



# LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY NEEDS

2020 Indianapolis





# GATHERING COMMUNITY INPUT

Anchored by a shared vision of establishing an LGBTQ+ Community Center to serve the City of Indianapolis, a collaborative group of organizations focused on meeting the needs of the LGBTQ+ community joined efforts in early 2020 to identify the needs, opportunities, and gaps in available services to inform this vision.

These community partners - including the Damien Center, GenderNexus, Indiana Youth Group (IYG), Indy Pride, Indy Rainbow Chamber, the IUPUI LGBTQ+ Center, and OutCare Health - developed and distributed a community needs assessment survey throughout their respective networks in February and March of 2020 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacting the Central Indiana community, resulting in **682 responses from LGBTQ+ community members** in the Greater Indianapolis area.

It is important to note that the needs assessment survey was distributed primarily through email and social media channels, limiting responses to those with internet access and connection to participating community partners. Based on these limitations, survey responses may not represent the full diversity of the LGBTQ+ community within Greater Indianapolis.



# SHARING THE RESULTS

The following report presents the **demographics** of these survey participants (pages 3-5), the **greatest needs** that emerged through the survey (page 6), and the **comprehensive survey results** (pages 7-17) presented within the five social determinants of health - a set of conditions within the public health framework that are known to influence the overall health of an individual, group, or community - including:

- Health and Healthcare
- Economic Stability
- Social and Community Context
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Education



Comments shared by individuals through the survey process are also reflected in quotations throughout this report. It is important to note that these statements were made anonymously by survey respondents and are not affiliated with the individuals pictured.

## Recommended Citation

The **community partners** who participated in this effort (page 19) encourage the reproduction or distribution of this report, in whole or in part, provided that it is done so with appropriate citation. This study was funded by the Damien Center. This report was prepared by Taylor Advising. Citation recommendations of various styles include:

Taylor, M., Nowaskie, D.Z., & Witchey, A. (2020). LGBTQ+ Community Needs: 2020 Indianapolis. Indianapolis, IN: Damien Center.

Taylor, Marla, Dustin Z. Nowaskie, and Alan Witchey. LGBTQ+ Community Needs: 2020 Indianapolis. Indianapolis: Damien Center, 2020.

Taylor, M, Nowaskie DZ, Witchey A. LGBTQ+ Community Needs: 2020 Indianapolis. Indianapolis, IN: Damien Center; 2020.

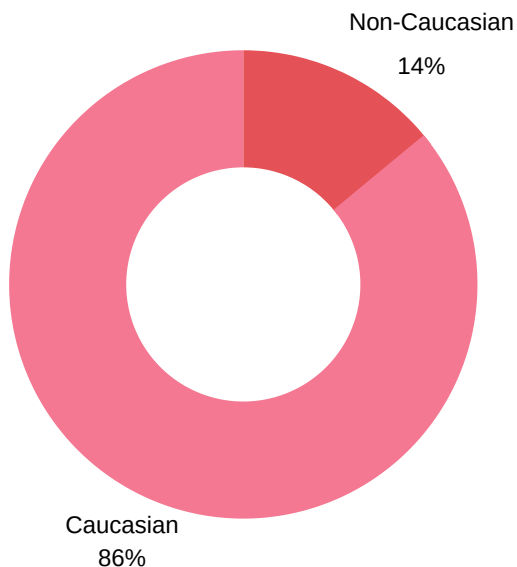
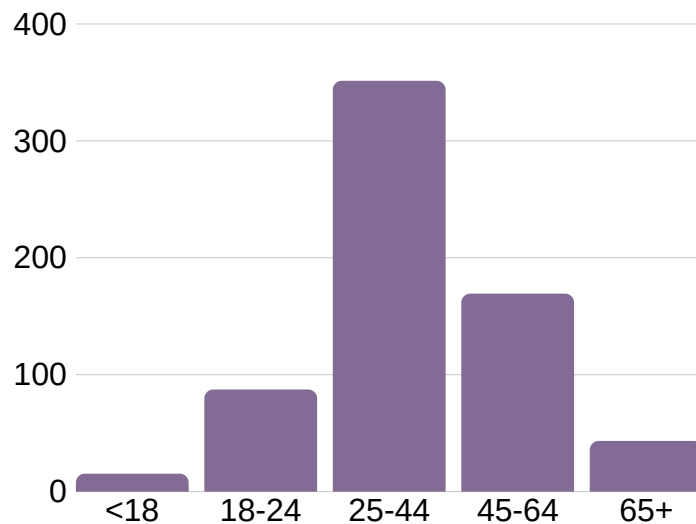
# DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the **682 individuals** who completed the 2020 LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey...

