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Building LGBTQIA+ Food Security in the District

Created by Emerson Hunger Fellow Ranen Miao
in partnership with the DC Food Policy Team

CONGRESSIONAL HUNGER CENTER
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Executive Summary

This report explores the current landscape of LGBTQIA+ hunger in Washington D.C., specifically analyzing the barriers which impede access to healthy, affordable, and tasty food for LGBTQIA+ residents. Leveraging data from a series of interviews with service providers, academics, and community members; data collected from a community survey; and feedback from a community roundtable, this report identifies the top challenges for LGBTQIA+ food security as:

- Discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people at food distribution sites, specifically discrimination from religious institutions
- Shame, pride, and social stigma
- Existing social inequities around poverty, racism, and housing insecurity
- Lack of access to transportation

Incorporating input from program managers and queer community members, this report also proposes policy recommendations for stakeholders in Washington D.C. to better address hunger in the LGBTQIA+ community, with top recommendations of:

- Mandate cultural competency training for all service providers and recipients of city grants
- Invest in LGBTQIA+ specific food distribution programs and low-barrier shelters
- Eliminate gender binary on all benefits forms and allow people to receive new IDs with their gender identity for free

The District of Columbia is home to the nation's largest percentage of LGBTQIA+ residents at 14.5%,[1] nearly double of second place, as well as the nation's highest percentage of transgender residents at 2.77%,[2] nearly triple the next highest state. Beyond LGBTQIA+ identification, 2020 Census data also indicates D.C. is a multiracial, diverse city: 41.4% of residents are Black, 39.6% are white, 4.9% are Asian, 0.5% are Native American, and 11.3% are Hispanic or Latino. Washington D.C. is one of the fastest-growing, most LGBTQIA+, and most racially diverse cities in the country.[3] However, our city also faces a growing crisis of hunger. In their 2024 report, the Capital Area Food Bank found that 37% of DMV residents are food insecure or severely food insecure, a 5% increase from the year prior and the highest level since the survey started in 2022.[4]

While our community is uniquely accepting in many ways, including being home to many explicitly accepting religious institutions and a set of robust legal protections for LGBTQIA+ residents, there has been insufficient research done about the economic problems LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians have faced. Our city's rising rent and food costs in the context of historic inflation creates a unique political and economic context within which we can and should do more to explore the economic security of our LGBTQIA+ neighbors.



Project Background

Project Purpose

This report seeks to fulfill this purpose by identifying the unique ways in which hunger is faced and experienced by the LGBTQIA+ community. From this research, we seek to provide concrete recommendations for public and private stakeholders in D.C. to address this crisis and direct more targeted and meaningful investment in support of the LGBTQIA+ community. This report will offer insights into the landscape of LGBTQIA+ hunger and provides insights to anyone concerned about hunger in Washington D.C., the well-being of LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians, policymakers, and service providers within this space. This report seeks to highlight and uplift the voices of LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians and center those who are most impacted to the heart of policymaking surrounding hunger.

In this report, terms used by the various researchers cited will be used as used in the studies. Some studies may just have looked a subset of this population, and the population studied will be referred to as such. LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual.

Methodology

This report is based on a national and District literature review, followed by interviews of key community stakeholders. This included interviews with service providers, impacted residents, and academics about their perspectives on barriers to LGBTQIA+ food security in Washington DC. Additionally, a survey was distributed along service networks for LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians to gather additional perspectives and insights into the landscape of food insecurity.

This study primarily focuses on adult hunger: while this includes young adults, a key demographic of the LGBTQIA+ community experiencing homelessness, we do not focus on school-age children. We know that LGBTQIA+ kids experience particular challenges inside and outside of school, and that deserves its own focused study. Given rates of bullying[31] inside of lunchrooms and rates of absenteeism[32] amongst LGBTQIA+ students that are significantly higher than their straight peers, many students are missing school lunches. Given the District's focus on increasing access to healthy, nutritious school lunches, missing class means missing these important meals. However, given the challenges

of surveying young people, we leave this for a future study.

The LGBTQIA+ community is not a monolith: it is diverse and each part of the community faces its own barriers and challenges, in addition to the intersectionality of race, age, education, and geography. While all of our surveys use the term LGBTQIA+, many of the national studies use a range of terminology. In this report, we reference national reports using the terms used in those particular studies, which ranges from LGBT to trans.

Lastly, we distributed a survey from November 2024 to January 2025 about LGBTQIA+ food insecurity which received 26 responses from LGBTQIA+ D.C. residents. This survey was promoted online, directly through existing service networks, and via in-person flyers in popular LGBTQIA+ destinations across the city. People who completed the survey were offered the opportunity to win a $25 gift card. The survey produced both quantitative and qualitative data that will be explored through this report.

After the bulk of this report's work was completed, the Office of Planning's Urban Design Division launched a "Designing Queer Futures" project, a set of surveys and events throughout 2025 to get LGBTQIA+ community members' inputs on what elements of urban design could make the District more inclusive. Where relevant, we've incorporated findings from those surveys, as well.



National Context

This report is the first study specific to the District of Columbia to focus on LGBTQIA+ hunger, but national studies show high rates of food insecurity within this community. Across the nation, members of the LGBTQIA+ community face unique barriers to accessing food and determinants of food insecurity, including housing, education, and good-paying jobs. In May 2023, 15% of LGBT adults and 19.3% of people in the United States who identified as another sexual orientation reported not having enough to eat compared to only 10.4% among non-LGBT adults.[5] Census data from 2021 showed that 13% of LGBT adults lived in households which experienced food insecurity in the past seven days, compared to 7.2% of non-LGBT adults. In 2019, the Williams Institute found that 27% of LGBTQIA+ people reported a lack of sufficient funds to buy food in the last year, 10 percentage points higher than straight and cisgender Americans.[7]

These inequities are particularly pronounced for LGBTQIA+ people of color and transgender people. More than one-third of transgender people of color (35.8%) sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in the prior week, compared to 12.6% of cisgender people of color, 17.1% of transgender white people, and 6% of cisgender white people.[8] Transgender adults face nearly three times the rate of food insecurity as non-trans adults, and transgender people of color are six times more likely to experience food insufficiency compared to their cisgender White peers. LGBTQIA+ people with multiple marginalized identities also are more likely to participate in SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at higher rates. A national survey conducted by the Center for American Progress showed that LGBTQ+ people used SNAP at more than double the rates of non-LGBTQ+ people (22.7% compared to 9.7%); that transgender people used SNAP at nearly double the rate of their cisgender counterparts (20% compared to 10.5%); that LGBTQ+ people of color received SNAP benefits at rates 50% higher than their LGBTQ+ white counterparts (28% compared to 19.2%); that LGBTQ+ disabled people used SNAP at 2.5 times the rate of LGBTQ+ nondisabled people (41.2% compared to 16%); and that LGBTQ+ women used SNAP at almost 50% higher rates than LGBTQ+ men (26.1% compared to 18.3%).[9] These disparities highlight the intersectionality of food insecurity amongst LGBTQIA+ Americans, and how additional identities pose new challenges to food access.

