



Champaign County Mental Health Board (CCMHB) Study Session Agenda **Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 5:45PM**

This session will be held in person at the Shields-Carter Room of the Scott M. Bennett Administrative Center, 102 East Main Street, Urbana, IL 61801. Members of the public may attend in person or watch the study session live through this link: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81393675682> Meeting ID: 813 9367 5682

- I. Call to order**
- II. Roll call**
- III. Approval of Agenda***
- IV. Public Participation/Agency Input** *See below for details.***
- V. Chairperson's Comments – Molly McLay**
- VI. Staff Comments – Leon Bryson, Shandra Summerville**

- VII. STUDY SESSION: "Resources and Concerns of LGBTQIA+ Community Members"**

Joshua Gavel, Uniting Pride

Bio, Agency Information, and Additional Feedback are included (pages 3-18)

Darya Shahgheibi, GCAP

Bio and Agency Information are included (pages 19-36)

Justin Michael Hendrix, HitNHomeBoy

Bio and Agency Information are included (pages 37-42)

Jaya Kolisetty or other agency representative, RACES

Bios and brief Agency Information are included (pages 43-44)

The packet also includes the following, to support this discussion:

Responses to Anonymous Survey (pages 45-56)

Additional Comments from Community Members (pages 57-58)

988 Option 3 Service Updates (pages 59-62)

LGBTQ Equality by State (pages 63-66) from lgbtmap.org/equality-maps

- VIII. Public Participation/Agency Input** *See below for details.***

IX. Board Announcements and Input

X. Adjournment

***Public input may be given virtually or in person. If the time of the meeting is not convenient, you may communicate with the Board by emailing stephanie@ccmhb.org or leon@ccmhb.org any comments for us to read aloud during the meeting. The Chair reserves the right to limit individual time to five minutes and total time to twenty minutes. All feedback is welcome. The Board does not respond directly but may use input to inform future actions. Agency representatives and others providing input which might impact Board actions should be aware of the [Illinois Lobbyist Registration Act, 25 ILCS 170/1](#), and take appropriate [steps to be in compliance with the Act](#). For accessible documents or assistance with any portion of the packet, [contact us](#) (leon@ccmhb.org).*

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Presenter Bio

Joshua Gavel is a dedicated advocate and community leader who has served Uniting Pride in multiple roles over the past 2.5 years, including Operations Manager, Associate Director, and now Interim Executive Director. Through collaborative leadership, he has seen the strengthening of the organization's programs, partnerships, and advocacy across East Central Illinois. A Champaign County native, Josh brings experience in nonprofit management, development, public education, and grassroots organizing, and is committed to building a more just and joyful future for LGBTQ+ communities.

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UNITING PRIDE

unitingpride.org



What is Uniting Pride

History

- Incorporated in Jan 2010
- Launched Champaign Urbana Pride Fest in August 2010
- One of only 4 brick and mortar LGBTQ+ resource centers in downstate Illinois; the only center in East Central IL
- Direct service to Champaign, Douglas, Piatt, Vermillion, Ford, Edgar, Coles, Iriquois, Moultrie, and more counties.

Mission

Uniting Pride leads in the creation of a community where all who hold historically and actively marginalized gender and sexual identities can live fulfilling, joyful, healthy, and vibrant lives.



Uniting Pride



ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Individualized advocacy and resource connection. Works to meet specific needs that are not otherwise met by our regular services or community resources.

Love Fest
Adult Queer Prom
June Pride
Champaign Urbana
Pride Fest
& More!

ADULT SUPPORT & SOCIAL GROUPS

Social Groups: Support Groups: Discord

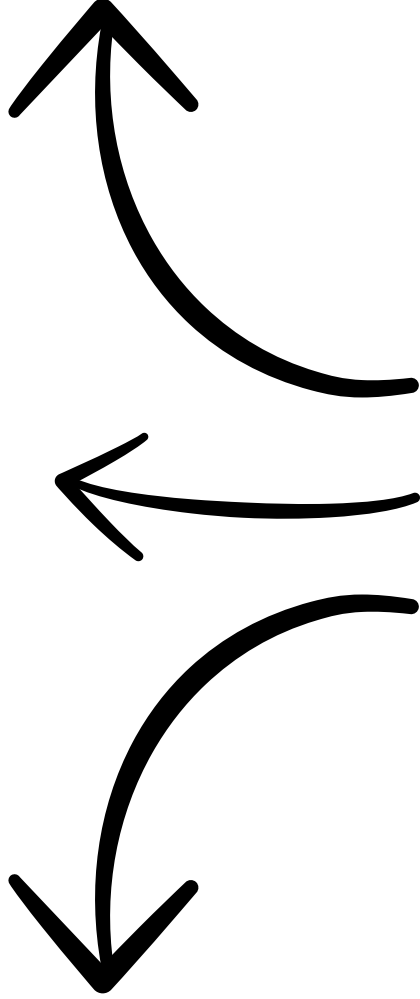
Craft It UP Trans UP
Meet UP Aging UP
UP & Outside Lift UP
UPWords

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Playgroup (0 - 10)
Queeries (10- 13)
Talk It UP (13- 18)
Talk It UP Discord
UParent
Camp Kaleidoscope
Teen Queer Prom

NEEDS BASED SERVICES

Eat UP—Food Pantry
UP & Away—Binders & Waist Cinchers
Queer Clothing Closet
Queer Library



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

EDUCATION AWARENESS, & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency Workshops
History of the Modern Pride Movement Workshops
Affirming Directories – Businesses, Faith
Communities, Healthcare
Welcoming Packet for New Community Members
Web Based Resources

Youth & Family Program

Support Groups:

Playgroup (0 - 10) - Last Sunday of Every Month
Queeries (10 - 13) - Monday Nights (Alternates Zoom & In Person)
Talk It UP (13 - 18) - Monday Nights (Alternates Zoom & In Person)
UParent - Monthly module based parenting cohort in partnership with UIUC

Camp Kaleidoscope (2nd to 9th):

Day camp in partnership with Stephens Family YMCA

Talk It UP Discord:

Provides a safe, moderated/monitored online space for teens participating in Talk It UP



Teen Queer Prom

Uniting Pride's Teen Queer Prom is a one-of-a-kind event in downstate Illinois, offering LGBTQ+ teens a safe, affirming, and joy-filled prom experience. As the only event of its kind in the region, it draws participants from across Illinois and even neighboring states. Completely free of charge, the prom provides everything needed to make the night unforgettable—including gender-affirming clothing, makeup, food, and transportation for those who need support. Most importantly, it creates a space where queer teens can be fully themselves, celebrate with their peers, and dance the night away without fear or judgment.



Adult Social & Support

Social Groups:

Craft It UP: Bring your own craft group | Meets 1st & 3rd Sundays | Zoom option & masked on 3rd Sundays
Meet UP: Adult social space for chatting, playing games, etc. | Meets 2nd and last Sunday of the Month
UPWords: Adult writing group (any written medium, fiction, non fiction, research, etc) | Meets every Sunday
| Alternates in person and on Discord voice channel
OUTSide in Campaign Forests: Hiking Group | 2nd Saturday of the Month | Partnership with Champaign Forest Preserves

Support Groups:

Aging UP: Elder Support Group | Meets Every Sunday | Zoom only
Trans UP: Trans & Gender Nonconforming Support Group | Meets Every Tuesday | Alternates Zoom & In Person
Lift UP (Paused): General LGBTQ+ Support Group | Alternates Zoom & In Person

Discord:

Provides a safe, moderated/monitored online space for adults to socialize, find support, share resources, and connect.
Available 24/7/365



Social & Support Groups

AgingUP 

Gather and connect with LGBTQ+ older adults in Champaign County. A welcoming space to discuss the fears, joys, and complications of aging. Open to LGBTQ+ adults of all genders.

Aging UP meets virtually every Sunday at 3PM. To sign up or get more information, please email agingup@unitingpride.org



UPARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Connect with parents and caregivers of LGBTQ+ and questioning children of all ages



RSVP to: uparent@unitingpride.org

All meetings take place via Zoom

2nd and 4th Mondays 7PM

Uniting Pride presents:

Trans UP

A support group for trans adults in Champaign County

The group alternates between online and in person meetings

For more information, or to join, email transup@unitingpride.org

THURSDAYS 5:30-6:30 PM

UPWords 

UPWords is a LGBTQ+ centered writing group for adults (18+) who write! It doesn't matter what you write: fiction, nonfiction, fanfiction, screenplays, academia, webcomics, it's all welcome here. Join us to chat with other writers, and get some words on the page!

Meets In-Person: 2nd, 5rd, & 4th Sundays at 4pm

Meets Online: 1st & 4th Sundays at 5pm

For More Information Please Reach Out To: upwords@unitingpride.org

Please Reach Out To: upwords@unitingpride.org



Uniting Pride of Champaign County

CRAFT IT UP

A bi-monthly, in-person social group for LGBTQ+ adults to work on personal arts and crafts projects and gather in community.

Meets in-person on the first and third Sunday of the month from 1 to 3pm

For more info, email craftitup@unitingpride.org



Uniting Pride's MEET UP GROUP

What is it?

A bi-monthly, in-person social group for LGBTQ+ adults 18+.

When is it?

Second and last Sunday of the month 12-2pm

email meetup@unitingpride.org for more info

Are you questioning your gender or sexuality? You're not alone.

Queeries 

PRE-TEEN SUPPORT GROUP

LGBTQ+ AND QUESTIONING PRE-TEENS AGES 10-13

MONDAYS 6-7 PM

ALTERNATES BETWEEN ZOOM AND IN PERSON MEETINGS

EMAIL queeries@unitingpride.org TO SIGN UP

TALK IT UP!

Alternates between Zoom and in person

QUEER TEEN SUPPORT GROUP

MONDAYS 4-8 PM

FOLLOW @TALKITUP ON INSTAGRAM

DM OR EMAIL talkitup@unitingpride.org



Advocacy

Individualized Advocacy:

Uniting Pride offers individualized advocacy support to help LGBTQ+ individuals navigate challenges related to identity, discrimination, housing, healthcare, employment, and more. This support is tailored to each person's unique situation, providing guidance, resources, and direct assistance to ensure they feel heard, respected, and empowered. Whether it's connecting with affirming services or advocating on behalf of someone facing injustice, Uniting Pride is committed to standing with the community every step of the way.

Policy & Civic Advocacy:

Uniting Pride engages in civic and community-based advocacy to protect and advance the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals at the local, state, and federal levels. We work closely with community leaders, school boards, legislators, and other policymakers to promote inclusive practices and maintain critical protections. In addition, we actively engage community members by educating them on current initiatives and threats to LGBTQ+ autonomy, empowering them to make informed decisions and take action. Through this combined approach, we aim to build a more equitable and supportive society for all.

Uniting Pride is a proud **Statewide Network partner of Equality Illinois** and proud to partner with Centerlink, the COLab, National LGBTQ+ Taskforce, Planned Parenthood Illinois Action, and the Human Rights Campaign to support these efforts.



Community Events

Love Fest:

Love Fest is Uniting Pride's annual celebration of love in all its beautiful forms—romantic, platonic, familial, and self-love—held during the Valentine's Day season. Designed to uplift and affirm LGBTQ+ identities, this event offers an inclusive space for connection and celebration. Attendees enjoy a festive evening featuring performances, music, games, photo ops, and opportunities for reflection and joy. Whether you come solo, with friends, or with a partner, Love Fest invites everyone to feel valued, seen, and celebrated.



