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# Understanding LGBT Donors:

## LGBT People in Rural Areas and Small Towns

Understanding LGBT Donors series: Report VI of VI



The LGBT Giving Project

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## Introduction

This report is part of the *Understanding LGBT Donors* project, a series of in-depth analyses of the donation-related behaviors and opinions of several key subpopulations of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Directed and funded by the LGBT Giving Project, the series is intended to advance understanding of indicators and motivators for donating to LGBT organizations among these groups. By focusing on specific subpopulations, the project aims to provide insight and opportunities for organizations to tailor their fundraising strategies to better reach and appeal to various sets of donors. The full series of reports is available to member organizations here: [Understanding LGBT Donors](#).

This report focuses on LGBT donors living in rural areas and small towns. It examines their feelings and actions as donors to LGBT organizations in comparison to LGBT donors living in urban and suburban areas. Based on their response to the survey question “How would you describe the area where you live?” respondents were split into two groups: rural (including people living in rural areas and small towns) and urban (including people living in large cities, small cities, and suburbs near cities). Included in this report are analyses of various research questions as well as research-based recommendations for increasing donor engagement among LGBT donors living in rural areas and small towns. The findings from this analysis also point to several areas for future research to understand how LGBT donors living in rural areas and small towns engage with LGBT organizations and how they see their giving overall.

The report *Understanding LGBT Donors: LGBT People in Rural Areas and Small Towns* is organized into the following sections:

**Key Findings and Actionable Insights** – An overview of important results and their connections to potential fundraising strategies.

**Sample and Demographics** – A detailed description of the methods used to define the sample of LGBT people living in rural areas and small towns in this analysis, as well as selected comparisons between these respondents and those living in urban areas for contextual purposes.

**Key Research Questions** – A look at the donor behaviors and attitudes of LGBT people living in rural areas and small towns.

**Future Research Areas** – Suggestions for research to explore unanswered questions and provide deeper and broader understanding.

## About the LGBT Giving Project

Launched in 2011, the LGBT Giving Project is a research and testing program aimed at increasing giving by LGBT individuals to the LGBT movement for equality and to LGBT community organizations. This research has looked at who has the will and the capacity to give, what motivates them and what message frames could inspire greater giving. The project has also worked with LGBT statewide advocacy groups and community centers to test messaging and strengthen fundraising capacity.

It has received financial support from the Walter and Evelyn Haas, Jr. Fund; Anonymous; Horizons Foundation; Kevin J. Mossier Foundation; Pride Foundation; Small Change Foundation; D-5 Coalition; and Henry Van Ameringen Foundation.

The analysis that informs this report is based on data from the LGBT Donor Survey conducted online between October and December of 2013. The data is based on responses from 8,323 known donors (6,755 LGBT donors) who made a gift to one or more of 56 U.S. LGBT organizations in the six years prior. Nearly 700 (684) LGBT people living in rural areas and small towns responded to the survey, representing 10% of all LGBT respondents. We refer to this group as rural LGBT people.

Several potential limitations of the data are important to consider. First, compared to the urban group, this is a relatively small sample. Additionally, because the survey did not include identifying geographic information like a ZIP code, county, or state, we are unable to determine the extent to which the sample reflects the diversity of individuals living in rural communities. Although there may be similarities between rural areas across the country, rural areas may differ across regions, particularly with regard to income, occupation, and political leaning.

Given the timing of the survey, it's also important to consider some of these findings within a particular context. The political and cultural landscape of the LGBT movement has shifted notably since the survey was fielded, particularly under the Trump administration and after the procurement of nationwide same-sex marriage rights. As a result, responses may differ if survey data were collected today. Further, the survey was sent only to those who have already donated to LGBT organizations, and, specifically, only those who donated to the LGBT organizations participating in this research. Therefore, these findings are not entirely representative of the overall LGBT community nor of all LGBT donors, though any potential differences between these groups has not been explored.

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## Key Findings and Actionable Insights

**FINDING:** Rural LGBT people are more likely to give to organizations with a national focus and political goals than to state and local organizations and those whose main priority is service provision.

This suggests that rural LGBT people may be more likely to donate to the extent that an organization demonstrates a commitment to national issues and success in achieving legal and political objectives. Organizations could consider appealing to this population's preferences in myriad ways, including via mission statements, clear and publicly available policy objectives, or blogs and earned media highlighting involvement in legal and political victories. Organizations should be sure to include donation asks with these materials.