Causes of Food Insecurity in the LGBTQIA+ Community

Causes of food insecurity are multifaceted and often interlinked. First, poverty is a key cause of food insecurity. LGBT adults have 15% higher odds of being poor than their cisgender straight peers, after controlling for demographic factors, with the highest rates of poverty amongst people of color, bisexuals, women, transgender people, young people and people at the intersections of these identities.[10] Poverty restricts the ability for LGBTQIA+ people to purchase the food they need to avoid hunger.



Poverty is the downstream effect of discrimination, harassment, and bullying that uniquely impacts the LGBTQIA+ community. Despite federal regulations[11] and court decisions[12] prohibiting employers from discriminating against LGBTQIA+ employees on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, 47% of LGBTQ employees reported experiencing discrimination or harassment at work, including being fired, not hired, not promoted, or being verbally, physically, or sexually harassed, because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.[13] Workplace discrimination was experienced by more than 1 in 3 LGBTQI+ adults, including nearly half of LGBTQI+ people of color and LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, more than half of transgender and nonbinary individuals, and 2 in 3 intersex individuals.

Second, discrimination inhibits access to food. LGBTQIA+ adults often carry religious trauma which creates an avoidance to religious food distribution sites. This is notable because 65% of emergency kitchens, 67% of emergency pantries, and 9% of food banks are operated by religious organizations.[14] Qualitative research indicates that transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals feared gender-based discrimination from religious groups who organize food pantries,[15] and LGBTQIA+ adults who used religious food services report being expected to pray as part of their meal. 14% of LGBTQ+ adults have avoided a faith-based food pantry at one point.[17]

Furthermore, LGBTQIA+ people, specifically transgender and gender-expansive adults, underutilize SNAP benefits because of issues with identification, social stigma, and discrimination. When applying for public benefits like SNAP, applicants must present an ID and must select a single gender binary option that matches that which is on their ID. This can be challenging because 66% of LGBTQIA+ respondents to a 2020 survey experienced difficulty obtaining accurate identification



documents due to discrimination or requirements by ID-issuing organizations to select a binary gender option.[18] The U.S. Transgender Survey found that 48% of respondents with at least one form of ID said that none of their IDs listed the name they wanted.[19]

Third, LGBTQIA+ people often struggle to access other crucial needs, including healthcare and housing. This inhibits access to food by forcing people to make choices between necessities, leading some to neglect using food services. Research published by the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics concludes that food and housing security have a bidirectional relationship, meaning people who experience housing insecurity are at higher risk for food insecurity and vice

versa.[20] This elevates the risk for LGBTQIA+ people, who are at higher risk for housing instability and homelessness. Data from the Trevor Project shows that 28% of LGBTQ youth reported experiencing homelessness or housing instability at some point in their lives, including 44% of Native/Indigenous LGBTQ youth and 36% of multiracial LGBTQ youth.[21] Similarly, LGBT populations are more likely to be underinsured and have disabilities that impede access to care. This underinsurance increases costs for healthcare and decreases disposable income available for other necessities, including food.[22]

Lastly, these issues regarding LGBTQIA+ hunger are disproportionately felt by people with intersectional identities, specifically LGBTQIA+ people of color, people with disabilities,[23] elders, youth, immigrants,[24] transgender and gender-expansive people, and people living with HIV/AIDS.[25] Hunger is an experience mediated by other social identities, and people who experience other forms of social marginalization are more predisposed to experiencing hunger.

Hunger impacts everyone. When people are hungry, they struggle with higher levels of toxic stress,[26] have higher rates of mental health issues,[27] and are at higher risk for chronic diseases.[28] Hungry children are sick more often; suffer from physical, developmental, and cognitive impairments; and suffer lower academic achievement than their peers.[29] Food insecurity can stunt economic development and cause absenteeism, negatively impacting economic growth.[30]

The literature currently lacks sufficient research detailing specific barriers that LGBTQIA+ people in the DMV Metro region experience in accessing food, but it's clear that many of the issues outlined above are present in the District. LGBTQ+ folks in the District have higher rates of homelessness, housing insecurity, and poverty compared to their cisgender, heterosexual peers. In Washington DC, nearly 50% (51 of 109) food pantries listed on LinkUDMV are Christian, posing an additional prospective challenge for LGBTQIA+ food insecure residents.

This report seeks to explore and address specific barriers that LGBTQIA+ people experience, including the unique barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ people of color, people with disabilities, women, youth, students, older adults, religious minorities, and gender-expansive people.



Current LGBTQIA+ Serving Organizations

The following organizations are currently serving LGBTQIA+ D.C. residents.

Table 1: Government-Funded Nutrition Programs for LGBTQIA+ Residents			
Program Name	**Program Summary**	**Gender Options**	**Currently Administered By:**
SNAP	Provides funds to buy non-prepared foods; monthly funding amount differs	Male/Female	Department of Human Services
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	Emergency nutrition assistance via food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters; CAFB	N/A	Capital Area Food Bank
School Nutrition Programs (SNP); includes the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Special Milk Program (SMP)	Providing nutritious low-or-no-cost meals and snacks to students.	N/A	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	Serves no-cost healthy meals and snacks to help youth 18 and younger in the District during the summer months	N/A	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	Reimburses approved child development facilities, adult day care centers, sponsored day care homes, afterschool programs, and emergency shelters in the District for the meals and snacks they serve	N/A	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Community Dining Sites	Provides hot, nutritious, and delicious meals in a group setting for older adults 60 years of age or older at different sites throughout the District.	N/A	Department of Aging and Community Living

Current LGBTQIA+ Serving Organizations (continued)

The following organizations are currently serving LGBTQIA+ D.C. residents.