Adult Queer Prom:

Adult Queer Prom is a magical evening for LGBTQ+ adults to celebrate themselves and each other in a space that honors their full identities. For many, prom was a time of discomfort or exclusion—this event is a chance to reclaim that experience with authenticity and pride. The night includes dancing, food, entertainment, and optional formalwear, all in an affirming, judgment-free environment. Whether you're reliving a moment or creating one you never got, Adult Queer Prom is about joy, visibility, and community.



June Pride Month Programs:

June Pride is a month-long celebration of LGBTQ+ pride, resilience, and history, curated and hosted by Uniting Pride. Throughout the month, we offer a wide variety of events across Champaign County and surrounding areas—including educational workshops, community panels, art shows, performances, family-friendly programming, and more. These events are designed to uplift queer voices, educate allies, and create space for joy and solidarity. June Pride is a time to honor the past, celebrate the present, and imagine a more inclusive future.



Pride Fest

Champaign-Urbana Pride Fest is the largest Pride celebration in Illinois outside of Chicago and has been a meaningful gathering for the LGBTQ+ community for 15 years. This week-long event features a wide range of activities, including educational workshops, lively performances, youth and family programming, and community socials that bring people together across the region. The celebration culminates in a vibrant Pride Fair and parade that attract tens of thousands of attendees each year, filling the streets with color, joy, and pride. More than just a festival, Pride Fest is a powerful expression of visibility, resilience, and community — welcoming everyone to celebrate queer identities and support equality throughout Central Illinois and beyond.



Needs Based Servi

Eat UP:

The Eat UP Food Pantry provides free, shelf-stable groceries and personal care items to anyone in need, with a focus on supporting LGBTQ+ individuals facing food insecurity. The pantry is stocked through generous community donations and is open for walk-ins or by appointment. Eat UP also stocks NARCAN, fentanyl testing strips, pregnancy tests, Plan B, condoms, and other harm reduction supplies.

UP & Away:

Our UP & Away program offers free gender-affirming binders and waist cinchers to trans and nonbinary individuals who may not have access to these essential items. We prioritize safety, comfort, and dignity by providing a variety of sizes and styles, along with education on safe usage. Clients are allowed 2 cinchers and 2 binders per year.

Queer Clothing Closet:

The Queer Clothing Closet is a free resource offering gender-affirming clothing for all ages and identities. Whether someone is exploring their style or needs clothes for a job interview or daily wear, this space provides a welcoming, judgment-free environment to find what fits and feels right.

Queer Library:

Uniting Pride's Queer Library features a curated collection of LGBTQ+ books for all ages, including fiction, nonfiction, memoirs, and educational resources. Community members are welcome to browse, borrow, and explore stories that reflect and celebrate diverse queer experiences.

Education, Awareness, & Community

Educational Workshops:

Uniting Pride provides dynamic and engaging educational workshops that equip participants with the knowledge and tools to foster truly inclusive environments. These sessions typically range from 90 minutes to 3 hours and are ideal for schools, workplaces, community groups, and organizations of all kinds. Workshop topics include LGBTQ+ cultural competency, understanding and addressing implicit bias, navigating calling out vs. calling in, respectful pronoun usage, the history and impact of the modern Pride movement, and much more. Each training is designed to be interactive, informative, and tailored to the audience, empowering individuals and institutions to better support LGBTQ+ people with confidence and compassion.

Affirming Directories:

Uniting Pride hosts three affirming directories on our website to help community members access supportive resources with ease and confidence. These include a directory of LGBTQ+-affirming therapists and healthcare providers, a list of inclusive faith communities, and a guide to affirming businesses and service providers in the area. Each directory is carefully curated to ensure the listed organizations and professionals are committed to creating safe, respectful, and welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Additional Resources:

Additional resources for all ages can be found on Uniting Pride's website, covering a variety of topics including coming out, navigating transitioning, how to be a better ally, how to be a supportive parent, etc.

THANK YOU

For Questions, Referrals, and Workshop Information
Please Email Us!

info@unitingpride.org

1001 S Wright St | Champaign, IL 61820 | 217.898.5235

Additional Agency Input – Uniting Pride

Here is a brief overview of some of the feedback we regularly receive:

Uniting Pride (UP) is currently the only 501c3 organization in Champaign County exclusively focused on serving the LGBTQ+ community. While there are affirming providers and organizations in the region, none offer the comprehensive, identity-specific, wraparound support that LGBTQ+ individuals and families increasingly need. Amid escalating anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment nationwide and the growing politicization of queer and trans existence, we are seeing a sharp rise in community members seeking urgent mental health, basic needs, and crisis-related support.

This comes at a time when Champaign County is also experiencing a noticeable influx of LGBTQ+ individuals and families from other states, driven by restrictive legislation elsewhere. UP regularly receives requests for information on moving to the area, safe and affirming schools, healthcare providers, housing, and support services. We anticipate this trend will continue—and possibly accelerate—creating even greater demand on local systems and increasing pressure on the few affirming resources that currently exist.

The mental health implications of this moment are profound. In our daily work, we are seeing clear and compounding gaps that contribute to elevated stress, depression, anxiety, and suicidality among LGBTQ+ people of all ages:

- **Lack of affordable and affirming mental health care**—especially for people on Medicaid or those with limited incomes—creates major access barriers. Many LGBTQ+ individuals are living at or below the poverty line, and unable to pay out-of-pocket costs for care.
- **Risk of losing access to gender-affirming care for minors and Medicaid recipients**—currently under political threat—poses a devastating mental health risk. Gender-affirming care is widely

supported by all major medical associations and is critical to reducing suicidality and psychological distress in trans and nonbinary individuals.

- **Housing instability and homelessness** are growing issues in our community, especially for LGBTQ+ youth and transgender individuals who are often denied safe and respectful service in general shelters or housing programs. We regularly serve clients who are unhoused or in crisis through our food pantry, clothing closet, and emergency resource navigation.
- **A lack of community gathering spaces and consistent support programs** contributes to increased isolation, particularly among LGBTQ+ youth, elders, and rural residents. These populations are especially vulnerable to mental health challenges when they lack safe spaces to be themselves.

Despite these realities, Uniting Pride remains a small organization with limited resources and staffing, working hard to meet a wide range of needs—from basic survival services to peer support groups and educational programming. Without greater systemic support and investment in LGBTQ+-affirming services, our community's mental health outcomes will continue to decline.

We urge the Champaign County Mental Health Board to recognize the urgent need for expanded mental health infrastructure that is inclusive, affirming, and accessible to LGBTQ+ individuals and families across all ages and income levels. Targeted funding, policy protections, and support for organizations like Uniting Pride are not just investments in equity—they are essential tools for suicide prevention, mental health stabilization, and community resilience.

Presenter Bio

Darya Shahgheibi (she/her/hers) is a passionate advocate for health equity, housing equality, social change, and LGBTQ+ rights. As a skilled nonprofit leader, her work is rooted in harm reduction and the belief that housing and healthcare are basic human rights. In her role as Executive Director of the Greater Community AIDS Project, she oversees housing and supportive services for individuals living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Darya brings broad experience from her prior roles, which include HIV Case Manager/Counselor, Programming Director, Research Coordinator, and Family Advocate.

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WHO WE ARE

In 1985, local LGBTQ+ community members founded the Gay Community Aids Project (GCAP) after witnessing the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on their friends and family. The founders soon became GCAP's first board and are still involved in the organization's work today.

The name was later updated to the Greater Community Aids Project to reflect that HIV/AIDS affects everyone, regardless of sexuality or gender. This change also encompassed our expanded services, which now include case management, financial assistance, transitional and emergency housing, and education and advocacy. We continue to serve those living with or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, and the LGBTQ+ community remains the majority of our clients.

OUR MISSION

This year, we updated our mission statement to explicitly include individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. This includes individuals at-risk or vulnerable to the disease, most notably members of the LGBTQ+ community.

GCAP empowers individuals and families living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in East Central Illinois by providing housing and supportive services and actively works within the community to reduce virus transmission.

Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ individuals living with or at-risk of HIV/AIDS

Healthcare Inaccessibility

PrEP Inequity

Social Stigma

Lack of Social Support

Financial and Housing Struggles

THE AIDS CRISIS IS NOT OVER

Get Tested



Ride Safely

GCAP
GREATER COMMUNITY
AIDS PREVENT

HOUSING AND FINANCIAL STRUGGLES

Housing Insecurity

- Challenges finding safe, welcoming housing.
- Roommate matching can reduce financial burden, but it can also be unsafe.
- Not enough affordable housing options are available.
- People relocating from areas with discriminatory policies often have nowhere to go.
- Shelters can be unsafe

Financial Struggles

- We have seen a significant increase in requests for financial assistance in the LGBTQ+ community, a clear indicator of growing need.
- This is often due to relocation, job instability, and lack of belonging or inclusion in the workplace, resulting in a loss of income.
- The high cost of health services and medications, specifically related to gender-affirming care and/or HIV care, is a significant burden.

Our Response

Transitional Housing

- Temporary housing (up to two years) for individuals living with HIV
- Affirming and safe environment
- Majority of clients identify as LGBTQ+

Emergency Housing

- Emergency housing for individuals experiencing homelessness as defined by HUD.
- We provide up to two weeks of motel housing, a safer alternative to shelters or "couch surfing."
- Option for individuals fleeing discrimination

