

# 2014 LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER SURVEY REPORT: DAVID BOHNETT FOUNDATION CYBERCENTER PROGRAM

*August 2014*



## This report was authored by:

### **CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers**

CenterLink was founded in 1994 as a member-based coalition to support the development of strong, sustainable LGBT community centers. A fundamental goal of CenterLink's work is to help build the capacity of these centers to address the social, cultural, health and political advocacy needs of LGBT community members across the country. For 20 years, CenterLink has played an important role in addressing the challenges centers face by helping them to improve their organizational and service delivery capacity, access public resources and engage their regional communities in the grassroots social justice movement.

### **Movement Advancement Project**

Launched in 2006, the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent, intellectual resource for the LGBT movement. MAP's mission is to provide independent and rigorous research, insight and analysis that help speed full equality for LGBT people.

**Disclaimer:** *The opinions expressed in this report reflect the best judgment of CenterLink and MAP based on analysis of data collected from participating LGBT community centers. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of our funders, CenterLink members, or other organizations.*

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a companion report to the 2014 Community Center Survey Report, coauthored by the Movement Advancement Project and CenterLink. The report is based on the responses from 111 participating centers, although all centers did not respond to all questions. When relevant, the report separately examines centers with budgets equal to or less than \$150,000 per year (“small centers”) and centers with budgets greater than \$150,000 per year (“large centers”). The David Bohnett Foundation’s CyberCenter program provides funding for computer equipment at 61 LGBT community centers and college campuses nationwide. The Foundation asked MAP and CenterLink to include survey questions specifically related to this program to help evaluate its impact on community center patrons.

## OVERVIEW

Ninety-four centers answered questions about computer resources and whether they have centers or spaces where patrons can use computers. Of these responding centers, 78% provide computer resources for their patrons, for a total of 21 small centers and 52 large centers who reported they provide computer services to their clients.

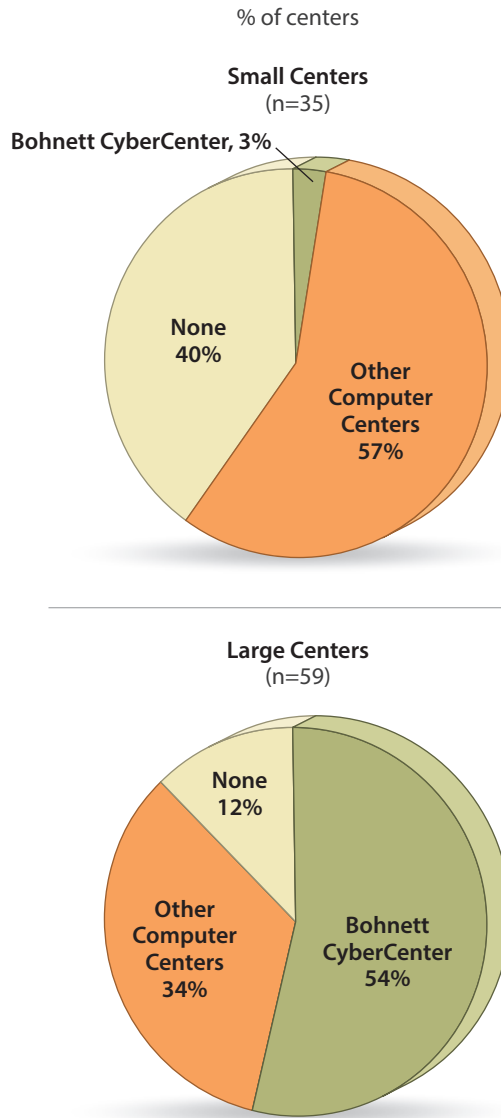
As shown in *Figure 1*, the vast majority of large centers (88%) offer computer services; more than half of these (54% of large centers, or 32 centers) do so through the David Bohnett CyberCenter Program (referred to as “CyberCenters” for the rest of this brief). Only 60% of small responding centers offer computer services; and of these, only one center is part of the Bohnett CyberCenter program.

The next two sections examine centers’ computer resources and compare CyberCenters to centers that are not part of the program but that still provide computer resources (referred to as “other centers”).

