COVID & THE LGBTQI MOVEMENT IN 2021: RESULTS FROM THE Q3 2021 COVID PULSE SURVEY

DECEMBER 2021

MAP movement advancement project

This report was authored by:

Movement Advancement Project
MAP's mission is to provide independent and rigorous research, insight, and communications that help speed equality and opportunity for all people. MAP works to ensure that all people have a fair chance to pursue health and happiness, earn a living, take care of the ones they love, be safe in their communities, and participate in civic life. For more information, visit **www.lgbtmap.org**.

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This report is part of a series assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on major organizations in the LGBTQI movement. To see previous reports in the series, please visit www.lgbtmap.org/covid-19. For additional research on the overall capacity of the LGBTQI movement, please visit www.lgbtmap.org/lgbt-advocacy-organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Early expectations in Spring 2021 were that the COVID-19 pandemic would begin to subside in the summer of 2021 because of widespread vaccination availability. However, in the third quarter (Q3) of 2021, July through September, the Delta variant of COVID-19, which is more contagious and easily spread, brought new uncertainty about how the remainder of the year would progress.

This uncertainty resulting from the Delta variant has impacted key areas of life, including travel, the return to the office for many workers, school reopenings, and the healthcare system in the United States.

The same is true for LGBTQI and allied movement organizations. This short report summarizes findings from a survey, fielded in October and November, about experiences during Q3 of 2021. The report demonstrates the impact of COVID-19 and the uncertainty that continues to mark how these organizations provide services and support to LGBTQI people, how their staff are working, and the ways they are navigating the financial realities of the ongoing pandemic.

This report is part of a **series of reports** released by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) in 2020 and 2021 focused on COVID-19 and movement organizations. It builds on 15 years of MAP research that has helped organizations identify opportunities and learn from one another, grounded funders in response strategies during times of need, and engaged individual donors more deeply in giving to the movement.

PARTICIPANTS

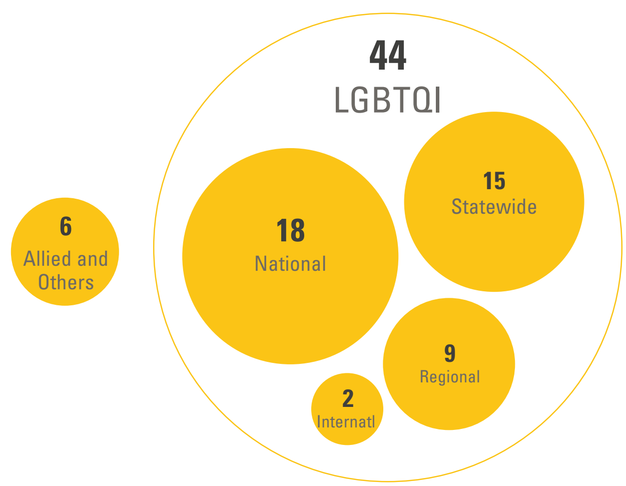
In total, 50 organizations participated in the Q3 survey, conducted in October-November 2021.

As shown in ***Figure 1***, the majority (88%) of participating organizations were LGBTQI organizations, and the remaining 12% were allied or other organizations.

Most participating organizations work at the national and/or state level, though some participants report working primarily regionally (e.g., in the U.S. South). One participating organization reports working primarily internationally.

Figure 1: Majority of Participating Organizations are LGBTQI

n=50



IMPACT OF THE DELTA VARIANT ON ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS & STAFFING

Organizations Continue to Delay or Cancel Key Programmatic and Operational Goals

Nearly all (44 out of 50) participating organizations reported clear and challenging impacts from the resurgence of COVID-19 and the emergence of the Delta variant. As shown in ***Figure 2***, a majority of organizations reported they had delayed or cancelled travel or gatherings (64% of organizations), events (56%), and in-person programs or services (54%).

