

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEW EQUALITY ILLINOIS FIELD OFFICES EXTEND REACH OF  
LGBT ADVOCACY**

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois today announced the opening of two field offices in key regions of the state, enhancing the reach of Illinois’ oldest, largest and most effective LGBT advocacy organization.

Equality Illinois’ statewide commitment has continuously expanded over its 21–year history, working in Springfield with a bipartisan team of professional lobbyists, aligning with local communities to pass non-discrimination ordinances in numerous parts of the state and participating in dozens of meetings throughout Illinois every year to educate the public and the media about LGBT issues.

With the addition of the two offices, to be staffed by experienced field organizers, the organization is strengthening its ability to engage at the grassroots level, respond to local developments, build coalitions and grow the ranks of supporters.

“The movement for equal and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans by necessity must be a statewide struggle. The experiences and voices of residents outside of Chicago need to be heard and shared with their local and state officials,” said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois.

“From our headquarters in Chicago, we have always been committed to representing the needs of the LGBT population in the whole state. Yet our reach has been somewhat limited simply by geography. This addition of two field offices will help empower LGBT communities outside of Chicago,” Cherkasov said.

One of the new offices will be located in Chicago’s western suburbs and be responsible for the outer collar counties and northern Illinois. The second new office will be based in central Illinois and work on issues and outreach in the central and southern parts of the state. (The exact locations will be announced once leases are signed.)

The new organizers will report to Caroline Staerk, the Director of Field Programs for Equality Illinois. She will continue to make frequent visits throughout the state, as will other Equality Illinois staff members, including Cherkasov and Randy Hannig, Director of Public Policy, who spearheads the statewide political work.

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