Collaborative Housing Efforts

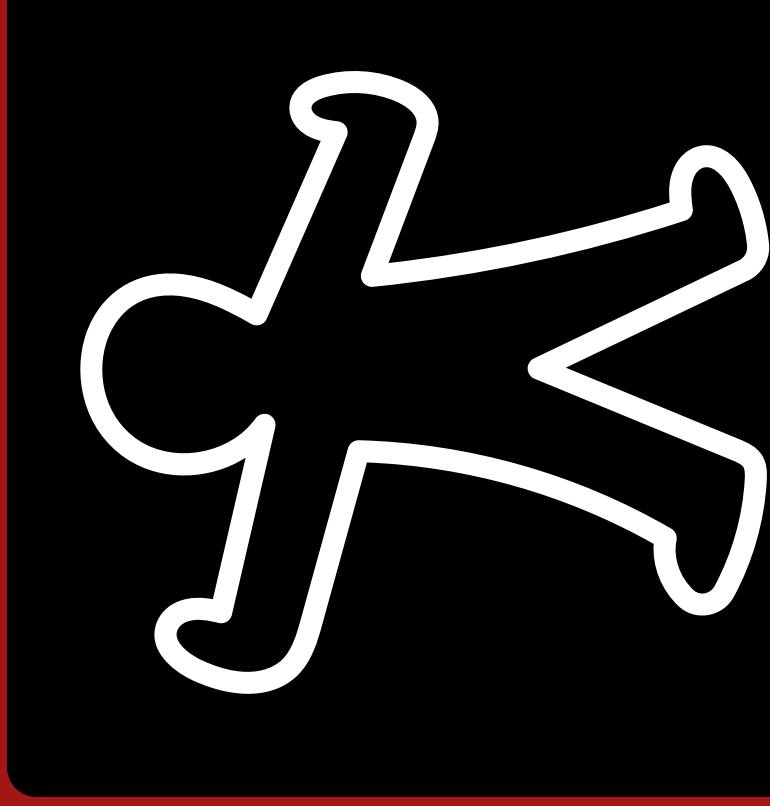
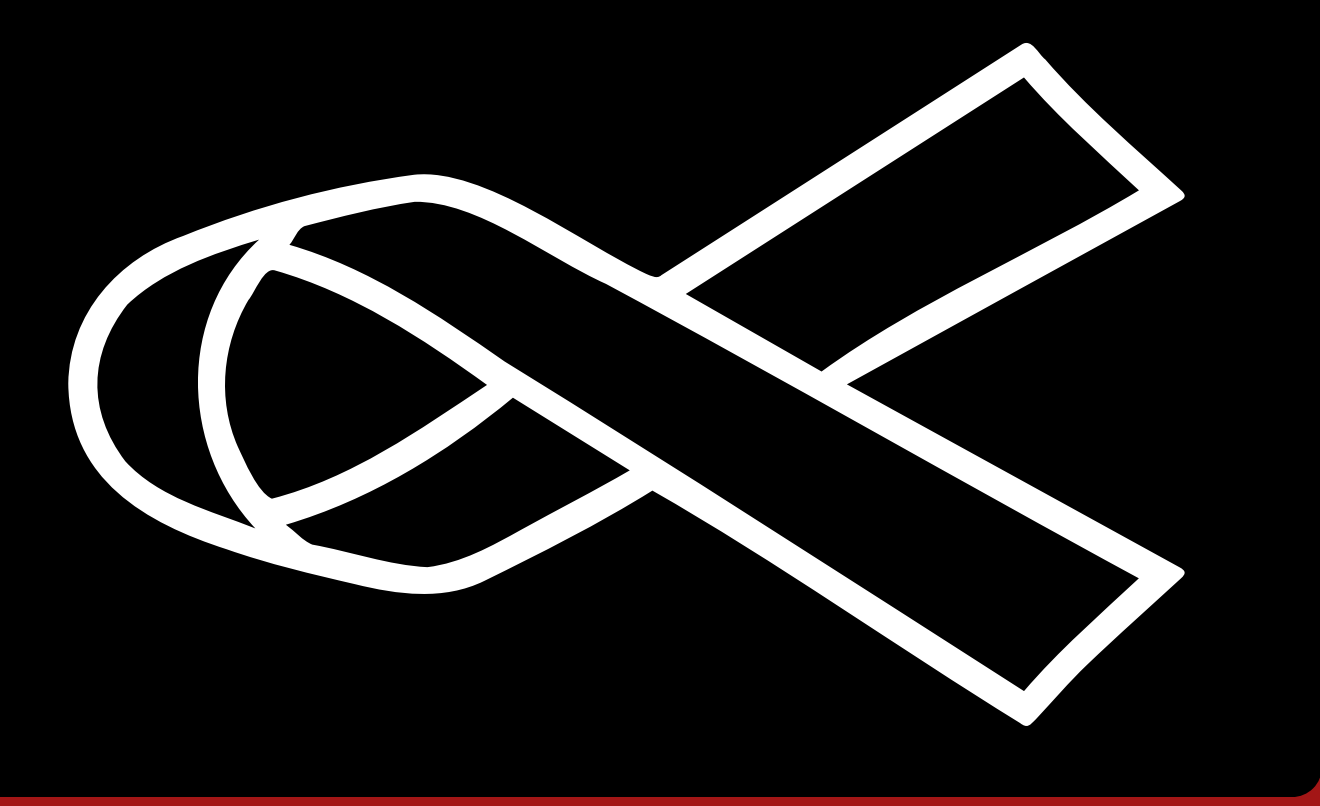
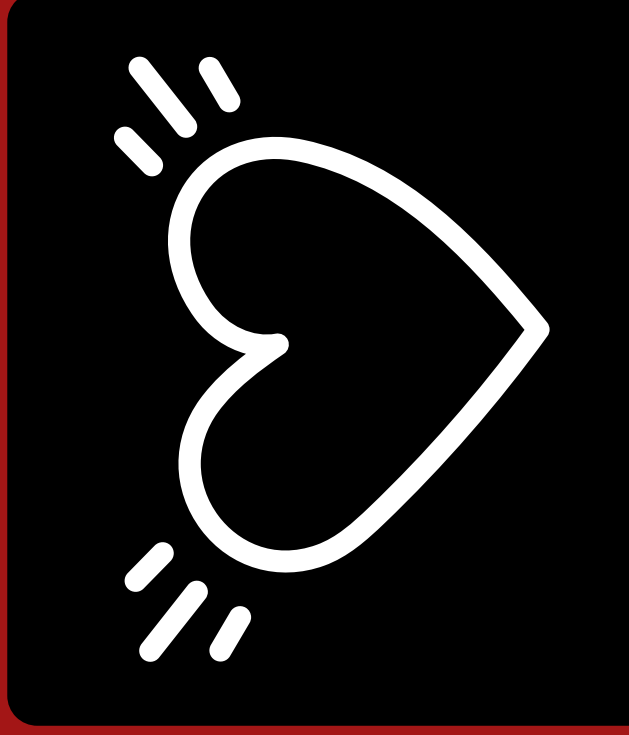
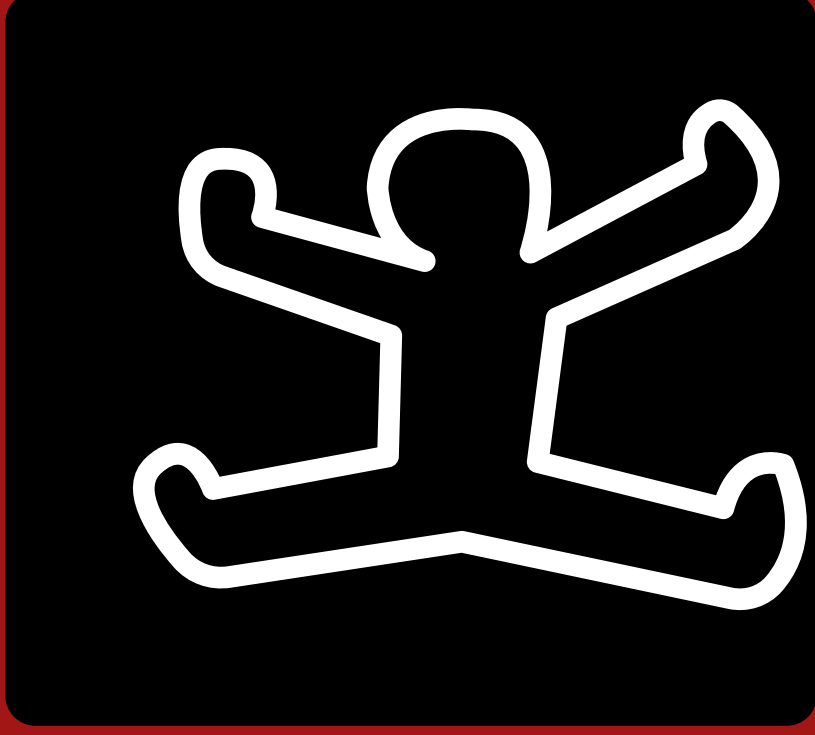
- As an active part of the LGBTQIA+ subcommittee of our local Continuum of Care (CoC), we collaborate with partners to provide emergency housing to LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Financial Assistance

- Direct assistance for rent, utilities, transportation, food, clothing, and essential items.
- Eases financial burdens and helps prevent homelessness.

ADDRESSING CRITICAL NEEDS IN THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

GCCAP
GREATER COMMUNITY
AIDS PROJECT
OF EAST CENTRAL ILLINOIS



Inequities in Healthcare

Healthcare Inaccessibility

- Difficulty finding LGBTQ+ affirming specialty care.
- Long waitlists for affirming primary care physicians (PCPs) and general practitioners (GPs).
- Lack of LGBTQ+ affirming mental health providers that accept Medicaid/Medicare
- Lack of insurance-covered transportation to specialty care in major cities (e.g., Chicago, St. Louis).

PrEP Inequity

- Widespread lack of PrEP knowledge and physician education.
- PrEP-to-Need Ratio: PrEP use does not match actual need.
- 94% of at-risk White Americans receive PrEP, compared to only 24% of Latine and 13% of Black communities.
- Black people account for 40% of new HIV infections in the U.S, and gay and bisexual black and hispanic/latine men account for the most new HIV infections

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL- HOUSING

"I came here because where I was before wasn't safe. It wasn't safe like I was afraid I was actually going to get hurt. People in Southern Illinois are [expletive for very] terrible. And my family is part of those people by the way. I got diagnosed not too long ago and when I did i thought 'Great, not only am I a [expletive for gay], I'm a [expletive for gay] with AIDS. These people are gonna kill me'. When my cousin found my meds he told my brother and I got kicked out. He said some [expletive for stuff] about the bible and about me being dirty or whatever and then said I had to leave or he would call his friends and they would make me leave. I left and came here because I heard it was less terrible. I didnt have anywhere to go but you guys got me a motel room. That was literally a life saver not to be dramatic but its true. I feel better here and have found my new family. Things are still kinda [expletive for bad] like the people at my job arent the coolest but thats trade services I guess. its better than living in that hell hole. Thanks guys.

-Emergency Housing Participant

FILLING THE GAP, MEETING THE NEED

Our services strive to fill gaps in care, but the increasing demand highlights the importance of continued support and community collaboration. To meet this growing need and continue closing these gaps, our agency goals include:

Expanding Services:

We will continue to seek dedicated funding to expand our services and meet the increasing demand from the LGBTQ+ community.

Strengthening Partnerships:

We will strengthen our collaborations with other community partners to ensure our clients have access to a comprehensive network of support.

Proactive Advocacy:

We will continue to be a proactive voice for the community, working with clients and community partners to identify how ever-changing laws and policies impact their lives and find solutions to close gaps in care.



Questions:

Greater Community AIDS Project of East Central Illinois (GCAP)

Darya Shahgheibi

Executive Director

executivedirector@gcapnow.com

815.901.5893

OUR RESPONSE

Transportation Support

- Bus passes, uber, lyft, and train tickets to medical appointments
- Staff or volunteer transportation for appointments within 10 miles, if preferred by individual

Mental Health Accessibility

- Funding for eight weeks of therapy with the client's chosen provider.
- Additional weeks may be provided based on need and funding.

Health Assistance

- Financial assistance for medical bills, prescriptions, and essential health items.

Education and Advocacy

- Education regarding PrEP, STI testing, and accessing services
- Connecting clients to affirming providers.
- Offering to attend doctors' appointments with clients for medical advocacy.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL-HEALTHCARE

“I’m on Medicaid and have been trying for months to find a therapist. Preferably a gay therapist or at least a therapist that is ok with me being gay. I want to be able to comfortably say ‘I’m gay, I have AIDS, and I’m depressed as hell’.