**72%**  
live in Marion County

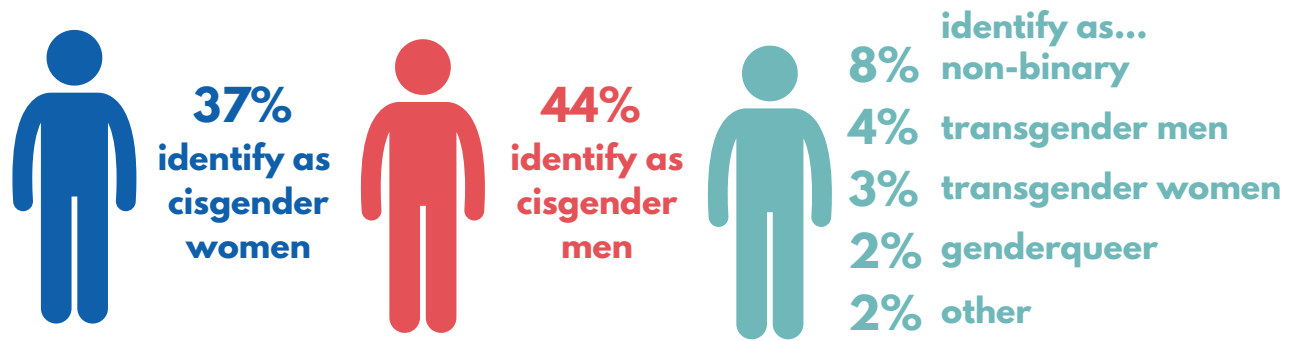


**Most are adults  
between 25-44 years old**

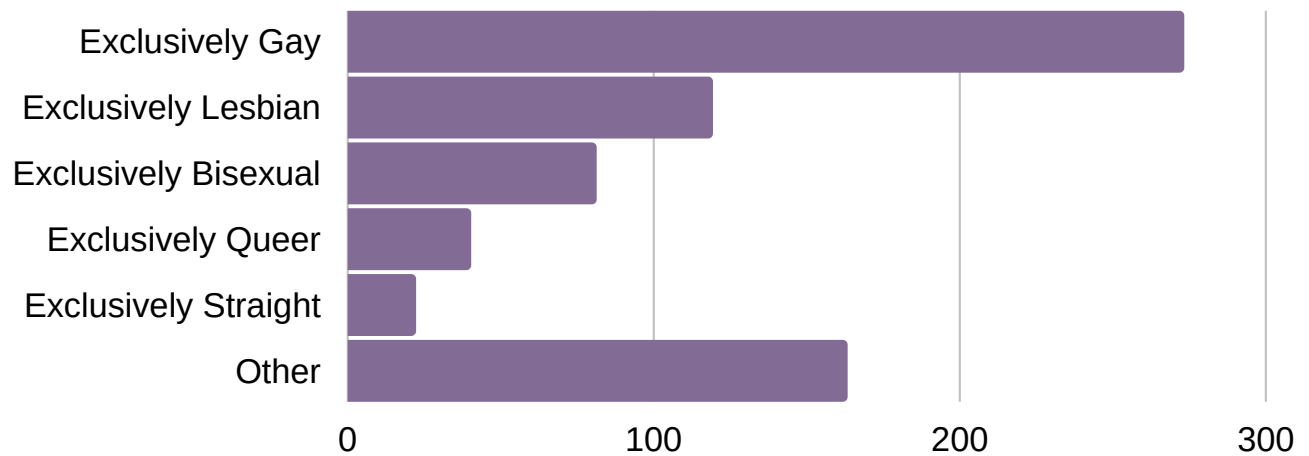


**Most identify as Caucasian**

579	Caucasian
32	African American or Black
31	Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial
12	Latinx
4	Middle Eastern
3	Asian
9	Other