Figure 2: COVID Resurgence Has Led to New Delays and Cancellations for Majority of Organizations
Percent of organizations reporting each impact in Q3 2021 due to COVID resurgence

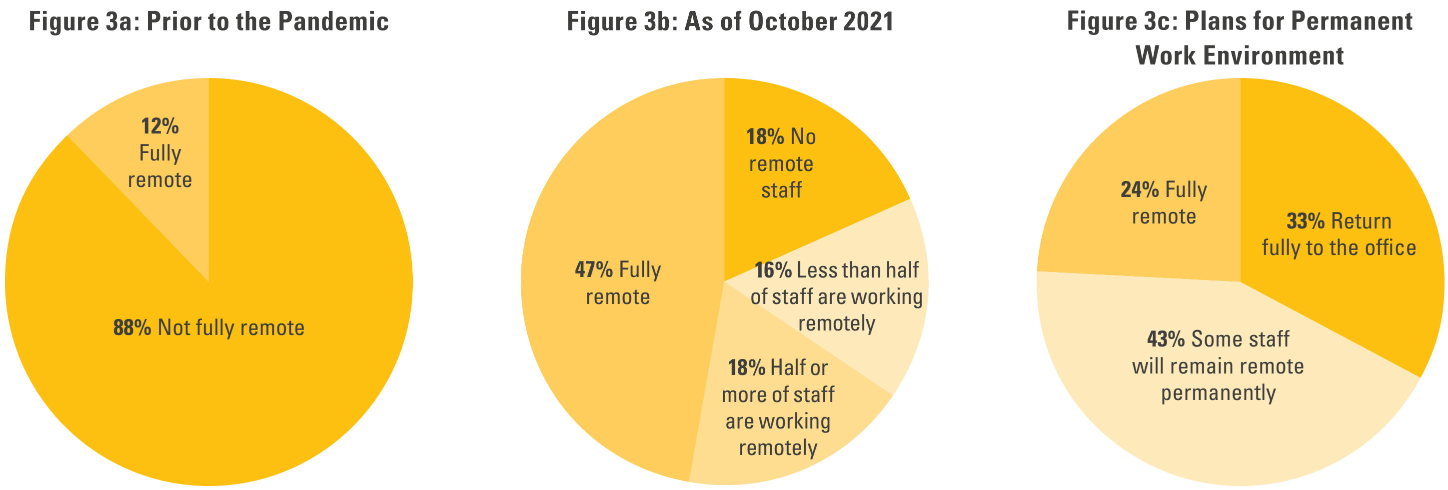
Many Organizations Continue to Operate Remotely and Are Working Through COVID Safety Concerns

Prior to the pandemic, only 12% of organizations were fully remote. As of October 2021, 47% of organizations indicated they are fully remote, while 18% have no remote staff, as shown in ***Figure 3***. The remaining one-third of organizations fall in between.

As shown in *Figure 2* above, 38% of organizations report they have delayed or cancelled office reopenings. Yet, as organizations look to the future, 24% plan to remain fully remote on a permanent basis, while 33% will return fully to the office. The remaining 43% will have some hybrid model where some staff remain remote permanently.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of organizations currently have or plan to implement a written mask wearing policy, including for some organizations that are still working remotely. At the same time, only 52% of organizations currently have, or are planning to implement, a written policy requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for employees. Again, given that 47% of organizations remain remote at the moment, it may be that organizations are not at the point of needing to create such policies.

Figure 3: Two-Thirds of Organizations Plan to Remain Permanently Hybrid or Fully Remote
Percent of organizations by remote vs. in-person status at each point in time



"Our direct service staff are working in-person as it's a requirement of our programming. Other departments remain remote so as to not overcrowd the space for folks who are required to be there. Other departments do have the option to work in-person if they want to but most have declined."

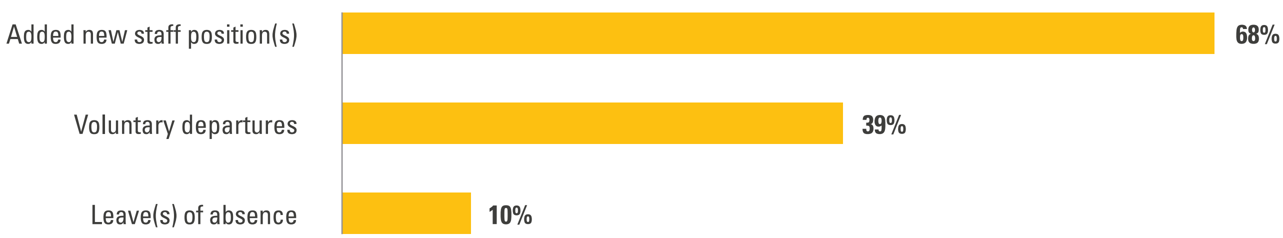
"We are planning (at this time) to return to the office, most likely in a reduced capacity (in terms of space, not staff). Things are very much in the air. We had, prior to the pandemic, several staff who were remote FT. Now that everyone is remote we have seen an increase in staff suggestions about remaining remote permanently. This is something we are currently looking into."