I went on Psychology Today and type in ‘Champaign’ then click ‘LGBTQ’, ‘In-Person’, ‘Medicaid’. I call one person and they don’t accept Medicaid. I call another they don’t either. I call another and they do accept Medicaid, but there’s a waitlist and I’m 20th on the list. I finally find someone who accepts Medicaid and is taking new clients, and then I get an email asking me to agree to participate in telehealth services, because apparently she doesn’t do in-person sessions. I’m ready to rip my hair out. Why is it so hard to get help. ”

-Anonymous Program Participant

SOCIAL STIGMA AND GAPS IN SUPPORT

Social Stigma

- Significant social stigma still exists, impacting relationships and support networks.
- Ignorance of U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) leads to ostracization.
- Misinformation within the LGBTQIA+ community creates an unsafe environment for people to share their status.

Gaps in Social Support

- Individuals new to the area don't know where to go to build social support
- No “third space”
- Many feel uncomfortable or excluded in “young” spaces or feel that current LGBTQ+ groups are “too formal”
- No access to technology for zoom groups

Our Response

Case Management

- Case managers discuss building social networks and confidence in group meetings.
- We host social outings with our clients and encourage relationship building.

Education and Advocacy

- Education regarding U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable).
- Provision of tools for clients to educate others.
- Support during partner notification

We acknowledge that social support and community building is an ongoing community concern that needs to be addressed. We gather input from clients to understand their needs and collaborate with community partners to find and implement solutions to close these gaps in care.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL - SOCIAL SUPPORT

"I think if I had to say one thing that we really need here it would be just a space to go to. The groups here are mostly for young people, and if they're not for young people then they're online. I want to actually go somewhere. I need to leave my house and be around people. But where does a dyke in her mid forties go? I could go to the bar but I don't want to drink, that's bad news. But apparently that's where all the dykes go. It's disappointing, it really is. It makes me sad if I think about it for too long. I just want somewhere I can go and be around other queers. And I don't want to have to introduce myself when I'm there. Like I said, I just want a space to go to."

-TH, 43

Presenter Bio and Agency Information

Educator, Advocate, Creative, and Community Engineer **Justin Michael Hendrix** is a native son of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.



He is the creator and founder of HITNHOMEBOY - a grassroots organization whose mission is to provide inclusive, equitable - education and resources to marginalized communities. HITNHOMEBOY established in 2019 addresses issues of food insecurity, mental health, gun violence, LGBTQ+ challenges, and poverty.

As a community leader, Justin Michael Hendrix's effort in equitable access earned him the 2021 BuyBlack Champaign Community Impact Award. He is an Advisory Group member of the legislation group Equality Illinois, the GLAAD Media Institute, and ballroom's Legendary House of Lanvin.

Justin has been featured in GLAAD's "I'm Voting No Matter What" and St. Louis Efforts for AIDS campaigns for his advocacy, civic engagement, and policy knowledge while living in St. Louis, Missouri.

He earned his Bachelors of Science in Early Childhood Education with a Special Education Endorsement from the College of Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in May of 2025.

Recently, Justin Michael Hendrix became a two-year term elected official as a member of City of Champaign Unit 4 School Board after an election victory on April 1st, 2025. In addition, he is relaunching HITNHOMEBOY with partnerships through the City of Champaign for Black and Brown LGBTQ+ teens and young adults later this year.

Learn more about HITNHOMEBOY:

<https://www.instagram.com/hitnhomeboy/?hl=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/hitnhomeboy/>



MISSION STATEMENT

HITNHOMEBOY'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE - EDUCATION AND RESOURCES TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES. HITNHOMEBOY ADDRESSES ISSUES OF FOOD INSECURITY, MENTAL HEALTH, VIOLENCE, LGBTQ+ CHALLENGES, AND POVERTY.



1

HUMANITY OVER CHARITY

HITNHOMEBOY believes in humanity and human kindness as giving is from the heart. We believe when operating in "charity" one has to cautiously think about giving.

2

FOOD INSECURITY LGBTQ+ I

Overall, about 13.1% of LGBTQ+ adults lived in a household that experienced food insecurity in the past seven days, compared to 7.2% of non-LGBT adults.

(T. File & J. Marshall, 2021)



3

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

We have been actively providing since the uprising of Summer 2020. HITNHOMEBOY has been able to provide additional (temporary) Food Pantries in collaboration with First Followers and Bethel AME Church. Furthermore, launched a (temporary) Clothing Closet with Independent Media Center.



4

UNDERSTAND DIFFERENT METRICS.

Since the inception of HITNHOMEBOY, we have made a great effort to not only provide accessible resources and avenues to our communities. We have collected data and identified areas of disparities, marginalization, socioeconomic concerns, and more

SINGLE PARENT HOMES
60%

LGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS
87%

INSECURITIES + HOMELESSNESS
75%

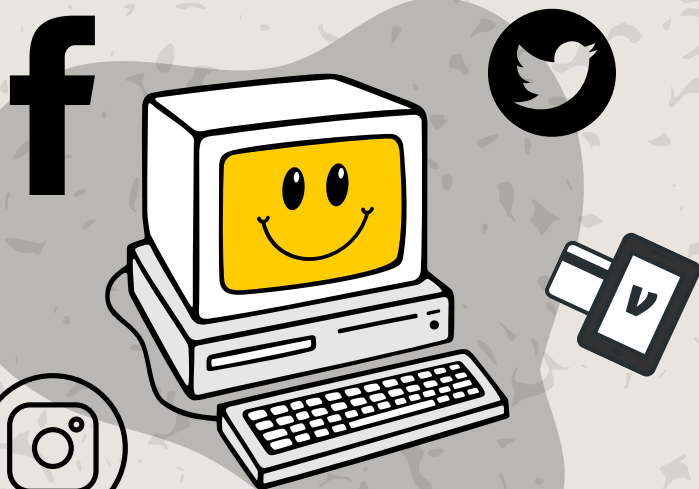
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
60%

DATA COLLECTION IS CONDUCTED DURING ORGANIZING INITIATIVES, COMMUNITY EVENTS, AND INQUIRY REQUESTS. ALL PERSONS ARE GARUNTEED THE RIGHT TO DATA COLLECTION CLIENT PRIVACY.

5

MONITOR THE SUCCESS OF YOUR CAMPAIGN.

Between 2020 and 2024 we have raised over \$10,000 through HITNHOMEBOY's grassroots-led initiatives such as the Community Food Pantries, Organizing, and In-Kind Hours.



@HITNHOMEBOY



PERFORMANCE

HITNHOMEBOY'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE – EDUCATION AND RESOURCES TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES. HITNHOMEBOY ADDRESSES ISSUES OF FOOD INSECURITY, MENTAL HEALTH, VIOLENCE, LGBTQ+ CHALLENGES, AND POVERTY.

6

FOOD INSECURITY LGBTQ+ II

36.6% of LGBTQ+ adults lived in a household that had difficulty paying for usual household expenses in the previous seven days, compared to 26.1% of non-LGBTQ+ adults. 19.8% of LGBTQ+ adults lived in a household with lost employment income in the past four weeks, compared to 16.8% of non-LGBTQ+ adults (T. File & J. Marshall, 2021).

7

FOOD INSECURITY LGBTQ+ III

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) adult population reported living in households with higher rates of food and economic insecurity than non-LGBT Americans, according to U.S. Census Bureau survey data released (T. File & J. Marshall, 2021).

8

ADDRESSING THE ARTICLE: SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY I

The framework of mutual aid is significant in the context of social movements resisting capitalist and colonial domination, in which wealth and resources are extracted and concentrated and most people can survive only by participating in various extractive relationships (D. Spade, 2020).

9

ADDRESSING THE ARTICLE: SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY II

Mutual aid exposes the failures of the current system and shows an alternative. It builds faith in people power and fights the demobilizing impacts of individualism and hopelessness induced apathy (D. Spade, 2020).

CHARITY IS VERTICAL. IT GOES FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM. SOLIDARITY IS HORIZONTAL. IT RESPECTS THE OTHER PERSON.



CONNECTION TO ARTICLE/SOCIAL JUSTICE

The most famous example in the United States is the Black Panther Party's survival programs, including the free breakfast program.

The Black Panthers' survival programs have inspired many other organizations to organize mutual aid efforts to attract people to movements and to build shared analysis of problems as collective rather than individual (D. Spade, 2020).



COMMITMENTS

EDUCATION

Provide educational stability. Educate on the historical influence and impact of Black and Brown LGBTQ persons.

ADVOCACY

Promote civic engagement; understand policy. Advocate for marginalized to underserved communities.

COMMUNITY CULTURE

Produce city-wide initiatives. Implement city-wide "wrap-around" approaches to prompt community awareness.

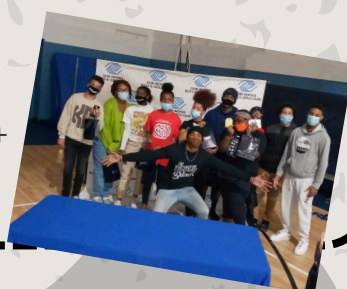


HITNHOMEBOY: EDUCATION

6

HITNHOMEBOY - Black History Trivia - In support of culturally responsive activities, youth + teen programming, and the acknowledgement of achievements in Black Culture & American History. (Teams include DMBGC, Goal Getters, DREAM, and more).

LGBTQ Young Gifted Black & Queer Book Drive - Addressing low proficiency levels during COVID-19, family inclusion, and engage effectively within Black + Brown families. (Donations include Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski)



7

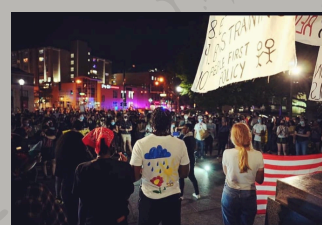
HITNHOMEBOY: ADVOCACY

Community + Campustown Relations & Partnerships - #MyBlackMentalHealthMatters Series (Over 3K Programming Streams) - HITN' HIV: World AIDS Day Discussion (featured panelist State Rep. Carol Ammons + Rep. Lamont Robinson) - Food Pantry - Community Closet - Ballroom/Vogue Culture

#MBMHM Link: <https://fb.watch/k2qu0b2VyD/>
HITNHIV Link: <https://fb.watch/k2r9ljsHm8/>



8



HITNHOMEBOY: COMMUNITY CULTURE



9

HITNHOMEBOY: OUTCOMES

HITNHOMEBOY support in legislation for passed House and Senate Bills - Decriminalization of HIV; Inclusive Curriculum, Keeps Healthy & Safe in Schools, Protect Black Girls & Women Act, Equality Act, and more!

Ayan Ar-Raheem Harris (*former mentee*) - Founding Member of PAIGN TO PEACE - Hampton University Student - Spotify NextGen's Scholarship Recipient.

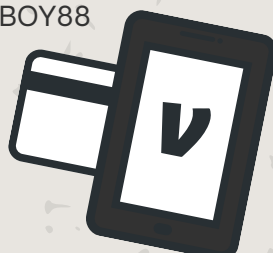
Kobe Clark (*current mentee*) - Unit 4 Graduate Spring 2024 - Ranked Gymnast (IL) - Michigan University Freshman - Fall 2024.



HITNHOMEBOY: MUTUAL AID

Pantry Location 102 N. Niel Street
Champaign, Illinois 61821

Cash App - \$HITNHOMEBOY88
Venmo - @HITNHOMEBOY88



Rules

HUMANITY over CHARITY
HITNHOMEBOY believes in humanity and human kindness as giving is from the heart. We believe when operating in "charity" one has to cautiously think about giving.