### Identify their sexual orientation as...



"[We need more] education on non-traditional relationships to reduce discrimination."



75% are in a relationship





**89%**  
live in their own  
housing, but

**17%**  
have experienced  
homelessness at some point

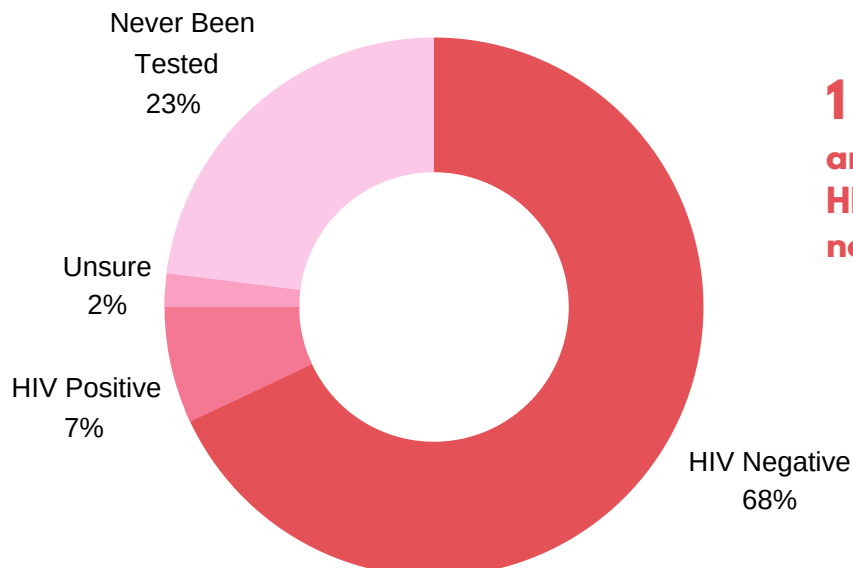
**21%**  
identify as someone  
living with a disability

**4%**  
identify as a Veteran

**2%**  
have experienced  
foster care



**"My disability  
takes most of  
my income."**



**1 in 4**  
are unsure of their  
HIV status or have  
never been tested

# GREATEST NEEDS

While a variety of needs emerged through the community survey, the majority of survey participants identified the following areas of greatest need when asked to rank the issues of importance to them. (Percentages following each area of need indicate the percentage of survey participants who identified this issue as important or extremely important.)

## Mental Healthcare

- Access to LGBTQ+ mental health counseling (97%)
- Availability of LGBTQ-specific mental health providers and services (95%)

## Healthcare

- Access to LGBTQ+ sensitive healthcare (96%)
- Addressing healthcare inequalities related to LGBTQ+ populations (92%)
- Availability of LGBTQ-specific healthcare providers and services (92%)



## Youth Support

- Ensuring schools are safe for LGBTQ+ youth (97%)
- Addressing LGBTQ+ youth homelessness (96%)
- Ensuring parents have information supporting LGBTQ+ youth (94%)

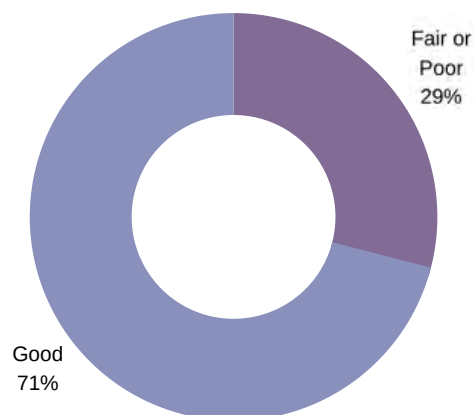
## Hate Crime Protections

- Hate crime protections for LGBTQ+ populations (94%)