Organizations are Focusing on Staff Growth Amidst a Challenging Hiring Environment

When asked how COVID-19 is affecting the organization's staffing levels during Q3 (July-September) 2021, three in five organizations indicated that the pandemic had impacted staffing levels. Of organizations that experienced an impact, the majority of organizations (68%) indicated they had added new staff positions, while at the same time 39% indicated they had experienced voluntary departures, and 10% had staff taking a leave of absence during the same period, as shown in ***Figure 4***.

Several organizations commented that the labor market remains challenging with both voluntary departures and difficulties filling positions and hiring staff.

Figure 4: Organizations Report Differing Impacts of COVID on Staffing in Q3 2021
Percent of organizations reporting each impact in 2021 (of organizations that say COVID has impacted staffing)



"Given the current unemployment rate, we have had front line staff leave to pursue other higher paying positions."

"We have had significant problems in fielding a robust pool of candidates for open positions in our wage ranges, even though we pay more than similar nonprofits in our area (and are unionized)."

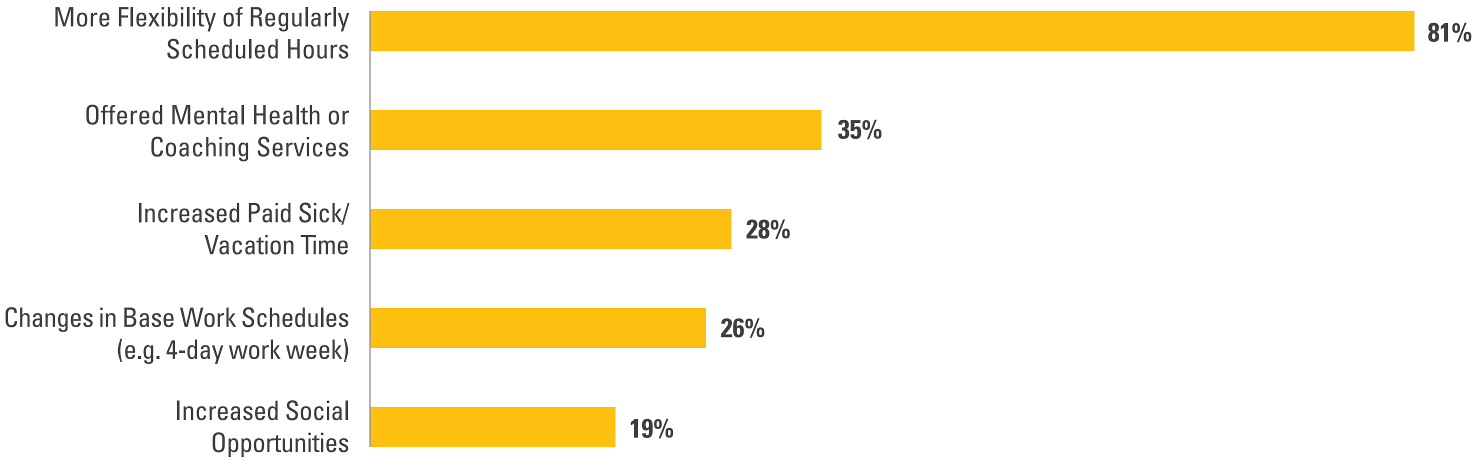
"We budgeted an increase in positions that will set us up for the future and being back on a growth phase - it's been difficult to find people. We have had offers ready and people have 'ghosted' us last minute, we've had to be more competitive in pay to get the talent we seek."

Finding Ways to Support Staff During the Pandemic

As noted above, many organizations are experiencing departures of staff and are working to hire amidst labor shortages. As the pandemic has continued, the toll on staff has become more apparent. In open-ended comments summarized in the Q2 report, organizations emphasized the ongoing toll of the pandemic on staff and mental health, including burnout, leaves of absence, and more.

Many organizations (86%) have undertaken new initiatives to help support staff, as summarized in ***Figure 5***.

Figure 5: Organizations Are Finding Ways to Support Staff As the Pandemic Drags On
Percent of organizations reporting each intervention (of organizations that have taken steps)



"Increased community need is making it so that our team continually grows, though its impact on the work/life balance and overall mental wellbeing of staff in rising to slay the challenges that come with that is contributing to burnout."