Penalties

Unable to acquire accessible yet gainful resources since not a 501 C 3 and optional city to state funding.

Presenter Bios

Jaya Kolisetty, MA, MBA, is an award-winning administrator, educator, and anti-violence advocate who has presented nationally on topics related to sexual violence and social justice. She serves as the Executive Director of RACES and is an active member of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault's (ICASA) People of Color Committee. Her previous experience includes serving as the Chair of ICASA's Social Justice & Training Committee, holding an appointed position on the Illinois Governor's Task Force on Campus Sexual Misconduct Climate Surveys, and working as a Practitioner Reviewer for the Center for Victims of Crime.

Cally Hines, (she/they) is an openly nonbinary and autistic professional with ADHD who has 5+ years of experience working in social services settings. Currently, they are the Office Manager at RACES, making them a first point of contact for clients and members of the community. In addition, she is a student studying for her MS in forensic psychology at Walden University. They have previously provided training at local and statewide levels on neurodiversity and sexual violence and are passionate about advocacy for those who are neurodivergent and the LGBTQ+ community.

Agency Information

Rape Advocacy, Counseling, & Education Services (RACES) has had various names, but its purpose has remained the same: to provide support and healing to those who have experienced sexual violence or stalking and work to build a world free of sexual violence. RACES draws on a legacy of over 50 years rooted in community organizing to provide crucial and unique service to Champaign, Ford, Douglas, and Piatt counties. The agency's office is located

in Urbana, within walking distance of the Champaign County Courthouse, and staff travel to provide services to residents throughout the agency's four-county service area. RACES also maintains a contract with a therapist in Rantoul, to increase access for rural residents. All services are free and are protected by the agency's absolute privilege, in keeping with 735 ILCS 5/8-802, [Confidentiality of Statements made to Rape Crisis Personnel](#).

Victim/survivor services include a 24/7 crisis hotline, 24/7 response to the emergency department, support accessing follow up medical care, assistance navigating the legal system and victim assistance programs, case management, and trauma-informed therapy services.

The agency also serves thousands of students each year and assists local schools in meeting the requirement for age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention education found in Erin's Law (105 ILCS 5/10-23.13). RACES also trains adults on strategies to create safer, more trauma-informed environments.

More information is at <https://cu-races.org>.

LGBTQ+ Community Survey

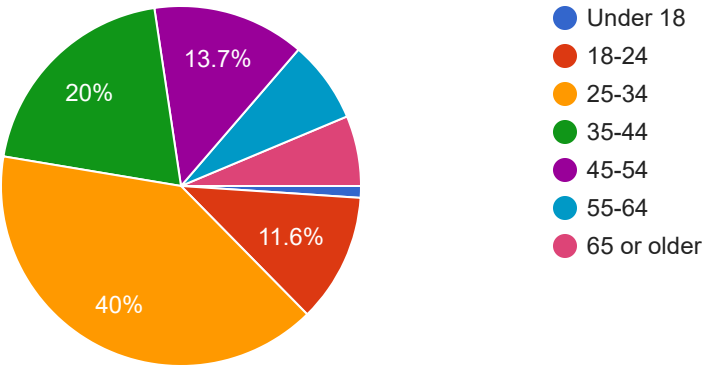
96 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

What is your current age?

 Copy

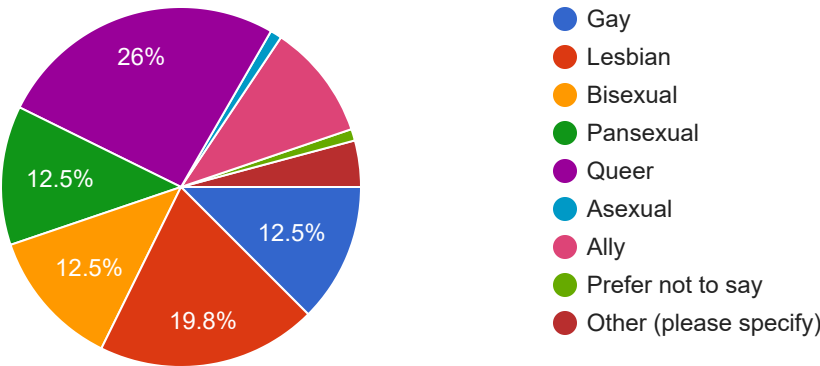
95 responses



Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation or connection to the LGBTQ+ community?

 Copy

96 responses



If 'Other (please specify)', please provide details:

5 responses

Lesbian queer

N/A

[email withheld]

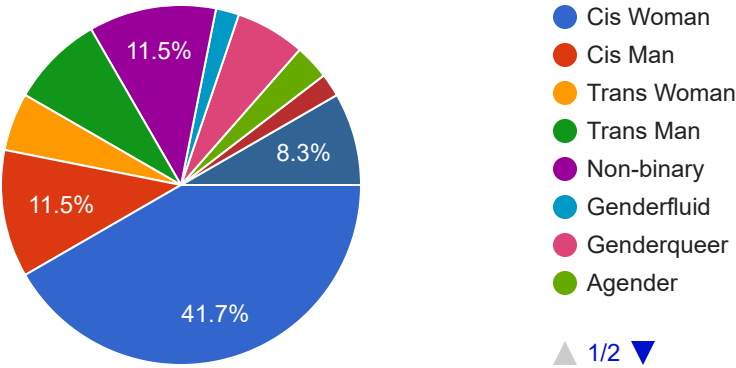
Should allow checking all the boxes one wants. And perhaps even definitions. Like, over the course of my life and sometimes at the same time, I could check bi, pan, queer, ace, and ally.

herterosexual

Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

 Copy

96 responses



If 'Other (please specify)', please provide details:

10 responses

[email withheld]

N/A

Butch

[email withheld]

female/genderqueer

Demigirl

Again, I could embrace non-binary, gender fluid, gender queer.

Female

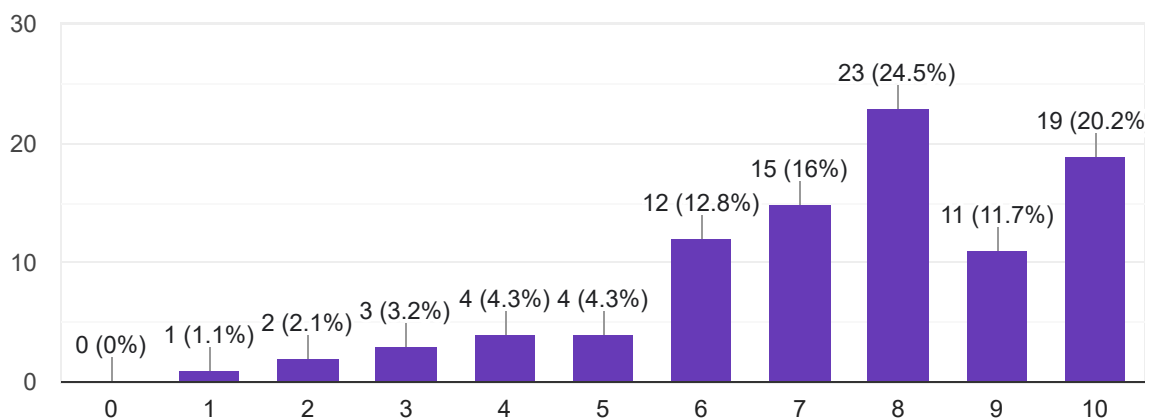
Transgender person

im a guy who identifies as a guy

How comfortable do you feel expressing your LGBTQ+ identity in your daily life?

 Copy

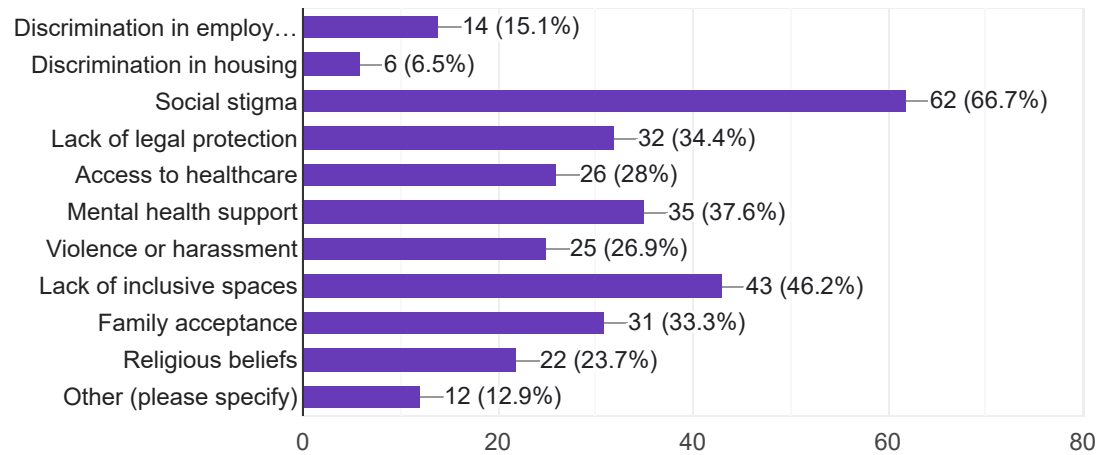
94 responses



What are the biggest challenges you face as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

 Copy

93 responses



If 'Other (please specify)', please provide details:

19 responses

My struggles are not exclusively because of my queerness, but are intersectionally exacerbated by my queerness. For example I am poor and on Medicaid, and I had to take a specific Medicaid plan to continue seeing the doctor who prescribes my HRT but that plan is not accepted by my trans therapist. I had to choose between HRT and therapy because I am poor but my options for providers are limited because I am queer.

N/A

[email withheld]

* I do not identify as LGBTQ, but I try to be an ally; these are some issues I know this community faces, from my limited knowledge.

Places that are both queer safe and also accessible, including covid mitigations. Intersectionality is not thought of enough when it comes to lgbtqu+ and disability!

Even supportive friends having hidden hierarchies of acceptance.

Attack on first amendment rights

Lack of resources available for middle-aged and older adults

Lack of inclusive exercise spaces (gyms, pools, outdoor clubs, biking groups, walking groups, etc.)

As an ally, I'm not as directly affected, but watching friends search for services can be heartbreaking .

Social isolation and religious judgement in small town

lack of ***disability friendly/accessible*** inclusive spaces. this is a huge problem in the queer community.

misgendering at work

I am constantly harrassed using female bathrooms because even though i am a cis woman, i have short hair and people mistake me for male. Twice male managers at a restaurant entered the women's bathroom to remove me until they realize i am actually female. I absolutely HATE using public bathrooms for this reason and i am always concerned about my safety every time



i use a public bathroom. I was harrassed so bad in front of my kids, my 8 year old son still says i should grow my hair out "so you look like a girl and people won't be mean to you in the bathrooms.

Very fortunate; life is good!

i dont need another label

More worried now with the current administration's open hatred of LGBTQ+ people and programs that help them.

Also (and this is for all elders, not for just LGBTQ), finding decent elder housing that won't bankrupt you - honestly, are there really that many people in CU area who can afford Clark Lindsey?!?