# HEALTH & HEALTHCARE

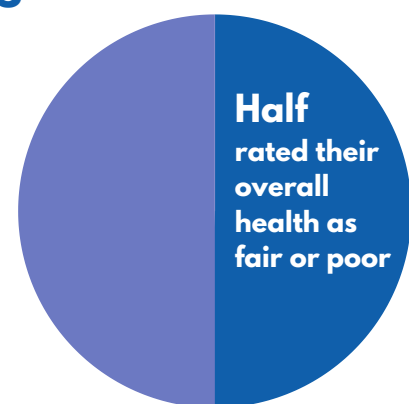
While some health related resources are available to LGBTQ+ individuals in various locations throughout the community, Indianapolis is one of the largest cities in the United States without a dedicated LGBTQ+ Community Center where comprehensive, LGBTQ+ focused health services could be provided in one convenient location. With access to healthcare as a key determinant of overall wellness, the following health related findings from the 2020 LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey demonstrate great opportunity for Indianapolis to better address these critical health related needs. Of the 682 individuals who completed the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey...

## Nearly one-third rate their overall health as fair or poor



Some subgroups more frequently rated their overall health as fair or poor when compared to other survey respondents.

## Of those who identify as transgender



Nearly all survey participants (96%) identified access to LGBTQ+ sensitive health care as important. Yet, for those seeking medical care, the findings are dire.

**30%**  
struggle having enough money to visit a doctor or get medical care

**27%**  
struggle having enough money to pay for needed medications





**7%**  
know they are  
HIV positive

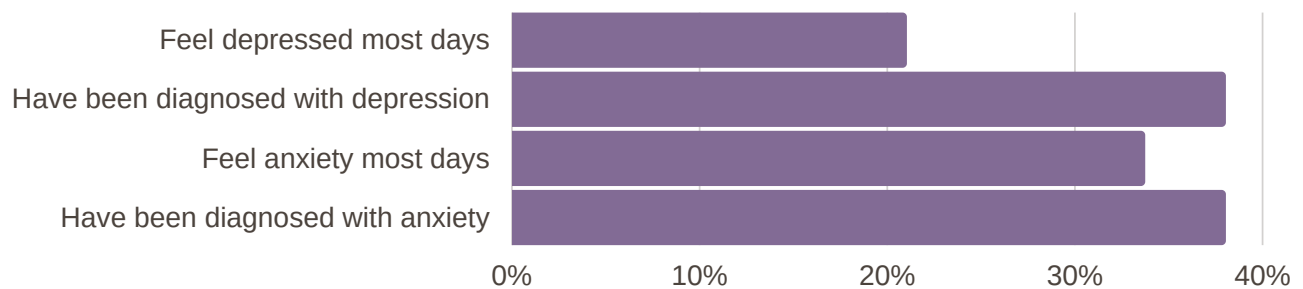
**25%**  
are unsure of their  
HIV status or have  
never been tested



Most survey participants (90%) identified increased access to PrEP and HIV/STD prevention services as important and 91% indicated the importance of increased services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

**Nearly 2 in 5  
have been diagnosed  
with depression**

**Nearly 2 in 5  
have been diagnosed  
with anxiety**



These responses indicate a significantly higher prevalence of depression and anxiety than is found in the general population. Public health data indicates that roughly 17-20% of individuals in the United States are diagnosed with a depressive disorder and roughly 30% are diagnosed with anxiety some point in their lives<sup>1</sup> With these realities in mind, nearly all survey participants (97%) identified access to LGBTQ+ mental health counseling as a critical need.

