

General Information

- **What is the ACLU of West Virginia and why is it hosting the summit?**

As one of the nation's oldest defenders of liberty, the American Civil Liberties Union strives to extend the promise of the Bill of Rights to each and every person. Historically, the ACLU has focused much of its work on marginalized communities including LGBTQ+ people. Since the ACLU took its first LGBTQ case in 1936, we have been at the forefront of this struggle in the courtrooms, in the legislatures, and in the streets. In rural states like West Virginia, queer youth often find themselves feeling isolated and cut off from the LGBTQ community. The primary goal of the Appalachian Queer Youth Summit is to break down those barriers of isolation and enable the next generation of LGBTQ+ activists to come together.

- **Where will the Appalachian Queer Youth Summit be held?**

The camp will be held outside Charleston, WV. Participants will be staying in a cabin with suite-style rooms.

- **What are the dates of the 2021 Summit?**

The 2021 Summit will run from late morning July 29 to mid-day on August 2nd.

- **Who is eligible?**

The summit is open to West Virginia high school incoming juniors and seniors (students who will be juniors and seniors in the 2020, 2021 school year) who identify as LGBTQ+ or come from an LGBTQ+ family and have a desire to learn how to organize and advocate for their community in West Virginia.

- **What is the cost for participants? What will be provided and what will participants need to supply?**

The summit is FREE for all participants. Lodging and meals will be provided at no charge to the participants. Participants will be asked to bring linens for the room (sheets, blankets, pillow, towels) - if this is not possible, accommodations can be made to ensure all can participate and have their needs met.

We recognize that some participants may have to travel a great distance to participate in the camp. We may be able to provide assistance with travel expenses for participants - please indicate this on your application where prompted (this will not factor into choosing participants) and we will do our best to accommodate all requests.

Application

- **How do I apply?**

An online application is available. If you are unable to complete this application because of internet access or other constraints, please contact Mollie Kennedy at (304) 290-4484 or mkennedy@acluwv.org for a physical application or to discuss other options.

- **When is the application deadline?**

There is no official deadline for applications, but spots at the summit are limited, so applications received before April 30th will be given priority.

- **When will I hear back about my application?**

Participants whose applications are selected will be contacted for a brief interview to learn more about you (online/over the phone depending on preference).

Safety and Security

- **What about COVID?**

Safety of AQYS participants is our top priority. The Governor's reopening plan includes resuming operations of summer camps with COVID guidance based on the CDC's recommendations. Due to the fast rollout of vaccines in West Virginia, we are hopeful that we will be able to safely hold an in-person camp. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, seek advice and best practices from public health experts, and keep all participants and families informed of any changes.

- **How do I know my child will be safe?**

The ACLU-WV takes the safety of summit participants very seriously. We have taken measures to ensure the well-being of all participants:

-Summit staff and volunteers who are responsible for camp participants are composed of ACLU-WV staff, board members, and community leaders who are members of the LGBTQ+ community or committed allies. All have been through a background check process.

-Summit staff includes a licensed mental health professional and nurse (able to distribute medication if needed).

-Procedures are in place for evacuation or emergency plans for fire or severe weather. Staff members are trained to follow these plans.

-Participants will be provided with a list of contact numbers for all staff, and connected through a message system for announcements and other needs.

Other Questions?

If you have further questions, please contact ACLU-WV Community Outreach Director Mollie Kennedy at (304) 290-4484 or mkennedy@acluwv.org.