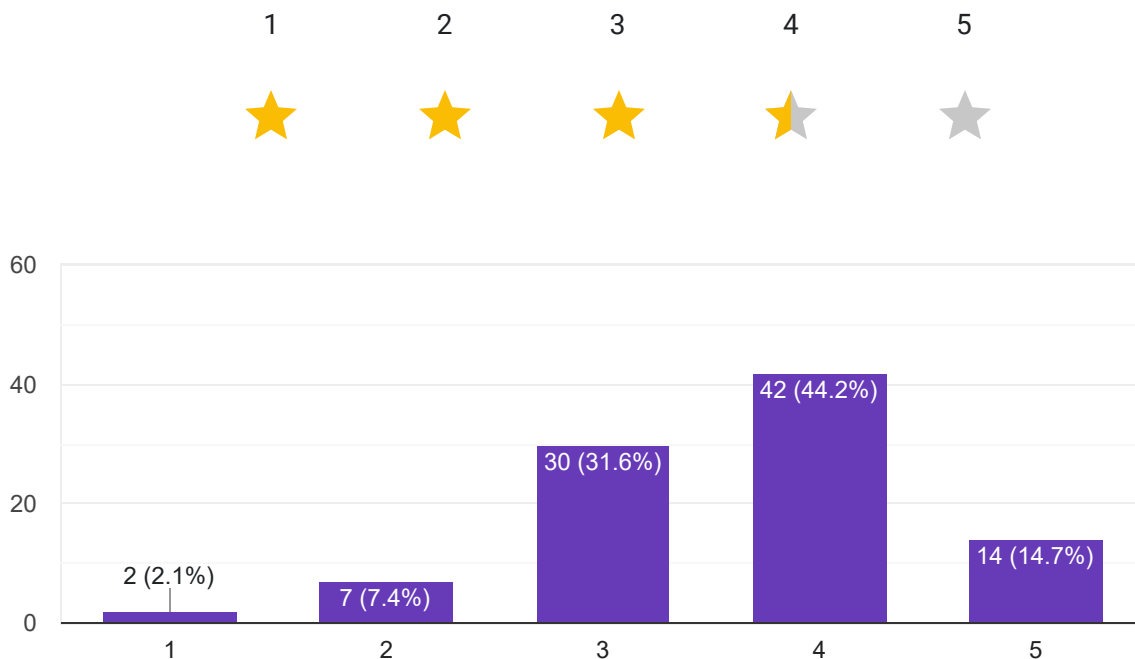
Lacking of community

How would you rate the availability of LGBTQ+ friendly resources in your local community?

 Copy

95 responses

Average rating (3.62)



What kind of support or resources would be most beneficial to you?

53 responses

I would love help figuring out how to "adult" and manage things like insurance with people who have been there done that!

Social events

more mental and physical health practitioners for low-income patients/who take medicaid who are actually knowledgeable about lgbtqia+ identities (rather than have just taken a pledge or something)

Affordable access to body-part-specific medical care without stigma. I am a person who needs regular screenings for cervical cancer and other related cancers, but it is difficult to find providers who take that need seriously, as I am a man with a full beard.

As a community, we need to move beyond representation, acceptance, and cultural presence as end goals. We need to focus on material and economic challenges. People may not face discrimination in housing here, but queer folks fleeing oppressive laws in other states are unable to move here because we have a community-wide housing crisis. Employment discrimination may not be a major factor here, but if we don't have adequate employment opportunities for anyone, that also keeps people from seeking safety here. The economic realities of our wider community impact the LGBTQ community because we, y'know, live in it.

More healthcare resources and more social/educational resources

Mental Health Access

[email withheld]

Actual medical care as carle is not friendly and does not care about trans enby queee people OSF misgendering trans people no real care exists you all should tour Positive Health Solutions in peoria il and see how they do real supportive and affirming care i drive hours to get that level of care

Existing support is good, I attend social/support groups facilitated by UP, I get healthcare from the VA but idk how long it'll last. Bridge healthcare would probably help a lot of folks who lose insurance or access to facilities that will provide healthcare to queer and especially trans folks

Chances to socialize with other queer people around my age without going to a bar

Youth activities/groups, directory of support groups/therapists for parents & individuals
Support for educators/school districts in face of Project 2025 agenda (anticipated)



Social meetings

Access to resources for children/teens, and training families of LGBTQ

Things like transportation to lgbtquia+ events, accessibility being a priority not something greeted with hatefulness

More LGBTQ+ inclusive spaces outside of bars/nightlife

While I understand the (occasional! includes this form, though) need for knowing characteristics in order to ensure equity of opportunity or even outcomes, most of it is either to sell you something, or sell your data. And research shows it makes people, even ones with great nurturing, feel less-than. So, Stop Thinking About My Junk!!!

Childcare, affordable mental and physical health care, better public transportation, more alcohol-and-substance-free third spaces for LGBTQ folks to socialize

Social

Spaces that are intersectional

Consistent free mental health services.

Mental health, supportive legal services, social supports

More social groups to meet with queer individuals in various fields/spaces

There is very little geared towards seniors, we are invisible in the community.

Learning how to support my peers more who are apart of the community

Carle doctors knowledgeable about trans community, specifically HRT, best practices, etc. I have to go to Chicago for this.

I like the list of providers, but it is out of date. Can't find a primary care doc easily.

Community building spaces for adults and ways to meet other LGBTQ+ individuals.

More mental health clinicians that are affordable. We have affirming clinicians but they are incredibly expensive or impossible to get appointments.

Education, safe spaces, more things like camp kaleidoscope to help kids learn

Opportunity to meet and socialize with other well educated retired professional gay couples



Support groups and safe spaces for teens

Social connections. Resources for LGBt parents and LGBT families.

Gay owned bossiness. We have lots of events but very few queer owned spaces. Example: anthem no gay staff barely and straight owned.

Informal social spaces that do not center around alcohol or bars, are not virtual, and are drop-in. Ex: LGBTQ+ coffee shop hours, table top or rpg meet-ups, puzzle nights, or even movie nights at the library or similar spaces. Events that skip formal check-ins or icebreakers, and allow for passive participation. Highly structured events can be intimidating and having a "come as you are, go as you please" approach allows folks to simply be present with others, even without active conversation. And for those experiencing isolation or mental health challenges, simply being in a safe, understanding environment can be incredibly beneficial and even a proactive step in suicide prevention. I would love an event where I could be a fly on the wall! Social interaction is challenging!

Transportation assistance is also a huge need for LGBTQ+ community! Services like Uber and Lyft can be risky for LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly those visibly expressing their identity through clothing or appearance. Access to LGBTQ+-friendly transportation, whether from volunteer drivers or folks who are paid to use their personal vehicle to provide services, would be a huge asset to the community!

More all-gender bathrooms, more inclusive language on forms / documents

Events for adults that are alcohol free and sensory friendly

disability/accessibility support and understanding, kink acceptance and education/understanding

More legal protections and rights. More access to affordable gender affirming care.

From what LGBTQ+ friends tell me: gender-affirming medical care and mental healthcare, public spaces that are safe, welcoming and don't center around alcohol

more lgbtq social spaces

Government protection, third spaces for LGBTQ people, more representation of queer, trans and butch/masc individuals in prominent queer organizations

Mental Health support and more education for non LGBTQ members on the challenges we face just for being ourselves.

More places to hang out



I feel supported!

Financial and legal resources specifically for older LGBTQ+ persons.

Ways to connect with other LGBTQ+ people, support services

Events for older LGBTQ+.

There are many senior LGBTQ+ individuals in our community who are very concerned about services related to senior housing, longterm care, lack of cultural competency in health care, long term care, in-home care.

Queen education, queen spaces, especially for older queen community-- lots of LGBT spaces have usurped but underage kids trying to get in somewhere outside of campus.

Social spaces like bars - I dearly wish there was a lesbian bar. Anthem gives me a weird vibe.

Mental Healthcare

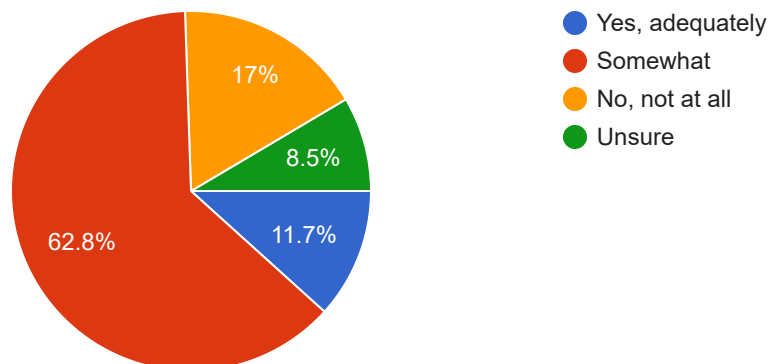
an event like we have during pride week but actually in pride month lol
also collaboration with schools and clubs within schools, i can help organize this. i am involved in many clubs at central high school. you can reach out to me through my email i have listed below

Queer/trans support groups, guidance and community activities for 18-21yr olds starting adult lives


Do you feel represented in media and public discourse?

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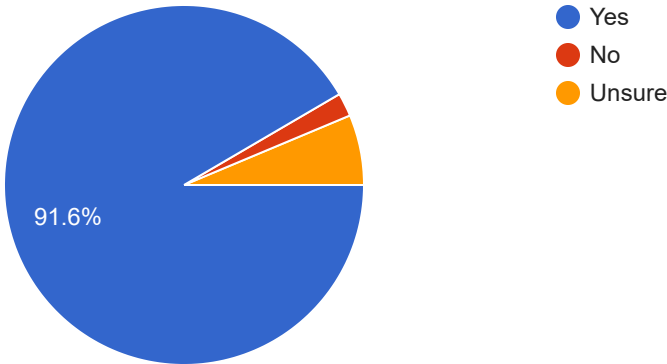
94 responses




Are you aware of any LGBTQ+ community organizations or events in your area?

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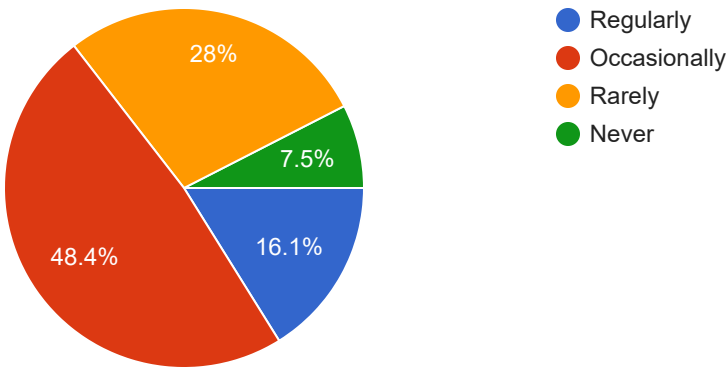
95 responses




If yes, how often do you participate in them?

