

HOW COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN SUPPORT LGBT PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



Part of the series
LGBT PEOPLE IN
RURAL AMERICA

An estimated 2.9 to 3.8 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people live in rural communities across the United States, and they are part of the fabric of rural American life. LGBT people in rural communities often choose to live there for many of the same reasons that other people do: for the strength of community and connection to family, for the pace of life, or simply to be part of the place where they were raised and call home.

However, the structural challenges facing all rural residents, such as fewer doctors or employers, can add to the challenges facing LGBT people in rural and urban areas alike, such as discrimination or mistreatment. By addressing the overall needs and challenges of rural areas, while also directly addressing LGBT-specific experiences in rural areas, meaningful and long-lasting change is possible in rural America, for both LGBT and non-LGBT residents.

ACTIONS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT LGBT PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

- **Adopt nondiscrimination policies for staff and patrons** ensuring that all are treated fairly.
- **Conduct cultural inclusivity trainings** for all staff and volunteers focused on LGBT people and their needs and concerns.
- **Incorporate LGBT-specific resources throughout the organization.** This includes displaying fliers with resources available in the local community or online, creating marketing materials that include diverse populations, and having an explicit statement of inclusion included on the website and in public materials.
- **Provide direct legal assistance** and incorporate the needs of LGBT people including obtaining legal name changes, filing complaints of discrimination with appropriate government agencies, and securing legal ties to children through second- or step-parent adoption.
- **Partner with LGBT organizations in your region or state** for in-person events or to advertise virtual events or opportunities.
- **Include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity in community needs assessments** and include the concerns and needs of LGBT community members when developing programs and initiatives.
- **Conduct both research and public education about the unique needs and experiences of rural LGBT people.** Update organizational offerings and efforts to be responsive to those needs.
- **Review events and programming to make it easier for rural residents to attend or participate** (such as phone-call town halls, live-streaming events, or other ways of virtual participation), as well as hosting events in rural areas as funding allows.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES OF LGBT PEOPLE
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE NEW REPORT
**WHERE WE CALL HOME:
LGBT PEOPLE IN RURAL AMERICA**
www.lgbtmap.org/rural-lgbt

View your state's LGBT policy profile at
www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps



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