Given rural LGBT respondents' overall preference for supporting national organizations, those groups that fit this description can also consider ways in which they can be a conduit for funding to other organizations. By strengthening strategic partnerships with state and local organizations, particularly those that provide crucial services to LGBT people, larger organizations are uniquely positioned to leverage donations from rural LGBT donors and others to support and sustain under-resourced organizations.

**FINDING:** Despite lower annual incomes, rural LGBT people report similar levels of household wealth compared to their urban peers; 21% of rural LGBT people have household wealth over \$1 million compared to 23% of urban LGBT people. This is likely due to capital investments and inheritances, as well as real estate and small business

holdings. Also, although rural LGBT people gave smaller total amounts to LGBT organizations compared to their urban and suburban counterparts, they were equally likely to devote a majority of their overall charitable giving to LGBT causes. Rural LGBT people were also equally likely to have a will or trust in place.

Given their comparable levels of household wealth, rural LGBT people should not be overlooked by LGBT organizations as a source of donations. They may also be a worthwhile population to solicit for planned giving to LGBT organizations, including real estate.

**FINDING:** Among rural LGBT people, the main reasons cited for decreasing or ending donations to an organization were over-solicitation and an impression that the organization was run inefficiently or seemed ineffective. Rural LGBT people also cited receiving too many asks for donations. Compared to urban LGBT people, rural LGBT people report lower incomes and donate smaller amounts to LGBT organizations. However, as noted above, they still devote a majority of their giving to LGBT causes.

Over-solicitation could contribute to the impression that an organization is run inefficiently, as it suggests over-spending and a lack of organization and coordinated fundraising. When reaching out to rural LGBT people, increased personalization and targeting may result in increased donations and stronger donor retention. It may also benefit organizations to demonstrate how funds are used alongside highlights of their programmatic and political outcomes in their appeals.

**FINDING:** The most successful established methods to solicit donations from rural LGBT people (i.e., the methods used to reach rural LGBT people that resulted in a donation) were through mail, by email, and by personal asks. Among rural LGBT people, bars and festivals are far less successful sources of donations compared to mail and personal asks. This preference for one-on-one contacts may be related to the fact that rural LGBT people were less likely to be “out” than urban LGBT people. In addition, there may be fewer LGBT bars and festivals in the rural areas where they live.

Overall, it appears that rural LGBT people respond well to most methods of solicitations (with the exception of street solicitation and phone calls), with little variation among the methods.

The success of mail over in-person asks is likely due, in part, to lack of access to LGBT establishments and festivals. Organizations seeking increased donations from rural LGBT people should explore diversifying the means of donor solicitation.

Organizations also may want to explore ways to reach rural LGBT donors—and all LGBT donors—that do not risk inadvertently outing them. This could mean sending mailings that do not have “LGBT” printed on the envelope.

**FINDING:** Contrary to the typical narrative about people living in rural areas, rural LGBT people were similar to urban LGBT people in their identification as “very liberal” and “somewhat liberal.”

This may suggest that appeals that emphasize progressive values and use liberal messages may resonate with rural LGBT people.

## Sample and Demographics

The sample of rural LGBT people includes 684 respondents, representing 10% of the total LGBT respondents. Of rural LGBT people, 270 reported living in a rural area (4% of the total sample), and 414 reported living in a small town (6% of the total sample).

Overall, the sample of rural LGBT people was mostly white, older and female. The vast majority of respondents in this group had completed some college, were over age 50, and were in a long-term partnership (married, domestic partnered, or cohabitating).

Below are key demographic points about the survey's rural LGBT respondents. Percentages refer to the proportion of the responding sample indicating their status in the specified group. Comparisons between rural LGBT people and another group ("more likely than" or "less likely than") are in reference to urban and suburban LGBT people, unless otherwise indicated. Comparison statements are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level, unless otherwise indicated (e.g. slightly less, slightly more). Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Similarly, aggregated percentages in the findings may not match numbers in the tables due to rounding.

### Basic information

- ❖ Women were **overrepresented** in the sample of rural LGBT people: 42% of rural LGBT respondents were women, compared to 34% of the urban LGBT respondents.

	Male	Female	Other
<b>Rural</b>	56%	42%	2%
<b>Urban</b>	64%	34%	2%

- ❖ Rural LGBT people were **less likely** to identify as gay and **more likely** to identify as lesbian or bisexual: 53% identified as gay, 31% as lesbian, and 16% as bisexual.