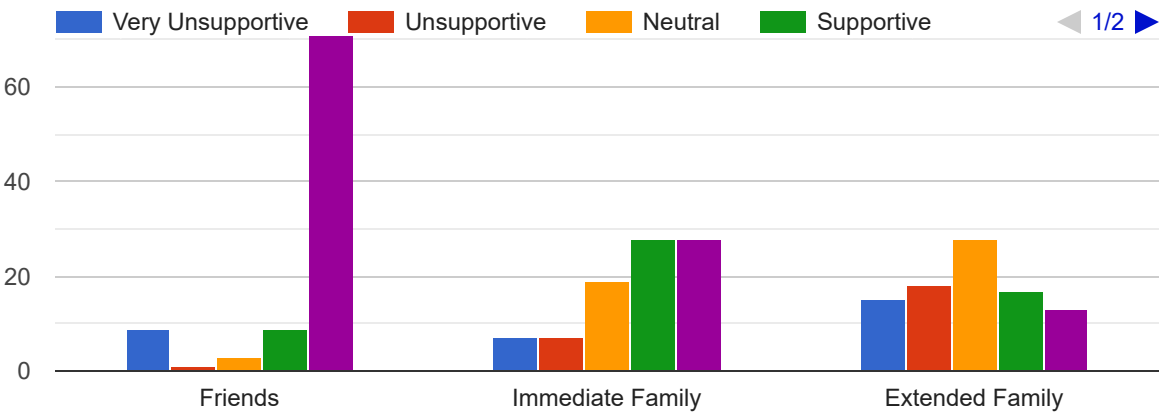
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93 responses



How supportive are your friends and family of your LGBTQ+ identity?

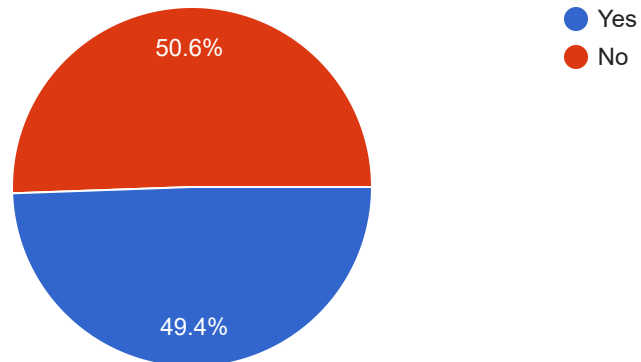
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Would you like to be contacted for additional presentations about the gaps and needs for LGBTQ Support?

 Copy

89 responses



Community Members' Comments Beyond the Brief Survey

1. Three allies/accomplices mentioned that they started to fill out the survey but chose not to complete it.

One explained: "... from the perspective of a person from the least-persecuted group in the world, it feels ick to relate my experiences as an ally/accomplice in the same poll as people who have slurs yelled at them while walking down the street. Like, do I get death threats in my DMs? Totally. Do I worry about it every second of being out in public? No. It's not on the same level and I feel like I'd be doing a disservice to the queer community if I inserted myself into their dataset."

2. A respondent wrote what might not fit in survey comments:

"Idk if you want this feedback... But I didn't feel the survey really asked or addressed, what the obstacles can be for queer ppl, to access queer community here. The intersectionality is vital. Like for me, it's often accessibility issues. For others it might be affordability, or needing child care, or elder respite care, that type thing. I'm grateful ppl want to do more for queer ppl but it's like what about the many queer people that are disabled? Or live in poverty? That type thing. Thank you for seeking input and not just deciding for others!"

"... Ppl with ID or DD are so often left out of any discussions about self identification or sexuality..." Notes that ableism is unfortunately common in queer spaces and adds "... if anything finally kills me, it might be lateral ableism..." and "I'm very happy to answer any follow-up questions... I know many queer ppl and as you noted – many are disabled/chronically ill, so we just don't have the energy to do more, and may ignore something like surveys... I have to remind myself often I'm probably perfectly safe here as a queer person... But wow, the vitriol I've experienced as a disabled/chronically ill person – that's what is scary. I know ppl will stick up for my rights, if I'm denied access, or whatever, bc I'm a woman/AFAB, or bc I'm queer. But they will often assume the worst of me, if I ask for the tiniest reasonable accommodation, or even mention ableism, or an accessibility issue."

“So, being out queer or lesbian – I think that’s fine and safe. It’s the disability comments, that you cannot believe the things that ppl have said to me, or demand of me. Ppl that know better will think I’m suddenly shouldn’t be running my own life bc my body broke more! Not my brain! The “solution” to disabled people’s isolation, or accessibility, etc – usually non-disabled people’s isolation, or accessibility etc – usually non disabled just propose we do our own thing, amongst other disabled. But part of me thinks, between my terrible health plus it seems pretty hopeless for people like me, under this regime.”

“I grew up terrified that I couldn’t pray the gay away but I feel pretty safe here, as just a queer person. I also feel like my fellow queers are pretty safe in the community. So that’s good news for y’all! Most of my fellow queers here, often the main problems are aspects of capitalism, that seem to be magnified by their intersectional identities. And then the disabled queers have their own additional issues.”

“For anything I say to not just be shouting into the void, feels like a miracle rn... I have fought so hard to finally be a somewhat out, or not horribly closeted, self hating queer. And when I finally am getting some things, better in my life, trump and his evil doers, are doing all they can to rip it away! Moreso, bc I’m so ill through no fault of my own. And yet I’m so very privileged, compared to many! I could just weep, that my words matter to someone! Bc I’ve become ever more disposable and invisible, not only as I get more disabled, but when viewed as [an older] woman in our society... I lost my longtime therapist, so now I usually don’t speak at all... But I couldn’t be more delighted that anything I’ve ever said, is useful.”



SAMHSA Statement on 988 Press 3 Option

June 17, 2025

On July 17, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline will no longer silo LGB+ youth services, also known as the “Press 3 option,” to focus on serving *all* help seekers, including those previously served through the Press 3 option.

The Press 3 option was established as a pilot program in Fiscal Year 2022 under a government agreement with a third party. The Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus included a Congressional directive for \$29.7 million to fund the specialized services. Federal funding in FY24 for the Press 3 services increased to \$33 million. As of June 2025, more than \$33 million in funds have been spent to support the subnetworks, fully expending the monies allocated for 988 Lifeline LGB+ subnetwork services.

Everyone who contacts the 988 Lifeline will continue to receive access to skilled, caring, culturally competent crisis counselors who can help with suicidal, substance misuse, or mental health crises, or any other kind of emotional distress. Anyone who calls the Lifeline will continue to receive compassion and help.

Last Updated: 06/17/2025

<https://www.samhsa.gov/about/news-announcements/statements/2025/samhsa-statement-988-press-3-option>

State health agency ensures 988 LGBTQ+ youth services will continue

WGLT | By **Lauren Warnecke, Colleen Holden**

Published July 18, 2025 at 9:55 AM CDT



Melissa Ellin / WGLT

A call operator station at PATH Crisis Center in Bloomington, which operates a 988 call center serving nine counties

The Illinois Department of Human Services [IDHS] will continue providing specialized suicide prevention services for LGBTQ+ youth through Illinois' 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, despite recent **federal funding cuts** to the service.

988 call centers are funded by IDHS. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or SAMHSA, announced last month it was terminating federal funding used to hire specialized counselors trained in suicide prevention for specialized populations such as veterans or gay and lesbian youth.

In McLean County, **PATH Crisis Center** is one such call center **serving nine counties** in Central Illinois. In an IDHS press release issued Thursday, PATH CEO Adam Carter said the loss of LGBTQ+ services "is not just a policy change."

"For many, speaking to someone who shared their identity was the difference between staying silent and reaching out. This is a matter of life and death," Carter said. "At PATH, we remain steadfast in our commitment to every caller."

SAMHSA's decision to end that funding took effect July 17, which **raised concern** among county health officials.

According to IDHS, LGBTQ+ young people are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide compared to their peers. The LGBTQ+ youth subnetwork of the 988 Lifeline supports more than 1,600 calls and 600 chats or texts every month.

“The Trump Administration’s decision to end these specialized services is a cruel reversal of proven practices,” Gov. JB Pritzker said in a statement. “Unequivocally, in Illinois, we stand side by side with each member of the LGBTQIA+ community, including transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming youth. If you need help and you call 988, you’ll be met with the compassion, competence and respect.”

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call, text or chat with the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988, or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741.



WGLT – Made Possible By You

We depend on your support to keep telling stories like this one. WGLT’s mental health coverage is made possible in part by Chestnut Health Systems. Please take a moment to donate now and add your financial support to fully fund this growing coverage area so we can continue to serve the community.

Tags

Local News

Illinois Department of Human Services

PATH Crisis Center

Mental Health

LGBTQ+

IPR



Lauren Warnecke

Lauren Warnecke is a reporter at WGLT. You can reach Lauren at lewarne@ilstu.edu.
See stories by Lauren Warnecke



Colleen Holden

Colleen Holden is a student reporting intern, and part-time local host of NPR’s All Things Considered. She joined the station in 2024.
See stories by Colleen Holden