## TYPES OF COMPUTER RESOURCES

As *Table 1* shows, CyberCenters have, on average, one more computer than other centers, and the computers at CyberCenters are, on average, slightly newer. Both CyberCenters and other centers offer programs from the Microsoft Office software suite such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Several CyberCenters and other centers mentioned they also have Adobe programs such as

**Figure 1: Centers Offering Computing Services**

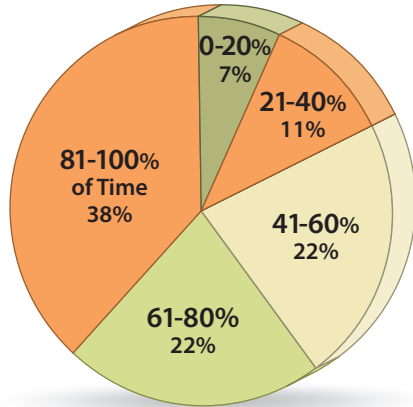


Note: May not total 100% due to rounding.

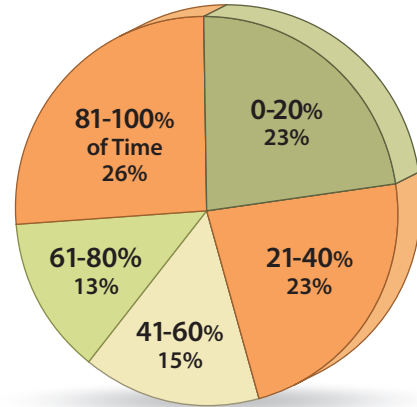
Table 1: Numbers and Ages of Computer Equipment		
Averages for centers with computer centers	CyberCenters n=33	Other Community Centers n=45
No. of computers	8	7
Age of computers	3 years	4 years
No. of printers	1	2
Age of printers	3 years	3 years
Average # of monthly users	315	48

Figure 2: Computer Center Usage

**CyberCenter Usage**  
% of Time Center is Open (n=27 Cybercenters)



**Other Center Usage**  
% of Time Center is Open (n=27 Other Centers)



Note: May not total 100% due to rounding.

The CyberCenter is one of the top programs used at our Center.

- A large center in the Northeast

Photoshop, browsers like Internet Explorer and Chrome, and communication software like Skype. A few centers use freeware or shareware such as Linux or Ubuntu on their computers to reduce costs.

The majority of the 33 CyberCenters do not charge for use of their computers (four CyberCenters charge a nominal fee and three of those offer some free usage), while six centers charge for printing. Only one of the 45 other centers charges patrons for use of its computer center.

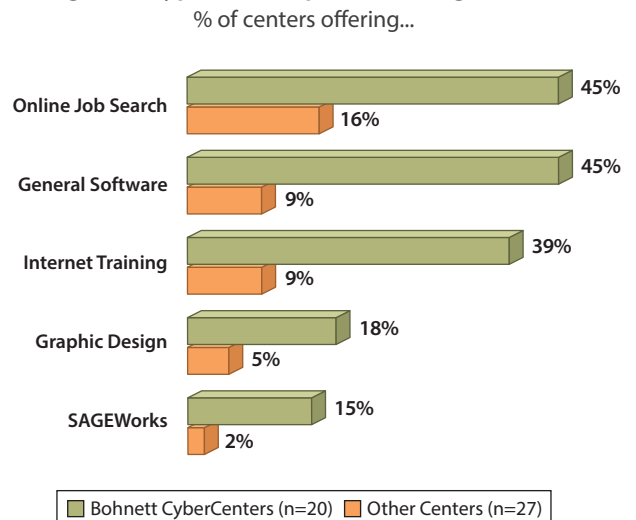
CyberCenters reported that patrons rarely visit for the sole purpose of using the computers; 77% of reporting CyberCenters said that fewer than one in five of their patrons visit for this primary purpose. Other centers reported similar findings: 84% said fewer than one in five of their patrons visited the center primarily to use the computers.

CyberCenters are used more frequently than computer resources at other centers (see Figure 2); 81% of CyberCenters reported their computers are being used more than 40% of the time, compared to only 54% of other

centers. Correspondingly, other centers reported less of a wait time to use their computers than CyberCenters.

