



**EQUALITY
ILLINOIS**

PRESS RELEASE

Founded in 1991, Equality Illinois is the state's oldest, largest and most effective organization advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2014

UNITED BECOMES EXCLUSIVE AIRLINE FOR EQUALITY ILLINOIS

CHICAGO – Two major Illinois institutions today welcomed a unique partnership, as Equality Illinois announced that Chicago-based United Airlines is becoming the Exclusive Airline for the state's oldest and largest advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans.

The partnership makes United the first choice for air travel by Equality Illinois.

"We are the first statewide LGBT equality group in the country to enter into such an Exclusive Airline arrangement," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "That we are able to do that with United, our own Illinois-based carrier that is also an industry leader in its LGBT workplace initiatives, is especially meaningful."

"We're proud to launch this great partnership with Equality Illinois – an organization committed to supporting the diversity that reflects United's customers, employees and 'Working Together' culture," said Nene Foxhall, the airline's executive vice president of communications and government affairs.

United was the recipient of the 2013 Equality Illinois Business Leadership Award at the annual Equality Illinois Gala last February, a recognition given to companies that demonstrate remarkable vision, courage, and leadership in the effort to achieve full equality for LGBT individuals in Illinois.

"United was one of the earliest U.S. corporations to prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and, later, gender identity," Cherkasov said when announcing the award last February. "The company has also continually earned a perfect score on the annual Corporate Equality Index."

Cherkasov said that under the "Exclusive Airline" agreement, Equality Illinois staff, board members and key supporters will be turning to United for flights to business meetings, and United will be supporting the ongoing work of Equality Illinois to secure full LGBT equality.

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