Table 1: Government-Funded Nutrition Programs for LGBTQIA+ Residents (cont.)			
Program Name	**Program Summary**	**Gender Options**	**Currently Administered By:**
Commodity Supplemental Food Program	Provides DC residents ages 60 and older a monthly box of shelf-stable, healthy foods, nutrition education, and referrals to healthcare and social services.	-	Capital Area Food Bank
Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program	Provides benefits to DC residents ages 60 and older enrolled in CSFP/ Grocery Plus to buy fresh fruit, vegetables, honey, and herbs at participating farmers' markets during SFMNP season.	N/A	Capital Area Food Bank
Home-Delivered Meals	Offers healthy lunchtime meals delivered to the home for seniors who are frail, homebound, or isolated. Participants receive 10 or 14 refrigerated meals delivered every 2 weeks.	N/A	Department of Aging and Community Living
Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)	Free healthy foods, breastfeeding support, nutrition education and services referrals for families with children 5 and under	-	DC Health

Table 2: Privately Funded Nutrition Programs for LGBTQIA+ Residents			
Program Name	**Program Summary**	**Explicitly LGBTQ+?**	**Currently Administered By:**
The DC LGBTQ+ Community Center Food Pantry	Two cabinets of food that LGBTQIA+ residents can directly access. Low-barrier.	Yes	The DC LGBTQ+ Community Center
SMYAL Housing Program	SMYAL provides direct services to young people experiencing homelessness, including shelter, food, case management services, crisis intervention, and community support for 18-24 year olds.	Yes	SMYAL
Food and Friends Meals Program	Medically tailored meals, groceries, and nutrition counseling to people living with life-challenging illnesses, including HIV/AIDS.	No	Food and Friends
Friendship Place Drop-In Center	Place for people experiencing homelessness to receive basic needs including food, basic hygiene supplies, clothing, and medical and mental health services.	No, but with LGBTQ+ wing	Friendship Place

Table 3: Community Resources			
Program Name	**Program Summary**	**Explicitly LGBTQ+?**	**Currently Administered By:**
Damien Ministries Food Bank	Provides 14 days worth of groceries to DC residents twice a month.	No	Damien Ministries
Metropolitan Community Church of Washington DC	Clients receive free gift cards to receive food.	No	MCC of DC
Bread for the City Food Pantries	Provide food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services. Pick up groceries once a month; must bring ID and proof of household size.	No	Bread for the City
Community Food Markets/Distribution	Free groceries via Martha's Table Markets, Community Markets, and Joyful Food Markets; Warm meals via McKenna's Wagon	No	Martha's Table
Hot Meals Program	Low-barrier warm meals, serve hot breakfast and cold lunches M-F; Run food pantry	No	Thrive DC
Healthy Meals Program	Provides breakfast and dinner M-F all year	No	Miriam's Kitchen
Breakfast and Lunch Distribution	Provides free hot meals every day, year-round	No	So Others May Eat (SOME)

Findings





Food insecurity is disproportionately severe for LGBTQIA+ people in Washington D.C., especially residents with intersectional identities.

The majority of interviewees identify LGBTQIA+ food insecurity as a critical need which needs to be addressed through their organizations. This concern is connected to other needs that are disproportionately high in LGBTQIA+ communities, namely housing and employment. When LGBTQIA+ lack access to adequate access or are denied job opportunities because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, they are also more likely to experience food insecurity as a downstream effect. The economic precarity of LGBTQIA+ is a severe issue that requires policy redress.

53% of LGBTQIA+ survey respondents reported that on "some days" in any given week, they are hungry or lack adequate access to food, and 11% reported that this is true for "more than half the days." 65% reported that it is always, often, or sometimes true that they are worried their food will run out before they have money to buy food, with 23% reporting this is rarely true and only 11% reporting this is never true. Even when people are able to eat, many respondents do not have sufficient nutrition: 88% report that they at some point could not afford to eat balanced meals, 57% reported not eating in the last month even while hungry because they did not have enough money for food, and 73% reported cutting the size of their meals or skipping meals because there wasn't enough money for food. These issues were so extreme that 35% of respondents reported losing weight because they didn't have enough food to eat.

These survey responses align with national data which indicates a higher level of hunger in the LGBTQIA+ community, especially amongst people with marginalized identities. For example, all respondents who reported lacking access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a given week are people of color (55% are Black, 33% are Latino, and 11% are Asian). This is consistent with data from the Williams Institute, which found transgender people of color to experience food insecurity at 6 times the rate of their white, cisgender counterparts (36% to 6%). Within Washington D.C., this is consistent with the broader community inequities in food access: Capital Area Food Bank's 2024 Hunger Report indicates that 53% of Black and Hispanic Washingtonians are food insecure, as compared to 17% of white residents.[34]

Despite this high degree of need, there is a lack of services explicitly focused on tackling hunger within the LGBTQIA+ community. There is targeted investment for service providers offering transitional and permanent housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, and career and professional development, but very little investment towards tackling LGBTQIA+ hunger specifically. Currently, only one grantee from the Mayor's Office on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Affairs focused directly on food services. Similarly, many LGBTQIA+ serving organizations – including SMYAL and D.C. LGBTQ+ Community Center – provide limited services addressing LGBTQIA+ hunger within the District (e.g. limited food distribution, a community food pantry, occasional prepared meals), but none operate specific programs providing sustained sources of food to LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians.

Housing is a primary problem for many food insecure LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians.



For many LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians, housing is a significant concern. The LGBTQ+ community is overrepresented in residents who are experiencing homelessness. The Williams Institute reports that 17% of sexual minority adults have experienced homelessness in their lives, nearly three times that of the 6% of cisgender straight people who have. Additionally, 40% of youth experiencing homelessness in Washington D.C. are LGBTQIA+.[35] This crisis of homelessness is directly connected with hunger and access to food. Deborah Shore, Founder and Executive Director of the multi-service agency Sasha Bruce Youthwork, explained: "What we know a lot about is that a large number of LGBTQ+ young people in the homeless community, and in the homeless community there is a significant amount of worry about hunger and access to food and access to decent food. We know from our direct experience that LGBTQ+ young people are certainly experiencing a great deal of hunger as well as other issues, such as housing discrimination."

> **"Affordable housing! If you can't pay rent with one-third of minimum wage, it's not affordable."**

Housing is not just a challenge for the LGBTQ+ community. The Urban Institute reports that Washington D.C. is one of the most expensive places in the United States to live, with many spending over 30% of their income on housing.[36] Community members emphasized not just the cost of housing but the mismatch between rent prices and wages. Data from ApartmentList in 2023 quantifies that Washington D.C.'s cost of living is 53% higher than the national average and housing costs are 144% higher than the national average.[37] On the supply side, a combination of rising development costs and skyrocketing rent delinquencies are worsening the housing affordability crisis and threatening to bankrupt many low-income housing providers.[38]

To make matters worse, the loss of funding for local developers through the Housing Production Trust Fund (redirected to protect existing low-income housing units from entering foreclosure) and from federal tax credits (which cannot be unlocked due to D.C. exhausting its supply of bonds required to access this funding) means that there will be a substantial drop-off of affordable housing in 2026 and 2027.