REVENUE AND NEW RELIEF RESOURCES

Continued Lack of Confidence in Event Revenue But More Confidence in Other Key Revenue Streams

Looking over time, for organizations participating in the Q1, Q2, and Q3 surveys, ***Figure 6*** on the next page shows the shifts in reported confidence for key revenue streams over the course of 2021.

Not surprisingly, given the continued challenges of navigating in-person events and the new challenges of the Delta variant, 52% of organizations indicated they are "not confident" about revenue from events—higher than any other revenue stream, and also higher than previous quarters.

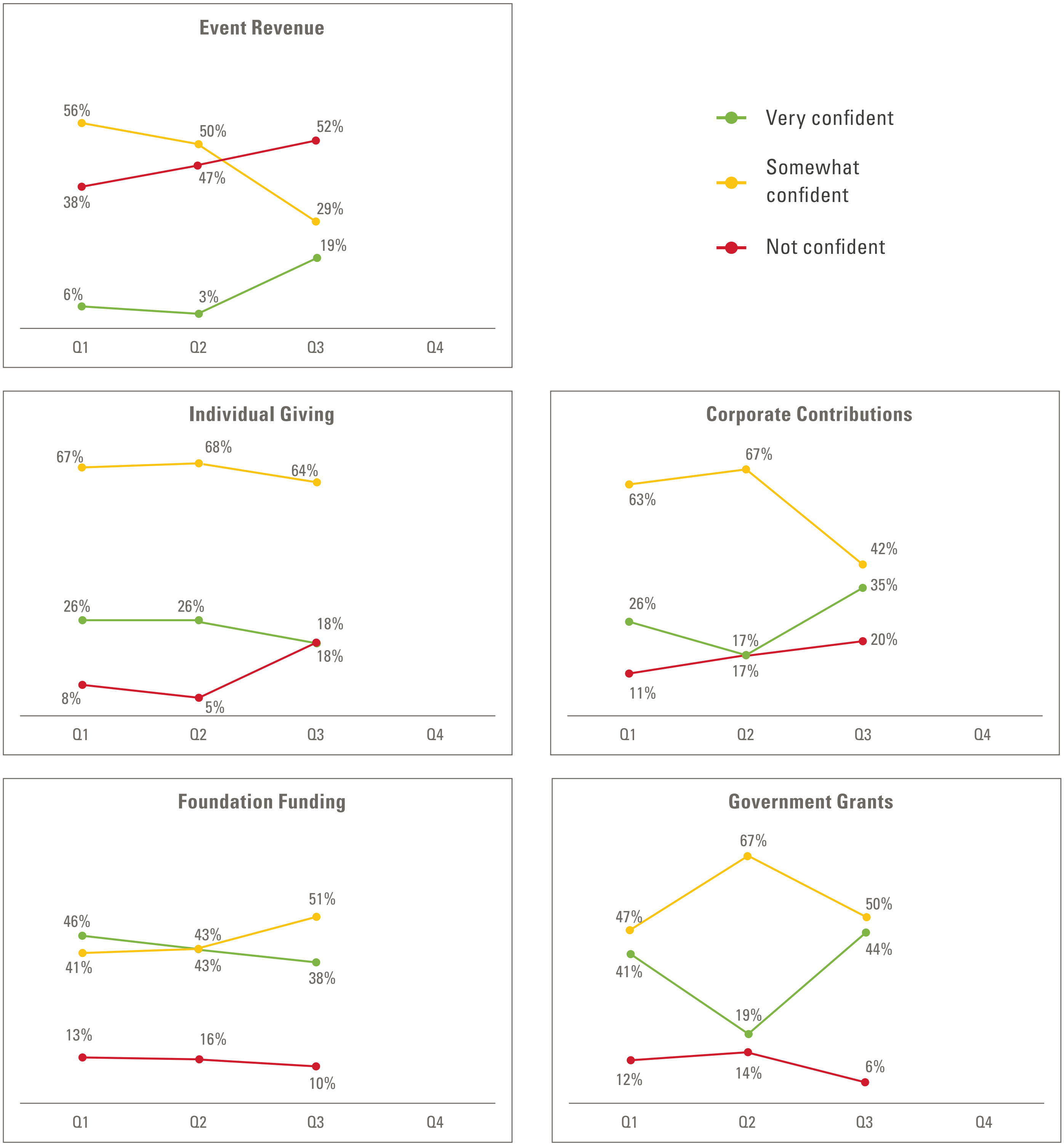
Additionally, reported confidence in revenue from individual giving notably fell. In Q2, 26% of organizations said they were "very confident" in individual giving revenue, but by Q3, that fell to 18%. Instead, nearly one in five (18%) organizations now report they are "not confident" about individual giving, a more than three-fold increase from Q2.