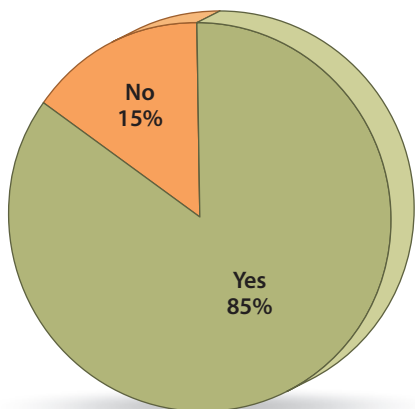
As Figure 3 shows, CyberCenters are far more likely to offer various computer training programs compared to other centers, including general software training, online job search training, and general internet training. CyberCenters are also more likely to have someone on staff who is able to provide competent training and technical assistance to patrons using computer resources (see Figure 4). Few centers of either type offer graphic design or SAGEWorks training.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 3: Types of Computer Training Offered

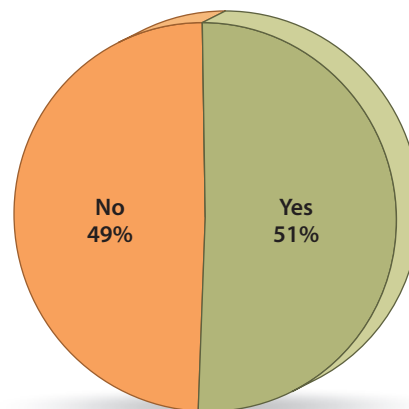


**Figure 4: Staff Member Available to Provide Training and Technical Assistance**

**Staff Member Able to Provide Training and Technical Assistance**  
% of CyberCenters (n=27 CyberCenters)



**Staff Member Able to Provide Training and Technical Assistance**  
% of Other Centers (n=39 Other Centers)



Note: May not total 100% due to rounding.

## USE OF COMPUTER CENTERS

The average CyberCenter serves 315 patrons each month compared to 48 patrons at other centers (see *Figure 5*). Centers with computer resources report that their patrons use these resources for a variety of reasons. Conducting job searches, keeping in touch with family and friends, and entertainment were the top three activities of computer center users at both CyberCenters and other centers.

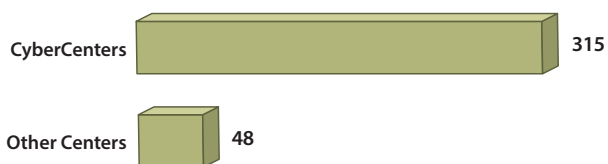
Given that job searches are among the top activities, it is not surprising that both CyberCenters and other centers have seen demand for computer resources rise over the past few years of stubbornly high unemployment. Half of all centers (50% of CyberCenters and 51% of other centers) report that demand for computer resources has increased moderately to greatly in the past year (see *Figure 6*).

As demand for computer resources increases, LGBT community centers report challenges in providing

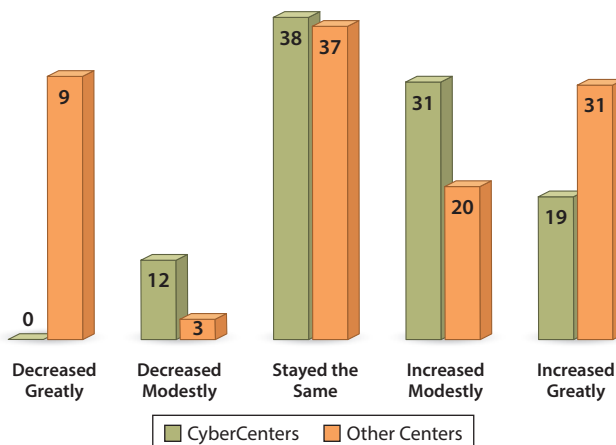
[Our CyberCenter is a] great resource to the community.