When LGBTQIA+ people, especially LGBTQIA+ young people, lack access to stable housing caused by and in addition to compounding forms of discrimination and social rejection, finding food and sustaining food security becomes increasingly challenging. Lacking a permanent address makes it difficult to access federal and local food security programs which require this information. Steph from Plantita Power explains that people have frequently expressed that "they're not going to get resources because they can't provide an address."



This need is why low-barrier food distribution sites do not request residential information, and why organizations such as Thrive DC offer their address to become a permanent address for their clients who need to apply for these federal programs.

Some community organizations in Washington D.C. have sought to serve these challenges, including Casa Ruby, an LGBTQIA+ non-profit which provided shelter, food, and emergency services to about 200 LGBTQ people every day throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for immigrants, multilingual clients, and transgender D.C. residents.[39] However, in 2022, Casa Ruby shut down all operations, including transitional housing and social services.[xl] Support programs that Casa Ruby provided for the transgender community, including transition housing and social services, ended. Casa Ruby's closure was a major setback for LGBTQIA+ housing security.

"I've heard the recommendation that you should just provide a fake address, and a lot of people will have different addresses at different food pantries."

While the Wanda Alston Foundation and SMYAL still provide transitional housing for LGBTQIA+ young adults, Mary's House in NE DC, provides affordable housing for LGBTQ+SGL adults 60+. It could be an outreach partner. It may be worth connecting with their residents to better understand food challenges facing older queer adults. This is a District-operated low-barrier shelter specifically supporting LGBTQIA+ individuals through case management, job readiness training, life skills classes, psychosocial support, and health and wellness support. The shelter provides support across months to help residents transition into permanent housing, not shelter beds for a one-night emergency stay. However, the shelter cannot sufficiently serve all of the need across Washington D.C. for their services. Other non-LGBTQIA+ focused shelters often lack inclusive policies surrounding gender identity and may include additional barriers for LGBTQIA+ people, such as harassment, discrimination, or misgendering. Danny Rico of Sasha Bruce Youthwork shared: "***There is one LGBTQ+ specific shelter in the city, which is usually at capacity almost every night. So a lot of the youth that did not feel comfortable coming to or going to a general shelter or adult shelter would come to us."*** One interviewee commented: ***"We need ten shelters like that to address all of the need."***

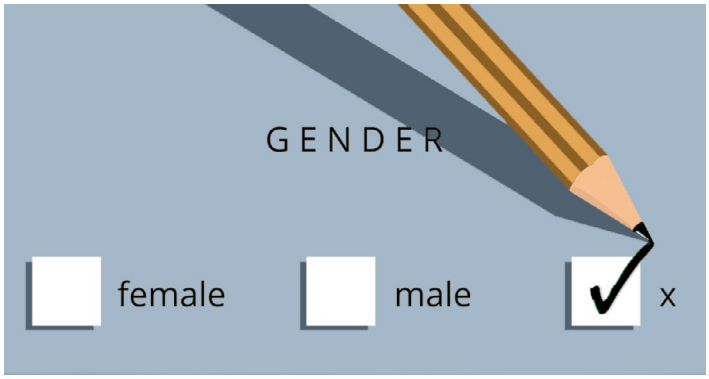
Discrimination remains a salient problem that drives people away from food services.

As with any marginalized population, a primary root of inequitable food outcomes for LGBTQIA+ populations comes from discrimination. A majority of interviewees articulate discrimination to be a concern for LGBTQIA+ populations, including as a problem at sites of food distribution. This corroborates pre-existing research identifying homophobic and transphobic discrimination to be a primary concern, both for service providers and food distribution sites and in the areas of housing, education, employment, and public accommodations.

Discrimination at food distribution sites manifests as direct forms of discrimination at food distribution sites, including supermarkets and restaurants, food pantries, and soup kitchens. This discrimination can be interpersonal (e.g. a service provider directly makes a disparaging remark about a client's gender identity, gender

expression, or sexual orientation; another client engages in sexual harassment related to a client's gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation), institutional (e.g. clients are asked to pray before a meal; service providers refuse to provide service for LGBTQIA+ clients on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation), or a combination of both (e.g. a manager who sets policy creates a hostile environment for volunteers and clients who are LGBTQIA+). It's important to note that discrimination occurs both vertically (management, leadership, or staff discriminating against LGBTQIA+ clients) and horizontally (clients making disparaging remarks or engaging in discrimination against other clients).

Notably, one structural barrier is the presentation of a gender binary for forms and accessing identification which accurately reflects one's gender identity. The new Trump Administration has rescinded practices from the Biden Administration offering an "X" gender marker on certain government documents (e.g. passports[41]) and codified the gender binary into law, proclaiming in one of his first executive orders: "agency forms that require an individual's sex shall list male or female, and shall not request gender identity."[42] This reinforces this barrier for gender-expansive people, including non-binary and transgender residents, who may not be able to access affirming documents from the federal government, increasing the onus for local identification to provide more appropriate documentation.



These issues of discrimination are substantiated by our survey, which indicates that the majority of respondents have experienced some form of harassment of discrimination. This includes 50% of respondents who have experienced discrimination and/or harassment at a restaurant or dining establishment, 31% at a food pantry or soup kitchen (amongst users of these services), and 35% at a religious food distribution site. Respondents also reported sexual orientation and/or gender identity becoming a barrier for access to local or federal benefits, including 15% who experienced discrimination while applying for a public food security program and 35% who report "selecting gender" as a "barrier [...] in applying for assistance for federal programs."

"The most common thing I've heard is that [...] a lot of specifically trans people have had to tone themselves down in terms of what they wear, or adopt a gender expression that is not theirs, to be able to access food. I know someone that mentioned that they really liked the fact that even though the pandemic brought so much challenges (sic) for them, one thing that was easier was that because they had a mask on, they could go and access food much easier at religious institutions because their face was covered. You can only see their eyes. You can only see their eyes. They have long hair. No one's going to assume anything, right? [...] Because their face is covered, you couldn't see that they have a beard." – Steph, Plantita Power

This discrimination then creates an unsafe space for clients to access food, leading to self-reported strategies to mask LGBTQIA+ identity.

Discrimination and fears of judgment at religious food distribution sites is a key point of concern.

