

Upcoming Events

Colorado Gold Rush

February 17-20, 2005
Lakewood, CO

NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling will keynote at this national transgender conference held by the Gender Identity Center in CO.

University of Wyoming

February 21, 2004
Laramie, WY

NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling will be speaking at the University of Wyoming.

NCTE Needs

Do you have a laptop computer (less than three years old) that you would like to donate to NCTE?

Do you have frequent flyer miles that you are not using?

Contact NCTE at 202.639.6332 or ncte@nctequality.org about making a donation. Donations are tax-deductible. 202.639.6332

Also, NCTE is looking for skilled graphic designers who are willing to donate their advanced skills for publications, fact sheets, event invites, and other miscellaneous items. Please contact NCTE 202.639.6332 or ncte@nctequality.org to find out how to volunteer your time.

Last Chance to Become a Founding Member of NCTE

December 31, 2004 marks the last day you can become Founding Members of the National Center for Transgender Equality. Founding Members hold a special place in the transgender movement by supporting initial efforts to build the only Washington, DC based organization focusing on issues of national importance to trans people.

To become a Founding Member go to <http://www.nctequality.org/donate.asp>.

When you become a Founding Member of the National Center for Transgender Equality, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to fight discrimination and violence against transgender people. Every donation ensures that transgender voices will be heard in Washington and around the country.

Solidify your commitment to trans rights. Go to www.nctequality.org/donate.asp by December 31, 2004 and become a Founding Member of the National Center for Transgender Equality.

NCTE Announces Washington, DC Lobby Day for 2005

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) announces the first NCTE-sponsored Washington Lobby Day, to be held on March 14, 2005. This day will provide an opportunity for transgender people and allies to visit members of Congress to educate them on transgender issues.

Washington Lobby Day will be preceded by a day-long training and strategy session on Sunday, March 13. On this day, experienced professional advocates will train participants to effectively educate Congress on transgender issues. Participants will also be briefed on trans-related federal policy. This session is open to everyone who wishes to learn how to educate Congress on transgender issues.

Mara Keisling, NCTE Executive Director, spoke on the significance of the Washington Lobby Day and training session: "Transgender people can be included in important legislation to be introduced next year, but first we must educate members of Congress on the necessity of such legislation and its impact on our communities. The only way we will be successful is if transgender and allied constituents meet with their members and put a face on discrimination and violence."

Because not everyone can travel to Washington, NCTE has also scheduled our first 2005 in-district Congressional education effort, Congressional Education Week, for March 21-25. During this week, transgender people and allies who are unable to participate in Lobby Day, or who would like to schedule follow-up meetings, can visit their members of Congress during the Spring Congressional recess in their home districts. This will be the third in-district Congressional education effort held by NCTE. NCTE provides participants everything necessary for effective lobby visits, including training via conference call, handouts, and briefing documents.

"Following the success of our two congressional education efforts in 2004, we are looking forward to another opportunity to educate members of Congress on the needs of their transgender constituents," said Caeden Dempsey, NCTE Field Director. "This program allows more people from around the country to participate in the legislative process by eliminating the need to travel to DC. If you have participated in our past efforts, we encourage you to participate again in 2005. If you have never participated in Congressional Education Week, please join us this time."

Participants in Lobby Day should arrive by Sunday, March 13 at 10am, and should plan to leave Monday evening or on Tuesday. Participants should sign up in advance to allow us to schedule a meeting with your legislator(s) and, if you want, to assign an experienced advocate to attend this meeting with you.

To learn more or to sign-up for Washington Lobby Day or Congressional Education Week, visit www.nctequality.org/events.asp or contact NCTE Field Director Caeden Dempsey at cdempsey@nctequality.org or 202.639.6332.

NCTE would also like to encourage those who cannot attend NCTE's Washington Lobby Day to consider attending the Lobby Days organized by the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC), to be held May 18-20, 2005. More information is available at www.ntac.org.

Air Travel Tips for Transgender People

Many trans people may be anxious about utilizing air travel this holiday season because of heightened airport security. NCTE hopes to lessen this anxiety with its recently released *Air Travel Tips for Transgender People*, a great resource for holiday travelers. Topics addressed in this guide include identification issues, dealing with airline and security personnel, luggage and clothing, and security expectations.

NCTE was motivated to provide travel guidelines following the implementation of a new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) policy directing agents at security checkpoints to pat-down passengers wearing bulky clothing items. TSA policy regarding pat-downs is included in the *Air Travel Tips* guide, as well as instructions on how to report misconduct by a TSA agent. NCTE urges trans people to properly prepare for air travel and to be aware of their rights as passengers.

You can view NCTE's Air Travel Tips at www.nctequality.org/travel.asp.

New IRS Policy Allows for Surgery Write-Offs

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently concluded an individual may deduct expenses for sex reassignment surgery as a necessary medical expense.

In 2001, Rhiannon O'Donnabhain underwent surgery after being diagnosed with gender dysphoria. O'Donnabhain sought to claim this surgery as a tax deduction but was initially denied. The Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (www.glad.org) represented O'Donnabhain in her successful IRS appeal. The implications of this decision, and the recognition of surgery as medically necessary, are promising for members of the trans community who pay for necessary medical treatment out of pocket. NCTE applauds O'Donnabhain and GLAD on this victory.

It is important to note that, while some trans people do elect to undergo medical transition, many within the trans community do not. Still, this decision is about more than legitimizing surgery. This ruling is another step forward to providing trans people equal treatment under the law. Such a decision has the power to positively influence other policy areas, within the government and private spheres, as well as public opinion.

Spring Internship Opportunities

NCTE has internship opportunities for Spring '05. We welcome applications from both students and non-students. We will work with a student's university to assure college credit is received. It is best if interns are based in the DC-metro area.

NCTE interns will be responsible for: writing and editing press releases, OpEds, and newsletters; organizing trainings and town hall meetings around the U.S.; scheduling speaking engagements and trainings conducted by NCTE staff; creating organizing and educational materials; tracking local and federal legislation; providing assistance to transgender activists in both in-district and DC lobby visits; and general office support.

Specialized internships are also available in the following areas:

Communications Intern:

The Communications Intern will work on media relations for NCTE. This includes writing press releases and OpEds, making press calls, setting up interviews with the media and assisting local transgender activists and organizations with their media needs.

Field Intern:

The Field Intern will work with the Field Director on planning trainings and town hall meetings around the US. This intern will also schedule speaking engagements and trainings conducted by NCTE staff and will create organizing and educational materials that will assist local organizing efforts.

Legislative Intern:

The Legislative Intern will track local and federal legislation that impacts transgender people, educate policy makers on transgender issues, and assist transgender activists in both in-district and DC lobby visits.

Please contact Caeden Dempsey at cdempsey@nctequality.org, or 202.639.6332 with questions or to submit a resume.