Since 1987, ACF has granted close to $6.5 million dollars to more than 300 grassroots organizations working on social change in Central Appalachia. Many of those grants were for general operating support, as well as special projects, and over $100,000 of that funding was for technical assistance.

In 2006, ACF made history in Appalachia with the establishment of our LGBTQ Fund. Its purpose is to develop and strengthen resources for LGBTQ organizing efforts in Central Appalachian communities. ACF had been funding rural and urban LGBTQ people and communities making change since the beginning, but this initiative was designed specifically to support LGBTQ organizational building, strengthening institutional resources, and capacity building for LGBTQ organizing efforts. ACF also seeks applications from new and emerging organizations, those working with LGBTQ youth, and networking efforts to connect LGBTQ work throughout Central Appalachia.

Over the years we have made over $26,000 in LGBTQ-focused grants to 13 organizations in the region.

More than a decade later, ACF stands strong as one of few LGBTQ Funds in existence across the entire US South—not just Appalachia.

Out In the South: Central Appalachia

In 2016, ACF partnered with The STAY Project and LGBTQ communities across the region for the Out in the South: Central Appalachia Project.

This project is a part of the broader Out in the South Initiative coordinated by the Funders for LGBTQ Issues as a strategy to increase funding and deepen fundraising strategies and relationships for LGBTQ communities across the South.

So far, we have hosted four state-based gatherings and a regional gathering for community members to come together and define their needs and share strategies they’ve used to survive and thrive in their communities.

The projects goals are to share the information we’ve learned at the gatherings, deepen our networks and identify and leverage resources for supporting and sustaining LGBTQ organizations and individuals in our region.
• The Pride End of Summer Festival used public visibility to promote positive social change through the interaction between the local LGBTQ community and the community at large, opening doors of communication, fostering understanding, and opening hearts to acceptance of the LGBTQ community (Pride Community Center of the Tri-Cities, TN)

• Caritas House operates an emergency shelter, education and prevention services for people with HIV/AIDS who are homeless or in transition. Through this assistance, they hope to address the most immediate needs of their clients, enabling them to live with dignity and security, as all people are entitled to do. (Caritas House, Morgantown, WV)

• The Masters of Social Work hosted a seminar at the University of Tennessee — LGBTQ+: Mind, Body, Soul — focusing on issues pertaining to mental, physical, and emotional wellness. This seminar aimed to give people in the LGBTQ+ community the tools to help them stay healthy in every capacity. (University of Tennessee’s Masters of Social Work Program, Knoxville, TN)

• For nearly 20 years, Idyll Dandy Arts has cared for 200 acres of land where they run a gardening internship program to teach sustainable agricultural skills. The group also provides an artist residency and retreat, a yearly queer music festival, a yearly feminist skill share, and smaller workshops, performances, and events. Although LGBTQ people have often been cut off from rural life, Idyll Dandy helps LGBTQ people connect with rural Appalachia’s many gifts. (Idyll Dandy Arts, Dowelltown, TN)