- A large center in the South

**Figure 5: Average Number of Patrons Served Each Month**  
Average Number of Patrons Per Center



**Figure 6: Demand for Computer Center Resources**  
% of Centers (n=26 CyberCenters, n=35 Other Centers)



<sup>1</sup> SAGEWorks is a national employment support program for LGBT people age 40 and older that expands participants' job hunting skills and career options, and connects employers to diverse high-caliber candidates.

## Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center

In our community there are people who do not have their own computers or cannot afford access to the internet from home. The majority of visitors to the CyberCenter have been people living in temporary and transitional housing, those who have lost employment (often due to transgender identity) and some students. Recently a transgender woman who is homeless sought out the Center to help her to relocate to California. After establishing contact with housing services providers via the phone, she then utilized the CyberCenter to maintain communication independently with the service providers via email (she has no phone of her own). After using the CyberCenter for this purpose almost daily for the past month, she has successfully negotiated her relocation plans and has a bus ticket for her travel to Sacramento and an appointment with the LGBTQ Center there.

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adequate services. When asked to identify their top three challenges, CyberCenters ranked the lack of a dedicated staff member or volunteer to manage or oversee computer resources as their number-one challenge. Other centers also ranked lack of dedicated staff among their top three challenges, but the biggest challenge faced by other centers is a limited amount of equipment. Other centers also listed the following as challenges: outdated hardware (such as printers and computers) and outdated software (such as operating systems and browsers).

## CYBERCENTER PATRONS

CyberCenters were asked to provide the demographics of patrons who use their computer resources. Nineteen centers collect this data through surveys, intake forms, or staff or volunteer observation. In general, CyberCenters reported that their computer users were disproportionately likely to be young, male, transgender, people of color, and low-income.

**Gender and Transgender Status.** On average, 60% of CyberCenter patrons were men, 34% women, and 10%

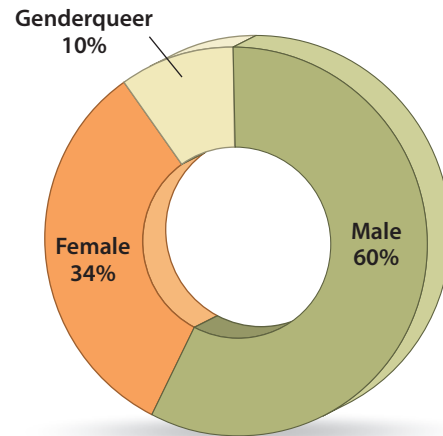
Our CyberCenter *is a valued resource.*

- A large center in New England

**Figure 7: Gender Identity of Cyber Center Patrons**

% of patrons (n=19 centers)

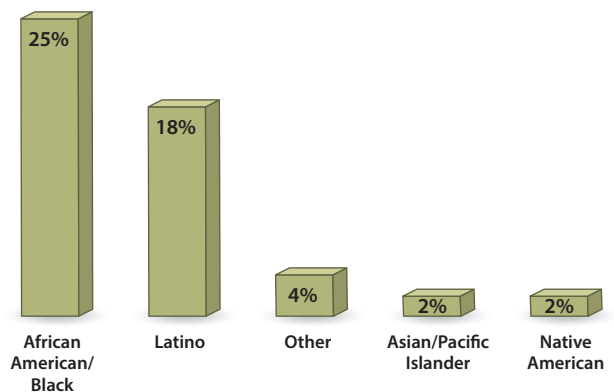
10% of Patrons Also Identify as Transgender



Note: May not total 100% due to rounding.

**Figure 8: Race/Ethnicity of CyberCenter Patrons**

% of patrons (n=19 centers)



Note: Because Patrons may identify as more than one race, these percentages are not mutually exclusive.

identified as genderqueer/other (see *Figure 7*). Sixteen percent of CyberCenters reported that 75% or more of their patrons were men. CyberCenters reported that an average of 11% of their patrons were transgender.

**Race/Ethnicity.** Thirty-seven percent of CyberCenters reported that half of their patrons or

more were people of color (see *Figure 8* on the previous page). Three centers (16%) reported that half or more of their patrons were African American, and one more center reported that half of their patrons were Latino(a).

**Age.** Unsurprisingly perhaps, CyberCenters reported that over half (average of 51%) of their patrons were under 30 (see *Figure 9*). On average, CyberCenters reported that 18% of their patrons were over 50.