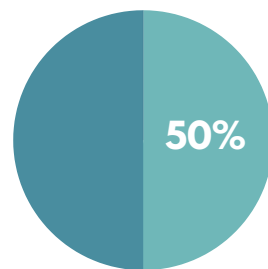
**145 individuals**  
have acted on thoughts  
of suicide at some time  
in their life



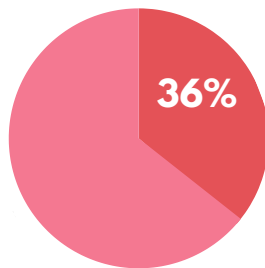
These individuals represent 21% of survey respondents, a significantly higher prevalence than is found in the general population. Public health data indicates that roughly 3% of individuals in the United States have acted on thoughts of suicide at some time in their life<sup>1</sup>

**Some groups were  
significantly more likely  
to have acted on  
thoughts of suicide**

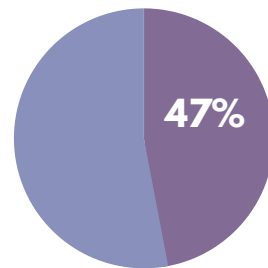
Some subgroups more frequently indicated they had acted on thoughts of suicide at some point in their life when compared to other survey respondents. This experience was reported by:



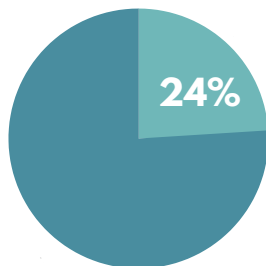
Of those who identified as  
**Non-binary**



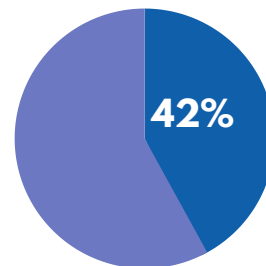
Of those who identified as  
**18-24 years old**



Of those who identified as  
**Genderqueer**



Of those who identified as  
**Transgender women**



Of those who identified as  
**Transgender men**



**116 individuals**  
have considered  
acting on thoughts  
of suicide in the  
past year

These individuals who specifically reported that they considered suicide *in the past year* represent 17% of overall survey respondents. Again, this is a significantly higher prevalence than is found in the general population. Public health data indicates that roughly 4% of individuals in the United States had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year.<sup>1</sup>

Some groups were significantly more likely to have considered acting on thoughts of suicide in the past year.



### **Suicide was considered in the past year by...**

**30%**  
of those who identified as  
18-24 years old

**24%**  
of those who identified as  
Transgender women

**33%**  
of those who identified as  
Non-binary

**33%**  
of those who identified as  
Genderqueer

**38%**  
of those who identified as  
Transgender men



**"Homophobia  
is still  
rampant."**

**1 in 4**  
of those who are  
unemployed

**1 in 3**  
of those who make less  
than \$10,000/year



# ECONOMIC STABILITY

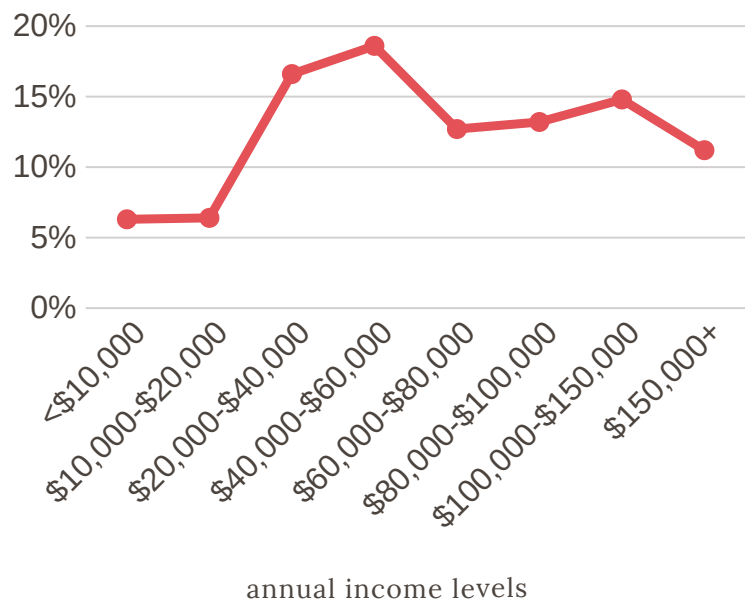
Employment can present a variety of challenges for the LGBTQ+ community, a population that has historically faced discrimination during the hiring process, in asserting employee rights, and while on the job. By incorporating comprehensive career services into an LGBTQ+ Community Center design, Indianapolis has the opportunity to help the LGBTQ+ community overcome these challenges, increasing access to job opportunities and higher wages. Better employment and increased income can directly influence an individual's access to safe and stable housing and overall economic stability, a key social determinant of health. While most (84%) of the 682 individuals who completed the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey are currently employed...

