# At times like this, you find out who your real friends are: corporates pull out of Pride sponsorships in the US



Data from Gravity Research reveals a concerning trend: 39 percent of brand executives plan to reduce their spending on Pride-related marketing in 2025, a significant rise from just 9 percent the previous year. This downturn suggests that corporate support for LGBTQ+ events is not only diminishing but is being replaced by a cautious approach, particularly among larger companies that fear potential backlash from political sectors opposed to LGBTQ+ inclusivity. Kendall Seketa, chief strategy officer of Gravity Research, describes the hesitation as a direct consequence of increased political pressures, particularly under the recent US administration, which has significantly affected companies that are federal contractors.

The repercussions of this corporate retreat are most keenly felt among LGBTQ+ creators who traditionally rely on partnerships during Pride Month. Many influencers have reported a significant decrease in brand collaboration. For instance, lesbian creators Ashley and Malori Anthony observed their sponsorship revenue plummet from nearly £30k in 2024 to just over £2k thus far in 2025. Similarly, Alysse Dalessandro noted a sharp drop in partnerships, signing only one deal this June, compared to multiple collaborations in previous years.

A broader look at various Pride events across the United States shows an even starker picture. In Philadelphia, while some local sponsorships remain, major names are conspicuously absent, reflecting a nationwide trend that has seen corporations like Anheuser-Busch and Target cut ties with Pride events. Reports indicate that significant budget shortfalls are emerging in well-known festivals such as those in San Francisco and NYC, where losses range between £150k to over £550k due to the withdrawal of key sponsors. As Densil R. Porteous, executive director of Stonewall Columbus, put it, the withdrawal of long-standing corporate partners is 'a little bit heartbreaking'.

Yet amid these challenges, community resilience is evident. Many organizations are pivoting towards grassroots funding and local partnerships to ensure Pride events can still occur. Pittsburgh Pride, for example, is proceeding with its festival despite significant losses in corporate sponsorship, encouraging local engagement to bolster attendance and visibility.

As the political climate continues to influence corporate decisions, LGBTQ+ creators are increasingly seeking alternative income streams to navigate the current landscape. Many are diversifying their efforts by engaging in affiliate marketing or launching new business ventures. Christopher Rhodes, a trans creator who previously enjoyed a rich array of sponsorships, has adopted a proactive approach by reaching out to brands himself - a shift from the laid-back approach he had previously enjoyed.

Some experts suggest that companies that persist in their support could cultivate a deep sense of loyalty among consumers who feel sidelined by mainstream marketing trends. Raul Rios, head of strategy for a creative agency, remarks that this moment creates a unique vacuum for brands that remain committed to their LGBTQ+ audiences, suggesting they could emerge as champions for inclusivity during a time when it is most needed.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://digiday.com/media/pride-but-no-budget-lgbtq-creators-hit-by-ad-spend-drop/?utm_campaign=digidaydis&utm_medium=rss&utm_source=general-rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2025/05/30/pride-march-festival-philadelphia-sponsors> - Philadelphia's annual Pride weekend is experiencing notable changes in sponsorship, reflecting a nationwide trend where corporations are reconsidering their support for LGBTQ+ events. While Philly Pride 365's festivities still feature over three dozen sponsors, including NRG, Penn Medicine, and the Philadelphia Union, the event is missing some prominent corporate names. The nonprofit Galaei, previously serving as the fiscal sponsor, recently withdrew its support. This shift comes amid broader corporate pullbacks in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitments. According to Gravity Research, 39% of U.S. companies are reducing their involvement in external Pride Month activities in response to increasing anti-DEI pressures. Organizers like Philly Pride 365 and some corporations declined to comment on this evolving situation. Despite the sponsorship shake-up, Philadelphia's Pride remains one of the largest LGBTQ+ celebrations in the country.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/1f41c6bc5f61dc96fbfb34ca66fb18b3> - In 2025, major U.S. Pride events are facing significant financial challenges due to a widespread withdrawal of corporate sponsorships. Organizations like San Francisco Pride, KC Pride, and NYC Pride reported budget gaps ranging from $200,000 to $750,000 as major companies such as Comcast, Anheuser-Busch, Diageo, PepsiCo, and Nissan reduced or ended support. This trend is partially attributed to political shifts under President Trump's administration, rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments, and consumer fatigue with corporate activism on social and political issues. Some corporations have opted to donate anonymously to avoid public backlash. Meanwhile, certain Pride groups have themselves severed ties with companies like Meta and Target over discontinued diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Despite budget cuts affecting amenities and entertainment, core Pride celebrations continue in cities such as San Francisco, New York, and Boston under themes emphasizing resistance and perseverance. Grassroots and community donations are helping bridge funding gaps, illustrating increased public support in the face of waning corporate backing.
4. <https://www.axios.com/local/pittsburgh/2025/05/30/pittsburgh-pride-sponsor-pullback> - Despite a decline in corporate sponsorship, Pittsburgh Pride is moving forward with its annual festival and parade, expected to attract around 200,000 participants. Organizers are urging the LGBTQ+ community to attend in greater numbers in response to new federal policies under President Trump's administration, which have targeted diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Jeff Freedman, long-time organizer and grand marshal, emphasized the importance of visibility amid these challenges. This year sees a notable reduction in national and local sponsors, amounting to a loss of tens of thousands of dollars. According to Gravity Research, 39% of corporations nationwide are reducing their Pride Month engagements, a sharp increase from last year's 9%. Despite fewer corporate participants, organizers invite all to show support by joining Sunday's parade. The event will begin at Liberty Avenue and 11th Street, culminating at Allegheny Commons Park West. The weekend festivities include a Pride Prom, Kiki Ball, and events hosted by local LGBTQ+ organizations like TransYOUniting, QBurgh, Proud Haven, and Trans Pride PGH. Additional details, including vendor lists, schedules, and shuttle information, are available online.
5. <https://www.axios.com/local/columbus/2025/05/27/stonewall-pride-march-sponsors-drop-out-dei> - Several major sponsors, including Anheuser-Busch, have withdrawn their support from the 2025 Columbus Pride events organized by Stonewall Columbus, significantly impacting the financial landscape of the celebration. The sponsorship losses amount to over $100,000, roughly 20% of the required budget, according to executive director Densil R. Porteous. This trend reflects a broader national rollback in corporate commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), often influenced by political pressures. Anheuser-Busch’s departure, after decades of partnership, was described as "a little bit heartbreaking" by Porteous. Despite these setbacks, many partners remain supportive, and the event—scheduled for June 13-14 under the theme "United in Power"—is still expected to draw approximately 700,000 attendees. Stonewall Columbus continues to function as a year-round community center and remains committed to highlighting inclusion and unity through Pride.
6. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/04/22/bud-light-brand-identity-dylan-mulvaney/> - Bud Light's partnership with transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney sparked significant backlash, highlighting the challenges brands face when attempting to shift their image. Conservative leaders called for boycotts, and social media was flooded with videos of consumers destroying Bud Light products. The controversy underscores the difficulties in evolving a brand's identity, especially when it involves sensitive cultural issues. Experts suggest that while brands may aim for inclusivity, they must be prepared for potential alienation of parts of their consumer base. The incident also reflects the broader political climate, with rising anti-transgender legislation and sentiments influencing consumer reactions.