That said, the majority of organizations expressed they were "somewhat" or "very" confident about revenue from corporations, foundations, and government grants at this point in 2021.

Current Sources of Relief

Roughly one in three organizations (36%) are currently pursuing COVID relief resources, with all mentioning the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERIC). Other relief sources mentioned included payroll tax deferments, payroll tax credits, and federal and state aid. As discussed in a later section of this report, organizations said their top needed resource at this time is more information on remote/hybrid work policies and procedures.

Figure 6: Declining Confidence in Individual Giving and Event Revenue
Percent of organizations reporting confidence levels in each revenue source in 2021



Note: This figure shows responses only from organizations that participated in all three surveys (Q1, Q2, and Q3). This means some confidence levels for Q1 or Q2 may differ from what was previously reported in the Q1 and/or Q2 survey reports.

TOP CONCERNS & NEEDED RESOURCES

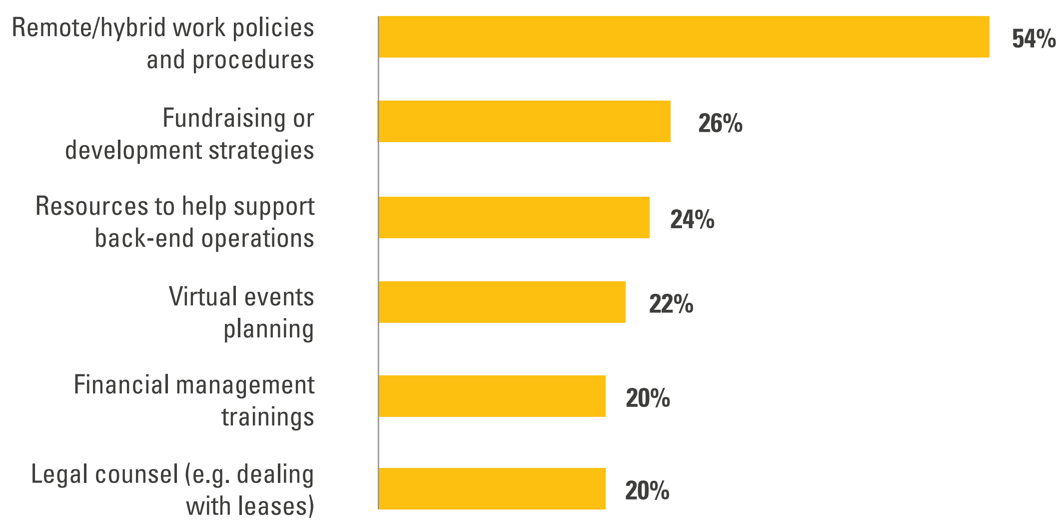
Top Concerns as 2021 Draws to a Close

As organizations look to the last quarter of 2021, their top concerns included hosting successful events (52% of organizations cited as a top concern), in individual giving (32%), affording current levels of staffing (26%), reopening offices and facilities (24%), and their ability to deliver programs (24%).

Needed Resources: Remote Work Policies and Resources for Back-End Operations

As shown in ***Figure 7***, when asked what additional resources would be helpful to organizations right now, the top answer, with 54% of organizations, was remote work or hybrid work policies and procedures, which was also the top need during the Q2 survey.

Figure 7: Organizations Need Resources on Remote Work Policies and Back-End Operations
Percent of organizations saying each resource would be helpful right now



CONCLUSION

As organizations prepare for the end of 2021, they continue to be resilient in the face of the Delta variant and shifting conditions. Staffing has emerged as a key issue, as the labor market has made hiring more challenging and organizations navigate policies about masking, vaccinations, and office reopenings. Financially, organizations are adjusting expectations and have more confidence about individual giving and government grants, but still have a lack of confidence around event revenue. These trends speak to the continually shifting nature of the pandemic and how nimble organizations must be.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report examines the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQI and allied organizations and is part of a broader series of reports available at https://www.lgbtmap.org/covid-19. Additional research focused on the LGBTQI movement's capacity overall is available at https://www.lgbtmap.org/lgbt-advocacy-organizations.

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