Support for WGLT comes from

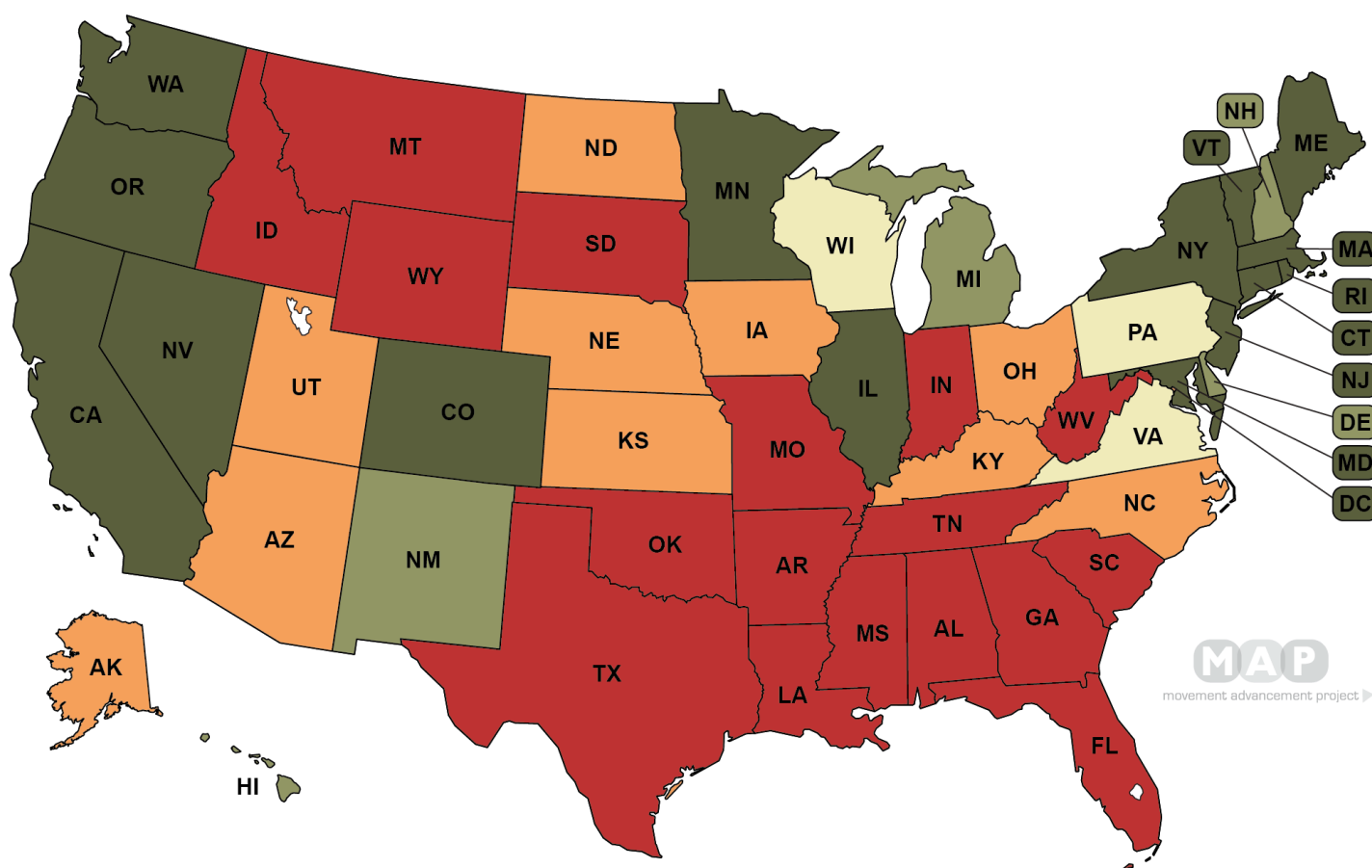


SNAPSHOT: LGBTQ EQUALITY BY STATE

OVERALL POLICY TALLY SEXUAL ORIENTATION GENDER IDENTITY STATE DATA TABLE

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) tracks over 50 different LGBTQ-related laws and policies. This map shows the overall policy tallies (as distinct from sexual orientation or gender identity tallies) for each state, the District of Columbia, and the five populated U.S. territories. A state's policy tally scores the laws and policies within each state that shape LGBTQ people's lives, experiences, and equality. The major categories of laws covered by the policy tally include: Relationship & Parental Recognition, Nondiscrimination, Religious Exemptions, LGBTQ Youth, Health Care, Criminal Justice, and Identity Documents.

Click on any state to view its detailed policy tally and state profile, or click "Choose an Issue" above to view maps on over 50 different LGBTQ-related laws and policies.



U.S. Territories

American Samoa

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Guam

Puerto Rico

U.S. Virgin Islands



Dark Green = High Overall Policy Tally (15 states + D.C.)
 Medium Green = Medium Overall Policy Tally (5 states)
 Yellow = Fair Overall Policy Tally (3 states, 2 territories)
 Orange = Low Overall Policy Tally (10 states, 3 territories)
 Red = Negative Overall Policy Tally (17 states)

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Note that these scores reflect only existing laws and policies. They do not reflect bills currently under consideration, nor the implementation of each state's laws. The tally also does not reflect the social climate in a state, the efforts of advocates, and/or opportunities for future change. States with lower scores might shift rapidly with an influx of resources, and states with higher scores might backslide, or they might expand equality for LGBTQ people in ways that can provide models for other states. In other words, these scores are an excellent measure of the *current* LGBTQ policy landscape across a wide range of issues, but the scores do not necessarily reflect the entire political or social landscape for LGBTQ people.

Each of the over 50 LGBTQ-related laws and policies that MAP tracks earns a score (positive for protective, or negative for harmful). See a state's profile to see its detailed scores across all these policies. For each state, these individual policy scores are then added up to produce a summary tally score. This table shows how a state's tally score determines its categorization.

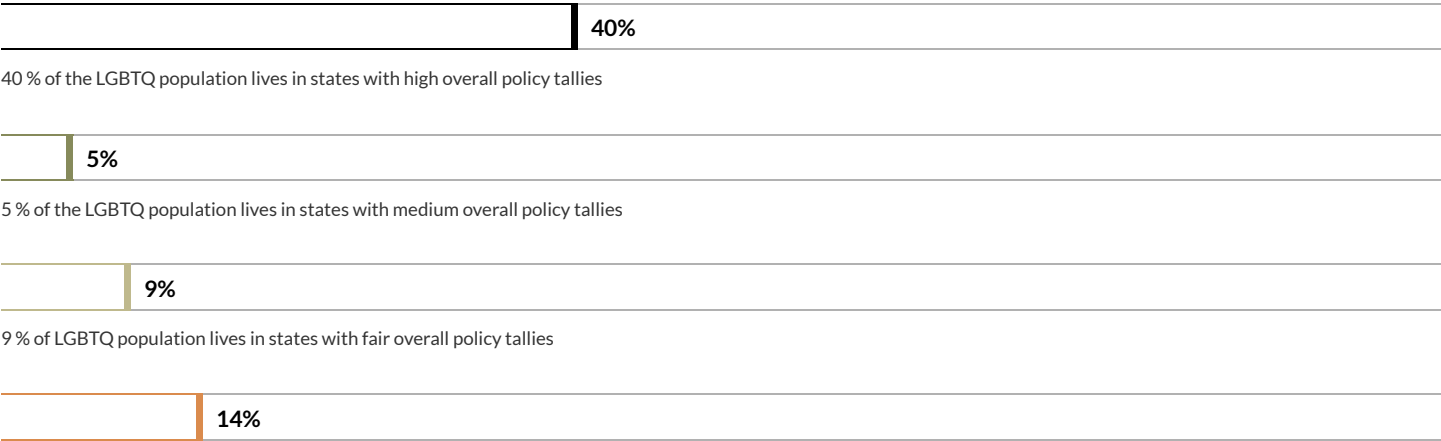
Below are the current scoring thresholds. Each category reflects a percentage range of the total possible points. For example, earning 25-49.9% of the total points possible results in a "Fair" categorization.

CATEGORY	SEXUAL ORIENTATION TALLY	GENDER IDENTITY TALLY	OVERALL TALLY
HIGH (75-100% OF POINTS POSSIBLE)	17.25+	19.5+	36.75+
MEDIUM (50-74.9% OF POINTS POSSIBLE)	11.5 to 17	13 to 19.25	24.5 to 36.5
FAIR (25-49.9% OF POINTS POSSIBLE)	5.75 to 11.25	6 to 12.75	12.25 to 24.25
LOW (0-24.9% OF POINTS POSSIBLE)	0 to 5.5	0 to 5.75	0 to 12
NEGATIVE (<0 POINTS)	<0	<0	<0
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	23	26	49

Recommended citation:
Movement Advancement Project. [Year of access]. "Equality Maps Snapshot: LGBTQ Equality By State." (https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/legal_equality_by_state) (https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/legal_equality_by_state)<https://www.mapresearch.org/equality-maps/> (<https://www.mapresearch.org/equality-maps/>), Accessed [day of access].

Percent of Adult LGBTQ Population Covered by Laws

*Note: These percentages reflect estimates of the LGBTQ adult population living in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Estimates of the LGBTQ adult population in the five inhabited U.S. territories are not available, and so cannot be reflected here.



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32%

32 % of LGBTQ population lives in states with negative overall policy tallies

RELATED RESOURCES

Table: Cutoffs for Each Tally

	Sexual Orientation Tally	Gender Identity Tally	Total Tally
High	11 to 19	8 to 15	19 to 34
Medium	4 to 10.99	3 to 7.99	7 to 18.99
Low	0 to 3.99	0 to 2.99	0 to 6.99
Negative	-5 to -0.01	-5 to -0.01	-10 to -0.01

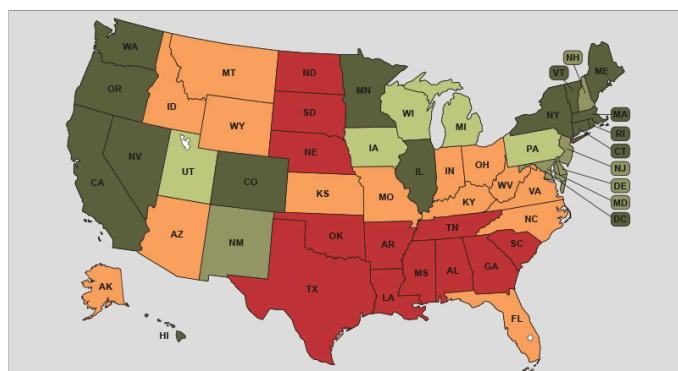
Policy areas examined in this report. States with low or hostile tallies offer few or no protections, or have predominant anti-transgender laws, and/or laws and policies that help transgender people update the gender marker on their identity documents.

FAQ 

POLICY TALLIES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(/state-policy-tally-faq)

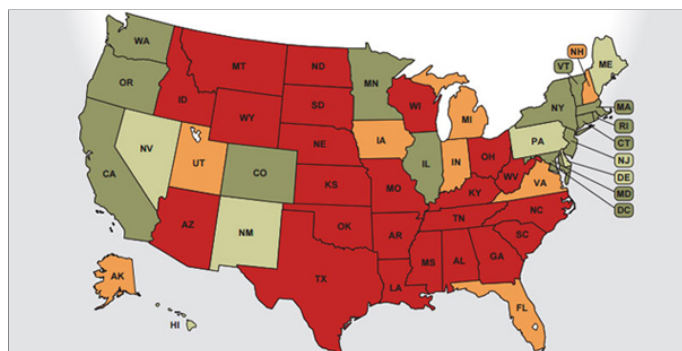
For information on our methodology and rationale behind the creation of the Policy Tallies, [click here](#) to see our Frequently Asked Questions.

REPORT 

MAPPING LGBTQ EQUALITY: 2010 TO 2020

(<https://www.lgbtmap.org/2020-tally-report>)

February 2020 - This report offers a fresh perspective on the current legal status of LGBTQ people and tallies nearly 40 LGBTQ-related laws and policies across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. territories.

REPORT 

MAPPING TRANSGENDER EQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES

(/mapping-trans-equality)

February 2017 - To help make sense of the current policy landscape in the states, this report looks at legal equality for transgender people across the country. The gender identity tally is comprised of 25 state laws and policies in five key categories: Non-Discrimination, LGBT Youth, Health and Safety, Ability to Correct the Name and Gender Marker on Identity Documents, and Adoption and Parenting.

REPORT 

MAPPING LGBT EQUALITY IN AMERICA

(/file/Mapping%20Equality%20for%20LGBT%20Americans%20Post%20SCOTUS.
May 2015 - Mapping LGBT Equality in America
(/file/Mapping%20Equality%20for%20LGBT%20Americans%20Post%20SCOTUS.pdf)

sets out to identify and explain the key gaps in legal equality for LGBT Americans by introducing the major state and local laws and policies that protect or harm LGBT people, providing a breakdown of those laws and policies by state, and showing how protections for LGBT Americans vary based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

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STATE POLICY TALLIES

([equality-maps/legal_equality_by_state](#))

Policy Tallies provide an overview of laws and policies that exist in each state. The major categories of laws covered by the policy tally include: Marriage and Relationship Recognition, Adoption and Parenting, Non-Discrimination, Safe Schools, Health and Safety, and the Ability for Transgender People to Correct the Gender Marker on Identity Documents.



POLICY TALLIES: INFOGRAPHICS

([state-policy-tally-infographics-SCOTUS](#))

From the pages of Mapping LGBT Equality in America is a set of shareable infographics, including: 'Equality Wheel: LGBT Policy Tallies by State,' 'Percent of Population Covered,' 'State Tallies if the Supreme Court Grants Nationwide Marriage for Same-Sex Couples,' and more.

Data current as of 07/08/2025

THIS MAP IS POWERED BY



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([HTTPS://WWW.MAPRESEARCH.ORG/EQUALITY-MAPS](https://www.mapresearch.org/equality-maps))