Religious trauma is acute within the LGBTQIA+ community and directly affects decision-making about where to access food. In the United States, 1 in 3 Americans suffer from religious trauma.[43] LGBTQIA+ people experience religious trauma in disproportionate and unique ways which increase risks for suicidality, substance abuse, homelessness, and mental illness.[44] Considering that nearly half of all food distribution sites in the District are Christian (based on analysis promoted through the District's LinkUDMV system), this can pose a significant barrier for food access in the city.

"Queer people often experience trauma returning to religious locations like churches, which often host soup kitchens."

Religious trauma manifests in many different ways, but stems from religious rejection of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. This happens across religions, geographies, and backgrounds. In the most severe cases, religion-based LGBTQIA+ conversion practices create harm and increase abuse, mental health diagnoses, and suicidality upon exposure.[45] In general, any religious space which invalidates the identities of LGBTQIA+ people reinforces a sense of alienation and erodes personal safety. Research on LGBTQIA+ people's relationship with faith finds that adverse religious experiences are particularly prevalent, meaning that many people carry with them the trauma of being told that their religion condemns their identity as a sin.[46]

While D.C. is home to many inclusive and accepting religious organizations providing food, there is also a need to reach residents who may avoid religious sites because of their religious trauma. These adverse religious experiences can create discomfort for LGBTQIA+ people when seeking to access religiously affiliated services, or cause them to avoid such services altogether, cutting off a critical source of food. Both service providers and impacted communities report feelings of alienation and experiences with discrimination to be a reason why LGBTQIA+ clients may routinely avoid religious food distribution sites.

"It's something I experienced in college. The only option was a faith-based pantry, and I really switched it up and hid my identity just to go there [...] I facilitated a group conversation between me and two people who were either actively food insecure or very recently food insecure, and just talking about how they had to hide their identities just to access services, or how not being able to hide their identity because they were not gender confirming. They just have to deal with bigotry, deal with the anxiety of going someplace and not knowing what will happen this time, whether it be from somebody else seeking services or somebody providing services." – Fleurian, Feeding America



"For many who come to our congregation, it's new to them to hear an explicit welcome, an explicit message that includes them, without any caveats that they can at some point in time change [...] with respect to programs at other churches who are not inclusive, it makes sense that we would avoid them: because I think the experience that people have had in the past is if you come to the church for any kind of assistance you are going to be preached to or preached at, and there aren't necessarily any restrictions on proselytizing to folks. So anyone who shows up is willing to get preached to, and then, based on how you look, will determine the message that you receive."
– Jonathan, Riverside Baptist Church

"Provisioning sites in churches is an obvious and clear barrier for LGBTQ+ people, and especially in rural areas, food provisioning sites in the emergency food system are more likely to be in and are often in churches." – Dr. Ike Leslie, Professor at University of Vermont



Enhancing public transportation can improve food access.

In order to access food, Washingtonians must be able to navigate public transportation in order to go to grocery stores, food distribution sites, or community gardens. Pre-existing research already finds that transportation is a major barrier to food access. including insufficient transit infrastructure, dependency on personal vehicles, and spatial limitations. Mobility is a specific barrier for LGBTQIA+ people because of safety concerns in public transportation that can complicate access to food. Research published in December 2024 in the Journal of Urban Mobility finds that gender minorities (transgender and gender-expansive individuals) "experience frequent harassment while engaging with the public transport system."[47] Kylie Madhav, the Senior Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at SAFE, identified verbal and sexual harassment, physical intimidation, and linguistic and economic barriers as some of the specific challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ riders.[48]



These challenges restrict LGBTQIA+ people's access to food. Fleurian Filkins of Feeding America explained, ***"For trans people [...] it can be dangerous just to ride the bus, just to access transportation, just to go shopping or leave the house. Gender-based violence, and not having the same access to support networks what some communities have, is an additive factor here. Maybe you don't have a ride to the store from your parents, because you don't always have support from your family."*** Familial rejection is particularly difficult for LGBTQIA+ young people, who might also lose access to housing or experience abuse and neglect after coming out.[49]

LGBTQIA+ adults face additional barriers to accessing transportation. For example, higher rates of poverty and economic insecurity caused by unemployment or underemployment constrain people from owning or renting a personal vehicle for transportation and increases the burdens of the costs of public transportation. In June 2024, WMATA increased metro fares by 12.5%, raising Metrobus fares to $2.25, express bus fares to $4.80, and Metrorail fares to $2.25 to $6.75 dependent on distance traveled.[50] Changes like this can disproportionately negatively impact LGBTQIA+ residents' – and all those reliant exclusively on public transit – ability to travel to and from a food distribution site.

Lastly, the distance between lower-income areas and food distribution sites or grocery stores poses an additional burden. Distance-dependent fares increase the costs for residents from Wards 7 and 8 to access a grocery store. Transportation is particularly difficult for residents who live in areas furthest away from service providers or food distribution sites where they can purchase groceries, access meals, or receive consistent service to tackle hunger. This means that transportation is a problem which is geographically mediated for D.C. residents, most disproportionately impacting those who live in regions with insufficient access to public transportation and furthest away from sites of food.

Per one survey respondent, their greatest barrier to accessing food is that there is "nothing close by within walking distance." Another simply noted "distance," while a third noted in Spanish "distance and transportation." The limitations of structural inequities which tilt the playing field of food access is a core problem which must be addressed in order to expand access to food for LGBTQIA+ clients.

Pride and stigma are social and personal barriers which may restrict access to food.

In our community roundtable, multiple people describe a core barrier to accessing food as an issue of pride. Research substantiates that "welfare

stigma," or negative stereotypes about people who may utilize public assistance programs for housing and food, limits participation for programs such as SNAP as people opt out of using such programs due to feelings such as shame or guilt.[52] The



emotional work and what Bruckner et al describe as "neoliberal stigma" surrounding emergency food assistance both impose additional costs of accessing such programs, and must be examined as part of the barriers LGBTQIA+ residents face in accessing such food programs.[52]

One roundtable participant explained: "The stigma with getting access to SNAP, there is a social stigma with it [...] it was a joke for your family to be on food stamps. They call it "jone-ing" in this area, but people would jone on you if you get food stamps, saying you're poor." This experience received a wave of nods and agreement from the audience. A survey respondent echoes this when asked about their greatest barrier to accessing food, writing it is "my pride and sometimes not having enough money to buy food." In this response, emphasizing pride as the primary emotional and social factor influencing decisions to access food, even more significant than economic constraints, indicates that we must address this issue within our community. LGBTQIA+ youth and adults may experience additional barriers in this space. LGBTQIA+ people have often received discriminatory messages which denigrate their identity, injuring their sense of identity pride. Research from the Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health finds that LGBTQ identity pride is negatively impacted by bullying and family rejection, which in turn increases depression amongst LGBTQIA+ youth.[53] In this way, identity pride may already be injured by negative external factors, creating a heightened need to defend and protect one's pride in other areas of life.