**13%**  
earn less than  
\$20,000 a year

However, challenges were present for survey respondents across all income levels.

**16%**  
struggle getting a  
job or a better job  
with a living wage  
due to their  
LGBTQ+ identity

Those who identify as transgender struggle with this even more frequently (27%).

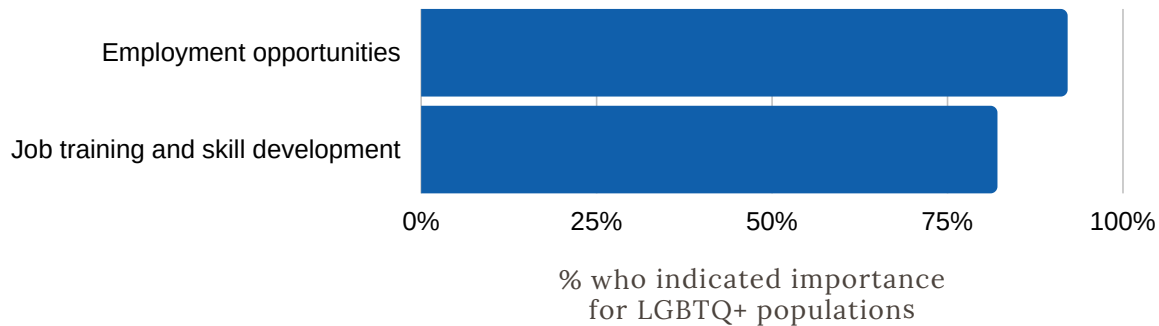


**2 in 5**  
struggle to  
earn enough  
money to pay  
their bills



**1 in 4**  
need financial  
assistance to pay  
for their utilities,  
rent, or mortgage

## Most believe employment support and job training are important for LGBTQ+ populations



### 17% have experienced homelessness at some point

Some subgroups indicated homelessness more frequently when compared to other survey respondents. 27% of those who identify as a non-Caucasian and 27% of those who identify as transgender have experienced homelessness at some point.

### 39 individuals have had no place to sleep at night at some point in the last year

This specific data point is often overlooked when experiences of homelessness in the general population are reported, therefore opportunities for comparison are limited.

"Having a deep respect for all queer people, no matter what lifestyle they choose, is fundamental to the continued health and well being of our community"



# SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Forming healthy relationships rooted in trust, support, and inclusion can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health, particularly for the LGBTQ+ population that has historically faced social discrimination. By providing a safe gathering spot for LGBTQ+ residents with access to services, the arts, and culture, an LGBTQ+ Community Center can create a unique environment for healthy relationships to flourish, providing opportunities to build social capital and a sense of community - critical components of the social and community context that influences overall well being. Of the 682 individuals who completed the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey...