	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual
<b>Rural</b>	53%	31%	16%
<b>Urban</b>	63%	24%	13%

- ❖ Rural LGBT people were **equally likely** to identify as transgender: 5.6% identified as transgender, compared to 5.2% of the urban LGBT population.

	Yes, Transgender
Rural	5.6%
Urban	5.2%

- Rural LGBT people were **older**: 15% were under age 40, 15% were between 40 and 50 years old, and 70% were over age 50. Among the urban LGBT respondents, 55% were over age 50.

	Under 18	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75+
Rural	0%	3%	4%	3%	5%	7%	8%	13%	13%	13%	24%	7%
Urban	0%	1%	5%	8%	9%	8%	12%	13%	12%	12%	14%	4%

- Rural LGBT people are nearly all white: 91% of rural LGBT people identified as white/Caucasian, 3% as mixed-race, 1% as Latinx<sup>1</sup>, and 1% as African American. Among the urban LGBT respondents, 87% identified as white/Caucasian, 3% as mixed-race, 3% as Latinx, and 2% as African American.

	White/Caucasian	African-American/Black	Hispanic/Latino	API	Mixed Race
Rural	91%	1%	1%	0%	3%
Urban	87%	2%	3%	2%	3%

- Rural LGBT people were **slightly more likely** to identify as “Very Liberal:” 54% identified as Very Liberal, and 30% identified as Somewhat Liberal.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Moderate	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Rural	54%	30%	11%	2%	1%
Urban	51%	33%	12%	3%	0%

- Rural LGBT people were **slightly less likely** to attend religious services: 60% hardly ever or never attend religious services, compared to 57% of urban respondents.

<sup>1</sup> Latinx is the gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina and even Latin@. Used by scholars, activists and an increasing number of journalists, Latinx is quickly gaining popularity among the general public.

	More than once a week	Once a week	Only for holidays or special occasions	Hardly ever or never
<b>Rural</b>	3%	9%	10%	60%
<b>Urban</b>	3%	9%	14%	57%

- ❖ Rural LGBT people were **less likely** to be “out”: 74% generally considered themselves “out” as LGBT, and 55% were out at work. In comparison, 91% of urban LGBT people were “out,” and 65% were out at work.

	Yes, out	I am out at work
<b>Rural</b>	74%	55%
<b>Urban</b>	91%	65%

### Family and Workplace

- ❖ Rural LGBT people were **more likely** to be married or partnered, but nearly equally likely to be single: 37% were married, 11% were in a civil union or domestic partnership, and 24% were single. By comparison, 29% of the urban respondents were married, 13% were in a civil union or domestic partnership, and 22% were single.

	Married or in a Civil Union or Domestic Partnership	In a relationship and living together	Widowed	Single
<b>Rural</b>	48%	13%	2%	24%
<b>Urban</b>	42%	16%	2%	22%

- ❖ Rural LGBT people were **more likely** to report having children: 29% reported having children, compared to 21% of the rest of the population.

	Has Children	No Children
<b>Rural</b>	29%	70%
<b>Urban</b>	21%	78%

- Rural LGBT people were **slightly less likely** to be highly educated: 82% had at least a college degree, and 50% had a master's degree or Ph.D. By comparison, 87% of the rest of the population had at least a college degree, and 54% had a master's degree or Ph.D.

	Some College	Graduated College	Graduate school (master's degree or Ph.D.)
Rural	14%	32%	50%
Urban	9%	34%	54%

- Rural LGBT people were **less likely** to be employed, part- and full-time, but **more likely** to be retired: 60% were employed; and 28% were retired. Among the urban LGBT respondents, 74% were employed, part and full-time, and 16% were retired.

	Employed Part-time	Employed Full-time	Retired	Unemployed and looking for a job	Student
Rural	13%	47%	28%	2%	5%
Urban	11%	63%	16%	3%	3%

### Financials and Donations

- Rural LGBT people reported **lower annual incomes**: 25% reported an income over \$100k, 31% reported an income between \$50k and \$100K, and 34% reported an income under \$50k

Income	\$20,000 or less	\$20,001-\$30,000	\$30,001-\$40,000	\$40,001-\$50,000	\$50,001-\$60,000	\$60,001-\$80,000	\$80,001-\$100,000	\$100,001-\$200,000	\$200,001 or more
Rural	12%	7%	7%	8%	7%	12%	12%	18%	7%
Urban	6%	5%	6%	7%	8%	13%	11%	24%	13%

- Rural LGBT people reported **relatively equal levels of household wealth**: 21% have household wealth over \$1 million, and 41% have household wealth between \$100k and \$1 million.