Scarlet from Friendship Place connects how family rejection and pride may connect with food insecurity, specifically the amount of money that LGBTQIA+ people may spend on food. She explains: "People extremely underestimate how much people, especially young adults, rely on their families for food security. Even as an adult, people with good relationships with their parents will often be taken out to dinner, sent/given snacks or treats, and do not typically pay for special occasion meals. All of this food assistance is lost for LGBT folk with an unstable or even poor relationship with their parents. [...] Even with LGBT folk who have healthy relationships with their parents, they often feel the need to prove to them that they can be independent and may refuse meals and gifts (which are often food-related or cash which can be used for food)."

One's sense of pride is both an important part of one's sense of self and can be a powerful motivator or deterrent for using specific food assistance programs. Service providers and policymakers must consider the psychological elements of shame which influence decision-making when people consider when and how to access food.



Barriers to access housing and food are starker for LGBTQIA+ residents in Wards 7 and 8 due to underinvestment and systemic factors.

There is insufficient data collection on LGBTQIA+ utilization of existing food distribution sites and anti-hunger services.

These gaps in service are most apparent in the most underserved communities in D.C., Wards 7 and 8. Rico shared: ***"There aren't that many LGBTQ+ serving organizations in Wards 7 and 8; there are some that might serve them, but there's none that really provide direct services. The only exception would probably be Whitman-Walker Health, which now has a campus in Ward 8. So for anybody who might be looking for help in their neighborhood, it would mean traveling outside of their neighborhood into a different part of the city trying to seek those services. I think that's a big barrier to just the services that we're trying to provide."***

Wards 7 and 8 already experience significant economic disparities and represent predominantly Black, low-income neighborhoods. 83% of Ward 7 residents[54] and 88% of Ward 8 residents[55] are Black. Both wards experience higher poverty, more gun violence and worse health outcomes.[56] Both Wards also have significant food deserts,[57] defined as areas "where residents' access to affordable, healthy food options is restricted or nonexistent due to the absence of grocery stores within convenient traveling distance." Consequently, residents struggle disproportionately with food insecurity when compared to wealthier regions of the city.[59]

These existing barriers are heightened when there is a lack of services coverage for LGBTQIA+ people in both Wards, creating intersectionally marginalized and exceedingly high-risk populations predisposed to housing and food insecurity. To comprehensively address LGBTQIA+ hunger, we must also address the fundamental geographic, racial, and economic inequities which constitute the backdrop of LGBTQIA+ life in the city.

In order to identify the severity of a problem, there must first be equitable data collection within impacted communities to identify what the scope and severity of issues within those communities. Currently, there is woefully inadequate data collection regarding LGBTQIA+ people, preventing comprehensive analysis of hunger within the LGBTQIA+ community. As the Center for Community Solutions explains, "without comprehensive data, the unique needs of LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be unknown, ignored, and underfunded."[60] They report that LGBTQIA+ communities currently operate within a "data desert," where the vast majority of national and local surveys do not collect information regarding sexual orientation or gender identity, limiting the capacity for advocacy organizations and government agencies to adequately respond to the level of need within the community.

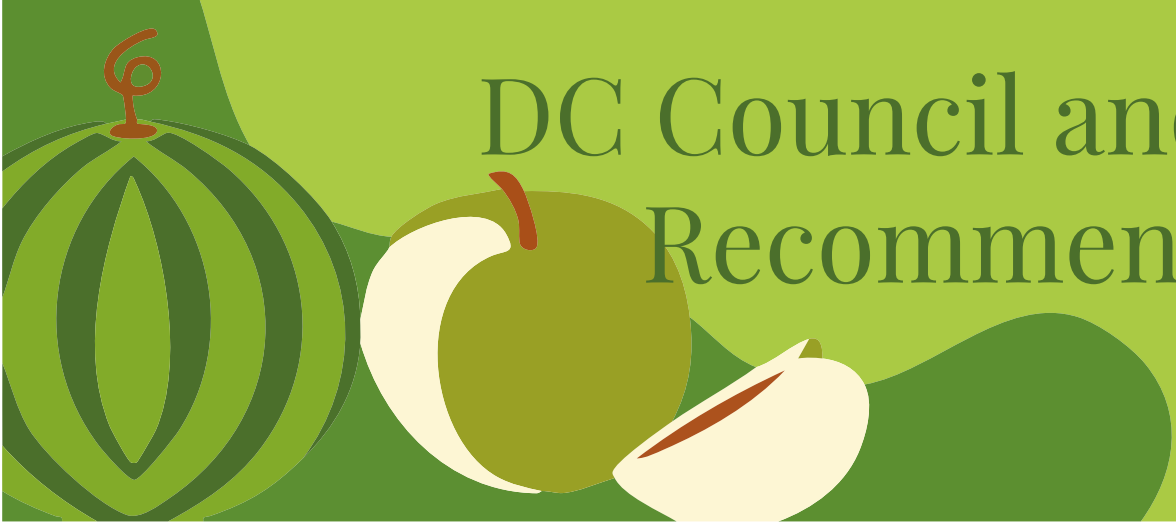
Ike Leslie, a Professor at the University of Vermont's Institute for Agroecology, explains: ***"When you don't ask about gender identity in a complete way or sexual orientation in the really large national surveys, it's really difficult to have a survey with a sample size big enough where you can distinguish inequities in minority populations like among trans folks, and it's even more difficult if you don't have enough trans folks across different ethnic and racial groups to make any sort of statements about what might be happening, as far as the intersection with race and gender and sexuality."*** This data deficit contributes to a dearth of targeted resources and research focused on issues of LGBTQIA+ hunger and economic precarity at a national level, and also creates barriers for research on the local level.