**Only 38%**  
feel connected to the  
LGBTQ+ community in  
Central Indiana

**7 in 10**

have difficulty meeting other  
LGBTQ+ individuals for  
friendship in Central Indiana



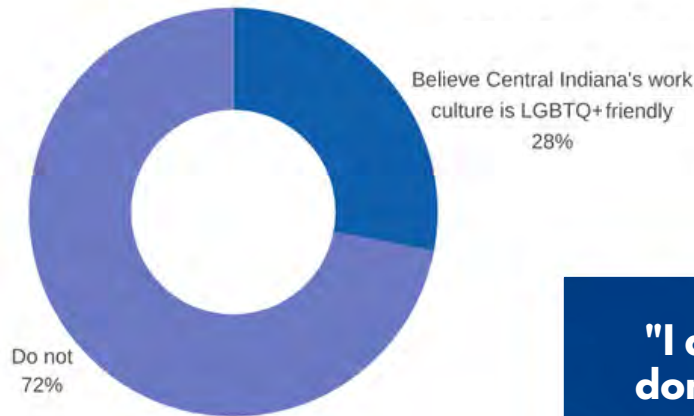
**Only 2 in 5**

say the services they  
receive are LGBTQ+  
sensitive and supportive



"Sober, all age  
queer spaces  
would be so  
great for our  
community!"





**Less than one third believe that Central Indiana's work culture is LGBTQ+ friendly, and**

**38% do not feel safe being out in the workplace, and**



**91% believe creating safe places for LGBTQ+ adults to congregate and build social networks is important**

The majority of survey participants indicated that they would personally take advantage of the following if made available through an LGBTQ+ competent program:

- a safe place for social support and community building
- social events like game night or movie night
- casual meeting space like a coffee shop for business meetings

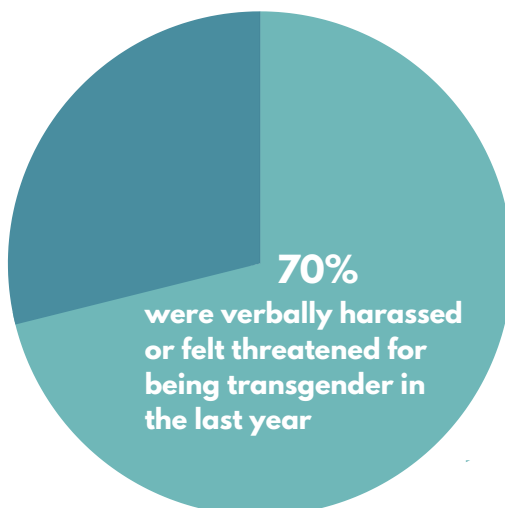
# NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Characteristics of an individual's neighborhood can dramatically impact their overall health, safety, and quality of life. From the physical and psychological impacts of exposure to crime and violence to the consequences of lacking access to basic needs and services, the built environment surrounding an individual plays a powerful role in determining their health and well being. Of the 682 individuals who completed the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey...



**44%**  
have been harassed,  
threatened, or attacked in the  
last year for being LGBTQ+

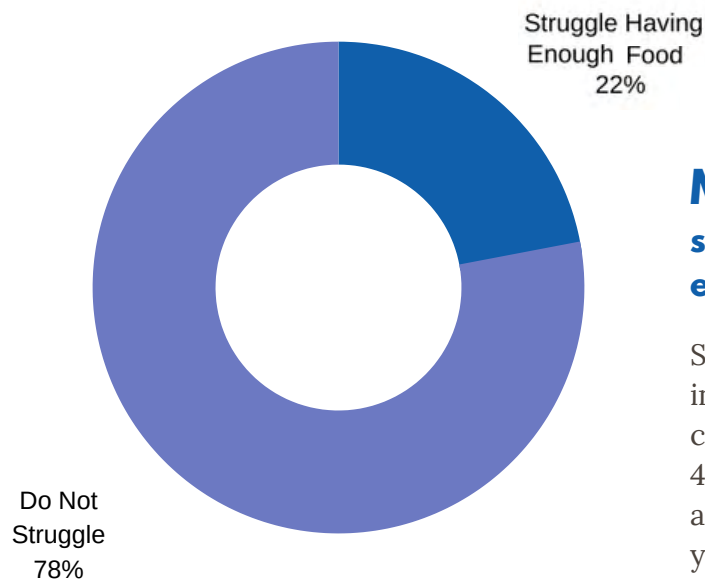
Of those who identify as  
**Transgender**



"I want us to be  
respected and  
respect each  
other for who  
we are and our  
differences."