Wealth	Less than \$25,000	\$25,001-\$50,000	\$50,001-\$100,000	\$100,001-\$200,000	\$200,001-\$300,000	\$300,001-\$400,000	\$400,001-\$500,000	\$500,001-\$750,000	\$750,001-\$1,000,000	\$1,000,001-\$3,000,000	More Than \$3,000,000
Rural	10%	5%	8%	10%	7%	4%	5%	8%	7%	15%	6%
Urban	10%	5%	7%	10%	6%	5%	5%	7%	8%	16%	7%

❖ Rural LGBT people directed similar proportions of their charitable giving to LGBT organizations when compared to urban LGBT people, but they donated smaller amounts overall.

What portion of their charitable giving goes to LGBT causes?	Rural LGBT	Urban LGBT
0-25%	34%	38%
25.1-50%	34%	29%
50.1-75%	17%	18%
75.1-100%	16%	15%

How much did they give?	Rural LGBT	Urban LGBT
\$20 or less	8%	4%
\$21 to \$50	12%	6%
\$51 to \$100	17%	11%
\$101 to \$200	18%	10%
\$201 to \$300	11%	13%
\$301 to \$500	12%	11%
\$501 to \$1,000	8%	12%
\$1,001-\$2,500	7%	12%
\$2,501-\$5,000	1%	6%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	1%	5%
More than \$10,000	1%	3%
None in the last 12 months	3%	3%

# Key Research Questions

Below are data slices aimed at measuring the donor behavior of rural LGBT people, including questions such as what drives rural LGBT people to donate to LGBT organizations, how they are asked for donations, and what is likely to discourage their continued donations. Responses to each measure are shown in a color-coded table (darker-shaded cells indicating higher proportions of favorable responses) and key data points are called out.

Each analysis is based on the overall sample of rural LGBT people. Scores for subsections of this population (e.g., people living in rural areas and people living in small towns) are pulled out or noted where statistically significant between-group differences were found. Several survey items are referred to by their shortened names (e.g., Message Frames) and the full text of the items is included in an appendix.

## What messages motivate them to give?

People are motivated to give to LGBT organizations differently based on their own experiences and values. The survey presented a series of statements (see box) describing the motivations that some people have given for why they donate to LGBT organizations. Participants were asked to indicate if they share that motivation or not when thinking about giving to LGBT organizations.

### Message Frames

**Frame: American Freedom.** is one of America's most enduring values. It's a word that gets thrown about a lot, but when you don't have it, you know it – like when you're not able to build a life with the person you love. That's why I give to LGBT organizations.

**Frame: Care for those less fortunate.** From an early age, I was taught to care for those less fortunate. Though I'm doing well in life, many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, especially those living in more conservative states, don't have it as easy. That's why I give to LGBT organizations.

**Frame: We're no different.** I'm no different than anyone else. I work hard, pay taxes, and try to make my community a better place. That's why, as a **(lesbian/gay person/bisexual person)**, I want to be treated the same as everyone else. That's why I give to LGBT organizations.

**Frame: Equality.** The United States is built on the idea of equality for all. Yet, for too many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans, equality is not a reality. That is why I give to LGBT organizations.

**Frame: Pride.** I've always felt really proud to be a **(gay person, lesbian, bisexual person)**. It has shaped who I am and how I live my life. I support LGBT organizations as an expression of my pride and the pride I have in my community.

**Frame: Giving Back.** I have had so many blessings in my life that it is important to me to give back. I make contributions to LGBT organizations as a way to give back.

**Frame: Legacy.** When I leave this earth, I'd like to know that I made a difference, even a small one. One reason I contribute to LGBT organizations is to ensure that I leave a legacy behind when I pass on.

**Frame: Stronger Together.** I believe we are stronger together than alone. I give to LGBT organizations to make sure that we are able to make progress on behalf of all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

**Frame: Who will care for us?** As lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, we should take care of one another, because too many of us still face rejection from our families or discrimination in our lives. If we don't support one another and our community, who will?