The majority of service providers interviewed for this report collected only limited information about LGBTQIA+ clients, and when this data was collected, it often did not disaggregate demographic information of clients. Most accounts of LGBTQIA+ hunger are anecdotal pieces of evidence, provided by service providers who either worked directly with LGBTQIA+ clients who disclosed their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or information provided through the survey we distributed to LGBTQIA+ community members. Similarly, on the federal level, national surveys – such as the Urban Institute's Well-Being and Basic Needs Survey – aggregate all LGBTQIA+ people into a singular category (represented by variable "LGBT"). While this data collection is useful to identify disparities within the LGBTQIA+ community at-large compared to heterosexual and cisgender survey respondents, it lacks the specificity to be able to truly understand unique and specific barriers impacting subsets within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Miriam's Kitchen provided a 2023 Point-in-Time Factsheet which collected disaggregated community data which can be used as a model for other food distribution sites seeking to capture more precise demographic information about their clients. The report collects data on sexuality, with the options of "heterosexual," "gay," "bisexual," "lesbian," "other," and "questioning/unsure;" data on gender, including "transgender," "transgender female," and "gender non-conforming;" and data on prior health conditions, including HIV/AIDS and physical or cognitive disabilities. National organizations, including the U.S. Census Bureau, are also beginning to collect data about sexual orientation and gender identity within future surveys, a promising sign of continued progress within the data space.[61]

Better data collection will be a crucial way to identify needs within the LGBTQIA+ community and create responsive policymaking to address disparities. Local, state, and federal government agencies, polling organizations, and non-profit organizations collecting data on who they serve should consider ways to capture disaggregated data about LGBTQIA+ identity within survey data to improve our understanding of need within the community.

At the same time, data collection is complicated by privacy concerns from LGBTQIA+ clients as a new administration actively hostile to LGBTQIA+ rights enters office. Washington D.C.'s tenuous position as a non-state district, which the United States Congress has direct jurisdiction over, means that data collection also opens up new prospective risks. Community members and service providers have shared how skepticism and caution from the LGBTQIA+ community, stemming from fears of targeting and persecution, creates additional considerations for data collection. These fears may be heightened because of the unique and specific forms of harm LGBTQI+ communities have experienced via digital technology, including data breaches.[62] Sensitive information, including sexual orientation and gender identity data, must receive special care when stakeholders craft privacy best practices.



DC Council and Other Recommendations

LGBTQIA+ hunger is multifaceted and complex. These recommendations are separated based on their target stakeholder: the federal government, D.C. Council, D.C. city agencies, and local stakeholders, including non-profits and businesses. Recognizing that hunger is a problem that many face, some of these recommendations also directly address policy interventions which will tackle hunger at large, and consequently, help LGBTQIA+ residents.

***DC Council: Increasing funds to the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs, specifically for organizations focused on food distribution within the LGBTQIA+ community.**

As a critical grantmaker within Washington D.C., MOLGBTQA has a significant degree of knowledge and familiarity of LGBTQIA+ providers. By increasing funding for food distribution services within the LGBTQIA+ community, City Council can: (1) create a financial incentive for LGBTQIA+ service organizations and food distribution organizations to create tailored programs serving the LGBTQIA+ community, and (2) invest more into existing initiatives already serving LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians. This support could expand to include queer-owned businesses that cater to a queer clientele, to create safe spaces for affordable food for the LGBTQIA+ population.

"I don't know in FY 25, if there is a dedicated program that is seeking out LGBTQ+ hunger, though we are offering services dedicated for housing or dedicated for workforce. I think this is definitely a blind spot." **– Japer Bowles, D.C. Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs**

***DC Council: Invest to open up more LGBTQIA+ specific shelters.**

The current level of demand for stable housing and wraparound services tailored to LGBTQIA+ residents is significantly higher than the current level of supply (one shelter and a few transitional housing programs specifically serving LGBTQIA+ people). Opening up more shelters requires more investments from city government, which can take the form of grants administered through MOLGBTQA or by allocating funds towards existing organizations which provide homeless shelters to open up new facilities specifically focused on serving an LGBTQIA+ clientele.

DC Council: increase food assistance benefits for D.C. residents.

Policies such as Give SNAP A Raise helped more than 141,000 DC residents participating in the program, alleviating the estimated $160 million SNAP food security gap between what they received in SNAP benefits and what they would need for an adequate healthy diet. Programs which specifically increase food benefits offer a powerful avenue of combating hunger at large and helping the most disproportionately impacted communities, including LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians.

> *"We strongly believe that Giving SNAP A Raise on a permanent and more robust basis is something that will pay massive dividends for the district not just across its food insecurity and hunger landscape, but also in terms of public health and economic engagement."* **– Alex Moore, Chief Development Officer at DC Central Kitchen**

DC Council: Expand eligibility for the Metro Lift Income-Qualified Program and extend reduced fares to buses.

Currently, only DMV residents who receive SNAP benefits qualify for the Metro Lift Income-Qualified Program, where all metro fares cost 50% less.[63] This creates barriers for residents who are SNAP-eligible but not enrolled, and people who have incomes above the SNAP threshold but still insufficient to cover all of their expenses. Expanding this program by (1) including more low-income residents by lifting eligibility to 300% of the SNAP eligibility threshold and (2) expanding benefits to include bus fares can increase access to public transportation for all Washingtonians, especially in areas only served by bus. This should be accompanied with ongoing efforts to continuously expand transit access, a real priority for residents. One Designing Queer Future survey participant noted their top goal as "having transportation that can reach all 8 wards of the city."

DC Council: Increase investments for grocery access, especially for residents of Wards 7 and 8.

The longest-term goal should be to increase the number of supermarkets and fresh produce distributors in Wards 7 and 8 so there can be an economically sustainable and geographically accessible site of food for residents. In the short-term, increasing funding for programs such as the Department of Health's pilot program covering delivery costs of groceries for residents can effectively bridge the gap between communities which need access to produce now and grocery stores in other wards.

In order to inform longer-term decision-making, the district can invest in researching access to grocery stores for residents to better understand the needs of community members.

DC Council: Administer grants which allow for food purchasing for service providers.

Currently, the city prohibits grant funding from going directly towards purchasing food, posing a barrier for service providers who are recipients of city funding from directing that funding toward food. Lifting this requirement enables greater flexibility for grantees to spend where the funding is most needed, which may include food purchases to directly serve LGBTQIA+ clients.

***Department of Health Services: Invest in LGBTQIA+ SNAP workshops.**

Currently, there are no centralized programs to support residents with applying for SNAP. This creates a gap in information where a significant number of residents who would otherwise be eligible for SNAP are not applying for and accessing benefits they are entitled to. Increasing utilization can reduce hunger by increasing disposable income to purchase food for limited-income LGBTQIA+ residents. By hosting workshops to educate residents about SNAP, assist residents with filing applications, and answering questions specific to LGBTQIA+ community members (e.g. questions regarding gender identity), the Department of Health Services can reach residents where they are and improve awareness and understanding of how to access these services.

