Center for Black Equity Announces 2026 BE. Gala Honorees

October 3 celebration in Washington, DC, will recognize leadership, advocacy, artistry, and service advancing Black LGBTQ+ communities



Center for Black Equity's 2026 awards will be presented during the BE. Gala on Oct. 3 in Washington.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 16, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The Center for Black Equity announced 13 of its 2026 honorees, continuing a longstanding tradition of recognizing distinguished Black LGBTQ+ individuals and those who champion Black LGBTQ+ communities.

The honorees will receive awards recognizing extraordinary leadership, advocacy, and service across civil rights, public health, the arts, media, entrepreneurship, and community life. The awards will be presented Saturday, Oct. 3, during the 2026 BE. Gala in Washington. The recipient of the BE. Icon Award, CBE's people's choice award, will be announced during the gala.

The Center for Black Equity's awards are deeply rooted in the organization's history. Several were first presented during DC Black Pride and carried the DC Black Pride Awards name. As DC Black Pride is a program of the Center for Black Equity, those recognitions remain part of CBE's legacy and its continuing commitment to celebrate excellence, leadership, and service within Black LGBTQ+ communities.

The 2026 Center for Black Equity award honorees are:

Courtney Snowden — Welmore Cook Advocacy & Service Award
Clover Barnes — Ernest Hopkins Public Health Leadership Award
Nikki Alexander — Unsung Hero Award
Darryl G. Moore — Center for Black Equity Leadership Award
The Freelux Project — Center for Black Equity Small Business Award
Tori Cooper — Earline Budd Transgender Leadership Award

Bishop Steven R. Sawyer — Bishop Kwabena Rainey Cheeks Spiritual & Community Leadership Award
Reverend Carmarion D. Anderson-Harvey — Bishop Kwabena Rainey Cheeks Spiritual & Community Leadership Award
Monroe Alise — Trans Power in Media Award
Justin N. Stewart — National Black Pride Image Award
Marlene McNeese — Curtis L. Etherly Jr. Ally Award
Venton Jones — Eleanor Holmes Norton Civil Rights & Justice Award
In Our Own Voices, Inc. — Ruth Ellis Community Impact Award

The BE. Icon Award will also be presented during the gala. Selected through a public vote, the people's choice award recognizes a Black LGBTQ+ figure whose influence, visibility and impact resonate with the community. The 2026 recipient will be revealed during the Oct. 3 celebration.

The 2026 honorees become part of a legacy of recognition spanning more than three decades. Past recipients include trailblazers and community leaders such as Ruth Ellis, Earline Budd, Ron Simmons, Wanda Alston, Rayceen Pendarvis, A. Cornelius Baker, E. Lynn Harris, Bishop Kwabena Rainey Cheeks, Tracey Africa Norman and David Johns. Across generations, CBE's awards have recognized those whose advocacy, creativity, service and leadership have strengthened Black LGBTQ+ communities and helped move them forward. This year's honorees carry that legacy forward through work that advances health and civil rights, strengthens community institutions, expands representation, creates economic opportunity and preserves the culture and stories of Black LGBTQ+ people. Awards to Be Presented at the 2026 BE. Gala

The 2026 Center for Black Equity awards will be presented during the BE. Gala on Saturday, Oct. 3, at Conrad Washington, DC. The evening begins at 6 p.m. and will bring together community leaders, advocates, artists and allies for a celebration of Black LGBTQ+ brilliance, leadership and liberation.

The gala's host committee is co-chaired by Carmen J. Neely, co-founder, president and CEO of Harlem Pride, and Letoi Williams, deputy director of volunteer leadership at the Human Rights Campaign.

Individual tickets are $250 and include dinner and two drink tickets. Reserved tables for eight are $2,000. Premier tables for eight are $2,500 and include premium seating near the stage.

Sponsorship opportunities and advertising in the BE. Gala program are also available. Full-page advertisements are $500, and half-page advertisements are $250. The program advertising deadline is Friday, Sept. 18.

For tickets, sponsorship opportunities, program advertising and additional information about the BE. Gala, visit centerforblackequity.org/gala.

For more information about the Center for Black Equity awards, their history and past recipients, visit centerforblackequity.org/awards.

About the Center for Black Equity

The Center for Black Equity works to advance economic, health and social equity for Black LGBTQ+ communities. Through a global network of individuals, allies, community organizations and Prides, the organization promotes health and wellness, economic empowerment, equal rights and community self-determination.

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