- ❖ Equality, Stronger Together, and Who Will Care for Us? were the most compelling message frames among rural LGBT people.
- ❖ Giving Back was more compelling for rural LGBT people than urban LGBT people.

Messaging Frames	Rural LGBT	Urban LGBT
Equality	52%	53%
Stronger Together	44%	40%
Who will care for us?	43%	36%
We're no different	41%	37%
American Freedom	41%	39%
Care for those less Fortunate	31%	27%
Giving Back	35%	27%
Pride	26%	22%
Legacy	20%	16%

**What “identity frames” make them more likely to give?**

The survey catalogued a number of statements made by organizations about why it is important to give to a particular LGBT organization; these are known as “identity frames” (see box). Participants were asked to indicate if the frame made them more or less likely to want to give to that organization.

**Identity Frames**

**The Advocate.** We must be advocates for our own equality – recognizing the dignity that comes from standing up and being counted.

**The Activist.** We will only create change in America if we fight back against intolerance and hate.

**The Game Changer.** To make progress, we must do what some say cannot be done: Transform our nation’s laws on behalf of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

**The Caregiver.** We must care for those less fortunate than us, including gay and transgender youth who are bullied and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people who face employment discrimination.

**Sage.** We must work to change the hearts and minds of Americans – from politicians and pastors to mothers and fathers.

<b>Identity Frames</b>	<b>Rural LGBT</b>	<b>Urban LGBT</b>
The Advocate	39%	41%
The Activist	39%	44%
The Game Changer	39%	42%
The Caregiver	38%	39%
Sage	34%	38%

- ❖ Rural LGBT people indicated that The Advocate (39%), The Activist (39%), and The Game Changer (39%) identity frames were equally likely to motivate them to give. In contrast, urban LGBT people prioritized The Activist (44%) and The Game Changer (42%) frames.

### **What messages spur more planned giving?**

The survey also presented a number of message frames describing motivations for making planned gifts to LGBT organizations. Respondents were asked which frames resonated most strongly with them.

- ❖ Among rural LGBT people, “It’s important to help future LGBT generations” (58%) and “I’ve been a part of the LGBT community” (57%) were ranked as the most important reasons to make a planned gift to an LGBT organization. Helping future LGBT generations was also the highest-ranked reason for urban LGBT people. “I’ve been a part...” was substantially more compelling to rural respondents in comparison to urban respondents.

<b>Planned Giving Messaging Frames</b>	<b>Rural LGBT</b>	<b>Urban LGBT</b>
It’s important to help future LGBT generations	58%	53%
I’ve been a part of the LGBT community or movement and want to continue to support it, even after I’m gone	57%	42%
It’s a way to continue my commitment to an organization or cause I care about, even after I’m gone	49%	49%
I want to leave a legacy that reflects my values and ideals	30%	51%
I’ve built something from my life’s work- and I want to put it to work to make a difference after I’m gone	20%	26%
My friends and relatives don’t need all of it	8%	22%
I don’t have relatives I want to give money to	3%	6%
Other people I respect are making planned gifts	2%	2%

**What are their issue priorities?**

- ❖ The highest-priority issues among rural LGBT people were “Winning marriage” (69%), “Ending workplace or employment discrimination” (68%), and “Working for equal rights in general” (65%).
- ❖ The lowest-priority issues among rural LGBT people were “Improving religious acceptance” (20%) and “Building a sense of LGBT community and pride” (29%).
- ❖ Rural LGBT people were more likely to rank “Combating negative stereotypes of LGBT people” highly compared to urban LGBT people (51% vs. 41%).

Issue Priorities	Rural LGBT	Urban LGBT
Winning marriage for same-sex couples	69%	61%
Ending workplace or employment discrimination	68%	63%
Working for equal rights in general	65%	60%
Challenging and changing laws to improve the lives of LGBT people	63%	61%
Supporting LGBT youth	59%	52%
Combating negative stereotypes of LGBT people	51%	41%
Ending housing and public accommodations discrimination	47%	44%
Increasing support services for aging/elderly LGBT people	46%	39%
Increasing acceptance for people who are transgender	43%	37%
Winning civil unions or domestic partnerships in your state	34%	33%
Providing more community and social services for LGBT people	31%	24%
Building a sense of LGBT community and pride	29%	24%
Improving religious acceptance for LGBT people	20%	19%

**What are their motivations for giving to LGBT organizations?**

- ❖ Rural LGBT people indicated that “Fighting discrimination and inequality” was the strongest motivation for giving to LGBT organizations (69%), followed by “Bringing about change on a national level” (60%) and “Making it safer and more supportive for LGBT youth” (56%). These were the top-ranked motivations for urban LGBT people as well.