***Department of Motor Vehicles: Make Non-Driver ID Cards free.**

Transgender and gender-expansive people may avoid food distribution sites or federal benefits because of the requirement to show Photo ID. Current identification cards may not correctly reflect a person's gender or gender presentation. However, changing one's gender designation on their driver's license or identification card usually carries a fee of $80 (a $60 filing fee and $20 motion fee, unless you apply for and receive a Fee Waiver).[64] Per the website, the only free IDs currently offered are for seniors, ex-offenders who were released within 6 months of their application, or homeless residents.

Waiving the fee to receive a Non-Driver ID Card eliminates a prospective barrier for people seeking new identification documents which accurately reflect their gender identity and gender presentation.

***Food Policy Council: Facilitate quarterly/annually/biannual gatherings to bring together LGBTQ+ serving organizations and food service organizations.**

Building connections between organizations trusted in serving the LGBTQ+ community and those that have access to food and food access programs – including DC agencies like DHS and DC Health, as well as organizations like Food Rescue US and the Capital Area Food Bank – can enable organizations embedded in community to have access to needed food and would be able to better reach targeted clients where they are.

"I know there are great organizations that work with the LGBT community in D.C. I don't know who they are, who the right point of contact is, who I should go to for a different age group. There's an important coordinating information function that can take place. [...] That's where the city can actually play an incredibly valuable role, because of the perspective they have."

- Shane, Thrive D.C.

Increase funding for housing programs, including homeless shelters, transitional housing, and affordable housing.

Federal funding for housing programs is limited, with the 2023 budget including only $3.6 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants and only $382 million for the Housing Trust Fund to build more affordable housing (just over $3 million of which was allocated for the District of Columbia). Increasing federal investments in homeless services, transitional housing, and affordable housing development can address broader market issues with the shortage of housing stock

and improve investments in services, addressing broader issues of housing insecurity in Washington D.C.

The Center for American Progress published a report in 2022 outlining best practices in data collection and question design.[65] Additional guidance has been published by Funders for LGBTQ Issues.[66]

***Local agencies, non-profits, and businesses: Use inclusive language.**

Feedback from the Designing Queer Futures emphasized interest in permanent streateries, plazas and pedestrian-oriented streets as inclusive public space strategies. All signage and communications should be inclusive of people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as one piece of a broader culture of LGBTQIA+ inclusion and belonging. Inclusive signage includes those which explicitly affirms and welcomes LGBTQIA+ clients into businesses and at food distribution sites; policies which explicitly address and acknowledge the LGBTQIA+ community, including disparities with access to food; and communications which eliminate gendered language which could potentially exclude or marginalize LGBTQIA+ residents. These practices, alongside regular collection of feedback from LGBTQIA+ clients, can enhance culture to become more LGBTQIA+ inclusive.

***Local agencies, non-profits, and businesses: Mandate cultural competency trainings to employees specifically addressing homophobia and transphobia.**

Research substantiates that LGBTQIA+ cultural competency training is effective in reducing bias and improving outcomes. A systematic review published in 2023 finds that LGBTQ+ cultural competency training for health professionals improved knowledge of LGBTQ+ culture and health, enhanced skills to work with LGBTQ+ clients, improved attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals, and improved behaviors towards LGBTQ+ affirming practices.[67] These trainings are both “widely used and highly recommended” by the National LGBT Cancer Network.[68]

For local agencies, such as the Department of Human Services and D.C. Health, implementing these trainings can be particularly helpful for advancing health equity goals. For other public-facing D.C. city staff, such as ibrarians, police officers, or bus drivers, these trainings can also provide substantial support in addressing and ameliorating discriminatory or harmful interactions and can include additional trainings about intervening in situations of harassment or discrimination. Non-profit organizations which receive taxpayer funding should also be mandated to provide these trainings for staff to ensure culturally competent, gender-affirming care.

These trainings can be provided through the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs. If necessary, additional funding should be allocated to invest in a staff member specialized in providing trainings about LGBTQIA+ inclusion.



*Federal: Policymakers should revoke religious exemptions for anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQIA+ people.

In 2022, when the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture expanded protections against sex discrimination to include discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation and gender identity, they provided a significant exemption for religious organizations. Crucially, these exemptions were extended automatically for religious schools, waiving the requirement for religious educational institutions to submit a written request for a Title IX exemption, reducing barriers for schools to practice discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students. These liberally granted waivers endanger LGBTQIA+ students and represents a dangerous blueprint for federal policymaking around LGBTQIA+ rights by privileging the interests of service organizations over the students and people they are intended to serve.

The strongest set of protections can be advanced by passing the Equality Act to extend anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQIA+ in all public spaces. This legislation, first introduced in 1974, has been re-introduced in every recent Congress but has yet to pass.

Additional positive reforms proposed include 88 Fed. Reg. 2395, introduced in January of 2023, clarifying religious freedom stipulations for federal grants. The Proposed Rule would stipulate that religion could not be the basis for denying services to clients or depriving them of their right to access services free of discrimination. Taxpayer funded organizations should be barred from any form of discrimination on the basis of religion, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other protected characteristics.

*Federal: Eliminate the gender binary for SNAP, or provide additional gender options for applicants.

Currently, the D.C. SNAP application requires data about gender and imposes a gender binary when collecting this information.

The current question can be seen below: Requiring applicants to identify with a single gender creates an unnecessary barrier for gender-expansive Washingtonians from applying for federal benefits. The gender question can be adjusted to include options, such as “gender-expansive” and “other,” or it can be adjusted to allow individuals to self-identify.

“When applying for public benefits, I just select 'female' because its easier and I don't want to make things more difficult.” **– Non-binary survey respondent**

Federal: Increase SNAP benefits.

During the pandemic, the federal government funded a temporary 15% increase in SNAP benefits which expired at the end of September 2021. These reductions make it more difficult for financially vulnerable families to pay for basic needs, including rent, utilities, and medical care by forcing families to spend more on ever-increasing food prices. Increasing SNAP benefits provides a vital lifeline to low-income residents and can supplement local increases in SNAP funding.

***Federal entities, local agencies, and non-profits: Disaggregate data collection for LGBTQIA+ clients.**

Data collection about LGBTQIA+ communities can be drastically improved by intentionally integrating questions about sexual orientation and gender identity into existing Such data collection must follow best practices to anonymize respondent data for research and invest in significant protections for private data. Organizations can and should also develop protocols for how to respond if malicious actors, including hostile government stakeholders, request or require disclosure of such data.



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