiden's books were among the 150+ titles added to the library. The students created a spreadsheet of the now 300+ titles that includes the identities represented, so students can always find a story like theirs.



FLORIDA

As their state continued their increasingly restrictive policies aimed at LGBTQ+ youth, students and organizations fought back. They would not allow critical information about identity, health, relationships, body image, and community become lost to the very people who needed it most. Created for and by LGBTQ+ youth, Taboo Talk with David is a groundbreaking digital content series that reflects the lived experiences of high school students in South Florida. Particular attention is paid to the Latine and Spanish-speaking community, making sure their specific needs are addressed and that content is available in dual languages. Each episode is paired with an interactive worksheet and discussion prompts, encouraging deep engagement with the topics in a safe digital environment. Taboo Talk has provided students with agency, visibility, and joy at a time when Florida students are being pushed into hiding. Students have access to critical information about their experiences that is being denied in schools. As a digital content series and accompanying education materials, this project is built to last and continue impacting LGBTQ+ youth in South Florida for years to come.



MARYLAND

The success of publishing a book, *Navigating the Margins*, last grant year only inspired this grantee to reach for the stars a second time. When exponentially more students applied to be a part of their author mentorship program, this grantee developed a “lite” version that was available digitally to students, including writing prompts aimed at cultivating young writers. More than a writing workshop, this program really opens students up to discussing the more challenging aspects of their identities in a creative and supportive environment. Their stories were read aloud at book readings across Maryland and Boston. Some of the proudest moments for students involved introducing the community to the experiences of marginalized young people, and provide a better understanding of their stories.



"We are hopeful that the promotion of inclusivity that this community space and the other initiatives has pursued will help further Boise High's commitment to welcoming all students and stand as a lasting reminder to future generations that LGBTQ+ students are loved and can thrive at school"

– Idaho

"As one student shared, 'This project gave us books, but more importantly it brought a new voice to our school and the community.' Thanks to the support of It Gets Better, Pride Pages succeeded in building something more powerful than a bookshelf: it built belonging"

– Alabama

"Students went from worried and crying to empowered. They went from being isolated in just our group and networked to expand their horizons. So many students made new friends in other groups that they have now joined. Through all of this one of the best things was that the younger students who were quiet spoke up and actually joined the principal's student leadership team and went to trainings. Now they have a voice!! Thank you so very much"

– Pennsylvania

"LGBTQIA+ youth felt seen, respected, supported, empowered and loved. We are slowly starting to make a difference in the lives of LGBTQIA+ youth in our community and we are excited for the future. We believe the youth can change the world, one small town at a time"

– North Carolina

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

To support the 2024-2025 cycle of *50 States. 50 Grants.*, It Gets Better entered into a hugely successful partnership with Tumblr. By working directly with Tumblr to target desired regions for grant applications as well as students and teachers interested in activism, the arts and education, we were able to generate nearly the same number of applications for our 2024-2025 grant cycle as we'd done in previous cycles with an aggressive ad spend. Tumblr, with pro bono support valued at more than \$200K and a guaranteed **5M impressions** across a variety of custom posts, ads, blogs, and more, resulted in us receiving applications from two states that had previously eluded us: Idaho and Florida.

On September 12, 2024, It Gets Better officially announced the grant recipients via [PR Newswire](#) and through an exclusive article on [Advocate.com](#). Individual grant recipients had their projects profiled through articles in [Idaho Daily](#), [CBS News Colorado](#), and CBS News' "[Great Kids](#)" segment in Hartford, CT for a total UMV of **256M**. Tumblr also blasted news about our grant recipients to its email list of more than **11 million** people.

SOCIAL MEDIA

To complement our outreach efforts, It Gets Better engaged a multichannel approach, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Throughout the promotional period, the 45 published posts garnered:

- **287,118** Impressions
- **6,415** Engagements
- **1,211** Post Link Clicks

50 States. 50 Grants. 5000 Voices. Landing Page

[50States50Grants.com](#) served as a hub for interested applicants to learn more about the grant initiative and gain inspiration for their proposed projects. Additionally, targeted ads and links on social media platforms including LinkedIn, Tumblr and Instagram drove interested applicants directly to our application on Submittable and to our custom blog post highlighting past grant recipients on [itgetsbetter.org](#).



Photo from 2024-2025 Grantee-Hawaii

[ItGetsBetter.org](#) Meet the Grantees Blog

March 2024-June 2025: **26,127 Visitors**

Website Ranking of most Visited Pages on
[ItGetsBetter.org](#): **4th out of 3,288**



Photo from 2024-2025 Grantee-California



Photo from 2024-2025 Grantee-Alabama

OUR PARTNERS

The fund that supported this program was made possible through generous financial donations from our partners at *American Eagle*, *Aerie*, *MAC VIVA GLAM*, *Humble Bundle*, and *Tumblr* with additional support from generous individual donors.

AMERICAN EAGLE

aerie

MAC
VIVA GLAM

Humble Bundle

tumblr

WHAT COMES NEXT

We are honored to continue the life-changing work of *50 States. 50 Grants. 5000 Voices.* for a third cycle. As part of our ongoing mission to reach LGBTQ+ youth in all 50 states, we're proud to share that, for the first time, this grant cycle includes projects from Florida and Idaho – bringing our total reach to at least one grant in 47 states. **By the end of the 2024-2025 cycle, we will have distributed more than \$1.3 million in grants** to dozens of middle and high schools and local nonprofits, ensuring that communities nationwide are safe and supportive for LGBTQ+ students. Hundreds of students have shared how these grants have empowered them to build fully realized, authentic, and proud communities across North America. Supporting LGBTQ+ youth across the country through this program is not just a goal – it's a dream come true for our organization. Together, we are truly creating a world where *it gets better.*



Photo from 2024-2025 Grantee-Hawaii

IT GETS BETTER[®]

50 STATES

50 GRANTS

5000

VOICES