<b>Motivations for Giving to LGBT Orgs</b>	<b>Rural LGBT</b>	<b>Urban LGBT</b>
To fight discrimination and inequality	69%	61%
To bring about change on a national level	60%	51%
To make it safer and more supportive for LGBT youth	56%	49%
To change hearts and minds	44%	39%
To have a voice	30%	26%
To help build a sense of community where I live	26%	22%
To directly see the impact of my donation through services or programs	25%	23%
Because someone I know died of AIDS or has AIDS or HIV	19%	19%
To support a cause important to a friend or loved one	18%	16%

### **Do they believe that most challenges facing LGBT people will be solved in next 20-30 years?**

- ❖ When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that most challenges faced by LGBT people will be solved in the next 20 to 30 years, 61% of rural LGBT people indicated that they strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. This was roughly the same for urban LGBT people (60%).

<b>Do you believe that most challenges facing LGBT people will be solved in the next 20 to 30 years?</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Rural LGBT	15%	46%	24%	11%
Urban LGBT	13%	47%	24%	12%

### **What are their opinions of LGBT organizations?**

- ❖ Rural LGBT people did not endorse the belief that LGBT organizations are too focused on winning marriage (67% disagreed), nor did they endorse the belief that focusing on the needs of LGBT people alienates straight people (72% disagreed).

Opinion of LGBT Orgs		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
LGBT organizations are often male-dominated and focused too much on gay men and not enough on lesbian women	Rural LGBT	9%	33%	29%	19%
	Urban LGBT	10%	35%	29%	18%
LGBT organizations are too focused on winning marriage rights, and should be working on other issues instead	Rural LGBT	11%	18%	31%	36%
	Urban LGBT	11%	25%	30%	32%
I think the kinds of problems that people face because they are LGBT will largely be solved in the next 20 to 30 years	Rural LGBT	15%	46%	24%	11%
	Urban LGBT	13%	47%	24%	12%
I think when it comes to making financial contributions, that other causes or needs are more important than LGBT ones	Rural LGBT	4%	24%	37%	32%
	Urban LGBT	4%	24%	38%	28%
Focusing only on the needs of LGBT people alienates straight people who could be allies, and makes it harder to promote LGBT acceptance and gain equality	Rural LGBT	3%	20%	33%	39%
	Urban LGBT	4%	17%	33%	43%
I support the efforts of many LGBT organizations to focus more on issues impacting transgender people	Rural LGBT	29%	38%	19%	7%
	Urban LGBT	32%	37%	17%	8%

- ❖ The vast majority of LGBT respondents, regardless of where they live, indicated a very favorable or somewhat favorable opinion of LGBT organizations, including rural LGBT people (89%). Rural LGBT people were slightly less likely than urban LGBT people to indicate a very favorable opinion (42% vs. 48%).

Generally speaking, what is your opinion of LGBT organizations?	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Neutral	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Rural LGBT	42%	47%	4%	5%	1%
Urban LGBT	48%	43%	5%	3%	0%

### How are they reached for donations?

- ❖ The most successful established methods to solicit donations from rural LGBT people (i.e., the methods used to reach rural LGBT people that resulted in a donation) were by mail (69%), through email (67%), and through an ask made by someone they knew personally (60%).
- ❖ An additional 24% of rural LGBT people said they had not yet been asked for a donation by someone they knew personally, but they would donate if solicited in this way.

- ❖ The most untapped method for soliciting donations from this population appears to be reaching out to donors at a center where services are provided: 38% of rural LGBT people had not been contacted in this way but would donate if they were. Other untapped methods may be at a gay or lesbian bar or at a festival; 21% of rural LGBT people had not been contacted in this way but would donate if they were.
- ❖ Responses suggest that street solicitation is the least successful method for contacting rural LGBT donors.