**Only 37%**  
are able to easily find resources and  
services needed as an LGBTQ+ individual



**More than 1 in 5**  
struggle having  
enough food to eat

Some subgroups struggle with food insecurity more frequently when compared to other survey respondents. 44% of those who identify as transgender and 30% of those who identify as 18-24 years old have struggled to have enough food to eat at least once in the past year.



"Lots of  
services  
require long  
drives for  
people who  
most need  
them."

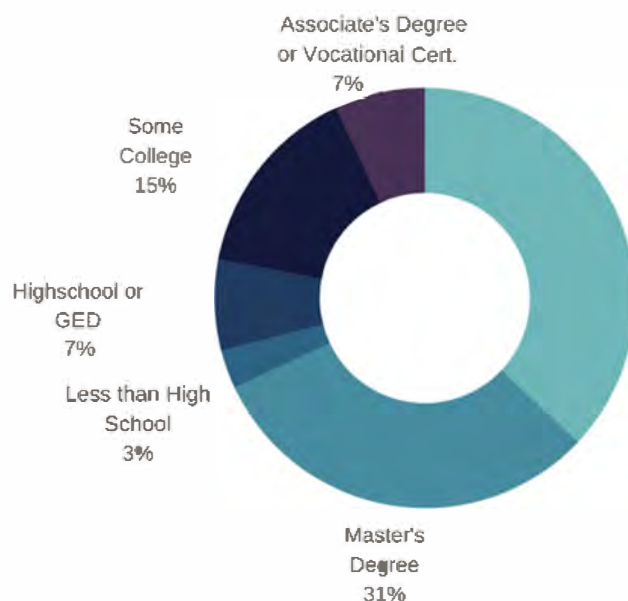


**81%**  
see safe public  
transportation for  
LGBTQ+ populations  
as a critical need



# EDUCATION

Access to education is often cited as a necessity for economic mobility. However, educational attainment can have more than just a positive impact on employment opportunities for adults. Attitudes about education and access to educational resources can impact the long-term health of an entire family. By considering opportunities to integrate access to education and financial aid into the design of an LGBTQ+ Community Center, Indianapolis has a clear opportunity to address educational disparities, and in turn, the overall well being of LGBTQ+ populations. Of the 682 individuals who completed the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey...



**Most are college educated**

**15%**

**need help paying for school or seeking financial aid**

**6%**

**need help paying for school for kids or other family members**

**3%**

**need help applying for college**

**97%**

**believe it is important to ensure schools are safe for LGBTQ+ youth**



# PUBLIC HEALTH REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Sources of comparative public health data noted within this report include:

Hasin, D.S., Sarvet, A.L., Meyers, J.L., et al. (2018). Epidemiology of adult DSM-5 major depressive disorder and its specifiers in the United States. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 75(4), 336-346. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2017.4602>

Kessler, R.C., Petukhova, M., Sampson, N.A., et al. (2012). Twelve-month and lifetime prevalence and lifetime risk of anxiety and mood disorders in the United States. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 21(3), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1359>

National Institute of Mental Health. (2017, November). Any Anxiety Disorder. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/any-anxiety-disorder.shtml>

Nock, M.K., Borges, G., Bromet, E.J., et al. (2008). Cross-national prevalence and risk factors for suicidal ideation, plans and attempts. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 192(2), 98-105. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.107.040113>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018.pdf>

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thank you to all of the Central Indiana-based organizations whose efforts were critical in gathering community input through the LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment survey in early 2020. The continued collaboration and leadership of these community partners and many others will pave the way toward bringing the vision of an LGBTQ+ Community Center in Indianapolis to life.



For more information about this study or the efforts of this group, please contact the Damien Center President and CEO Alan Witchey at [awitchey@damien.org](mailto:awitchey@damien.org) or 317-632-0123.





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funded by



DAMIEN  
CENTER

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