**Household Income and Access to Computers at Home.** CyberCenters reported that an average of over 90% of their patrons had a household income of less than \$30,000, with an average of 60% of patrons having an income under \$15,000 (see *Figure 10*). Over half the CyberCenters reporting this data reported that 70% or more of their patrons had a household income below \$15,000. Unsurprisingly, on average, only 23% of patrons have access to a computer at home and only 39% have access to a smartphone that connects to the internet (see *Figure 11*).

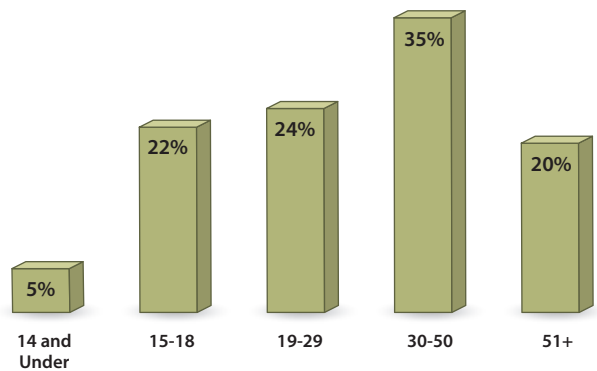
**Educational Attainment.** On average, CyberCenters reported that three-quarters (71%) of their patrons had attended some high school or had a high school diploma or equivalent (see *Figure 12*). Forty-two percent of reporting CyberCenters said that the majority of their patrons had only attended some high school.

## CONCLUSION

CyberCenters help LGBT Community Centers serve their patrons along a number of spectrums: technology competence, job hunting and training, and staying in touch with community. The ability to offer free computer services allows centers to serve a deep need in their patrons' lives. Unfortunately, centers are already stretched thin with few resources and few trained staff. The David Bohnett CyberCenter program can help fill those gaps by providing hardware and technical assistance to centers.

**Figure 9: Age of CyberCenter Patrons**

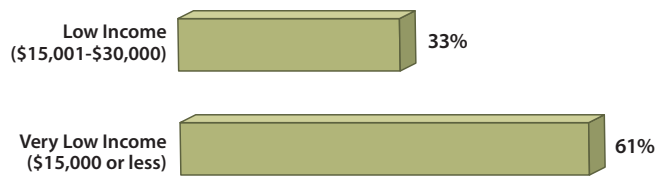
% of patrons (n=19 centers)



Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding

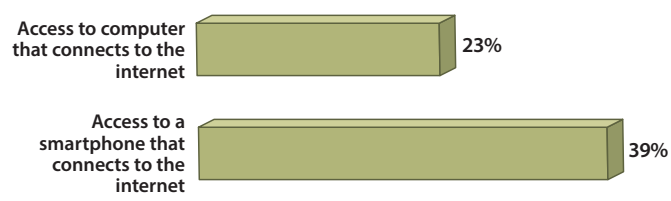
**Figure 10: Household Income of CyberCenter Patrons**

% of patrons (n=19 centers)



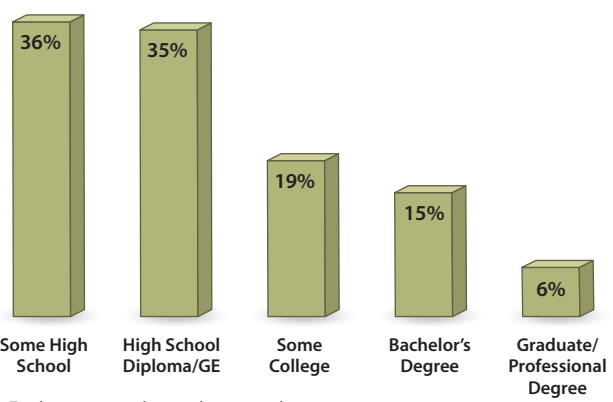
**Figure 11: Access to Computers At Home**

% of patrons (n=19 centers)



**Figure 12: Educational Attainment of CyberCenter Patrons**

% of patrons (n=19 centers)



Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding



movement advancement project ▶

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