<b>How are they reached for donations? Rural</b>	<b>Have donated</b>	<b>Have not been contacted this way, but would donate</b>	<b>Have not donated</b>	<b>Have not been contacted this way, and would not donate</b>
By mail	69%	6%	14%	8%
Through an email	67%	6%	15%	9%
By someone you know personally	60%	24%	10%	3%
To attend a fundraising event	56%	16%	15%	8%
Online or through social media	56%	8%	18%	14%
At a festival, parade, rally, or march	43%	21%	20%	12%
At a center where services are provided	30%	38%	20%	8%
By a telephone call	29%	6%	30%	31%
At a gay or lesbian bar	18%	21%	23%	30%
Approached on the Street	12%	12%	27%	44%

### **Which kind of LGBT organizations are they most likely to give to?**

- ❖ Rural LGBT people appeared to prefer donating to LGBT organizations with a national focus (23%) versus those focused on their state (17%) or focused on the local community (11%); however, a near majority (46%) would consider donating to all three equally.
- ❖ Rural LGBT people were slightly more likely than urban LGBT people to say they would give to state and locally focused organizations.

<b>Which kind of LGBT organizations are they most likely to give to?</b>	<b>Rural LGBT</b>	<b>Urban LGBT</b>
All equal	46%	48%
With a national focus	23%	27%
Focused on your own state	17%	13%
Focused on your local community	11%	9%
Would not donate to an organization focused on policy or legal change	1%	1%

- ❖ Similarly, rural LGBT people appeared to prefer donating to an organization working to change laws and policies at the national or state level (28%), compared to local organizations providing direct services to the community (18%). That said, 52% of rural LGBT people would consider donating to the two equally.

Which kind of LGBT organizations are they most likely to give to?	Rural LGBT	Urban LGBT
Both equally	52%	51%
An organization working to change laws and policies at the national or state level to promote equality and reduce discrimination	28%	32%
A local organization providing direct services to the community, including health care services, groups, etc.	18%	15%

### Why did they stop giving?

- ❖ The top reasons cited by rural LGBT people for stopping giving to LGBT organizations were that the organization sent too many donation requests (56%) or that the organization was poorly run or seemed ineffective (49%). These were the same two reasons frequently cited by urban LGBT people, although the reasons were switched in priority.

Why did you stop giving?	Rural LGBT	Urban LGBT
An organization made requests to donate too often	56%	53%
An organization was poorly run or seemed ineffective	49%	58%
An organization was too elitist	34%	34%
An organization was not transparent or open enough about their finances	33%	36%
An organization became too focused on fringe issues and political correctness	30%	31%
An organization's staff and leadership did not sufficiently reflect the diversity of LGBT people in terms of things like gender, race, class, or gender identity	21%	24%
An organization excluded or failed to prioritize issues affecting lesbian women	19%	16%
An organization focused too much on gay men	19%	18%
An organization excluded or failed to prioritize issues affecting people who are transgender	16%	19%
An organization excluded or failed to prioritize issues affecting LGBT people of color	15%	19%
An organization did not acknowledge my donation with a proper thank you	12%	14%
An organization did not acknowledge or include my current partner	7%	7%

## Future Research Areas

This survey offers some key insights into the perspectives of LGBT people living in rural areas and small towns and their engagement as donors to LGBT organizations. The above analyses also suggest several directions for future research, including:

- ❖ Given the lack of geographic identifiers in this survey, future research on rural LGBT donors could take a regional approach to understanding donor activity and feelings (e.g., engaging rural donors in the South). This approach may yield enough of a sample size to be able to draw conclusions about various subsets of rural communities, including white vs. nonwhite respondents, those with higher and lower household incomes, etc.
- ❖ The overall survey sample skewed heavily toward urban and suburban LGBT people. It is unclear the extent to which this is representative of donors to LGBT organizations. Expanding the type of organizations participating in the research (such as smaller community centers or LGBT social and community groups) may increase the number of rural LGBT people surveyed, given that few national organizations or large community centers are based, or have offices, in rural communities.
- ❖ Another question to explore is why the concept of creating a Legacy is so much stronger for urban LGBT donors in comparison to rural LGBT donors. Further research also could look at why the “my friends and relatives” planned giving frame elicits such a low response among rural donors relative to urban donors
- ❖ The field would also benefit from more research on whether or not rural donors are likely to visit an LGBT community center or a bar, based on the fact that they express a potential willingness to donate in these venues if asked. Researchers also may want to explore the degree to which rural donors believe their local needs are being met by state or local organizations versus national organizations.