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HOUSING IS AN LGBTQ ISSUE

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BRIEF / OCTOBER 2024

LGBTQ people have known that housing is an LGBTQ issue for decades. Since the 1980s, housing support has been critical to meeting the needs of people living with HIV. Over the past two decades, the LGBTQ community has developed housing support for LGBTQ youth and older adults, who are more likely to face housing instability.

Recent research by the Williams Institute, the TransLatin@ Coalition, and the Los Angeles County Department of Health reveals that housing is a top priority for LGBTQ people in Los Angeles County, particularly for those who are struggling to meet the high cost of living in LA. We found that the 650,000+ LGBTQ people in LA County desire housing that is **affordable**, **safe**, and connected to **community**.

AFFORDABILITY

When asked about their biggest worries, financial concerns, including housing costs, were at the top of most LGBTQ people’s lists. LGBTQ people in Los Angeles County are more likely than non-LGBTQ people to be living in poverty, to rent their homes (as opposed to own), to have housing costs that take up much of their income, and to be unhoused.

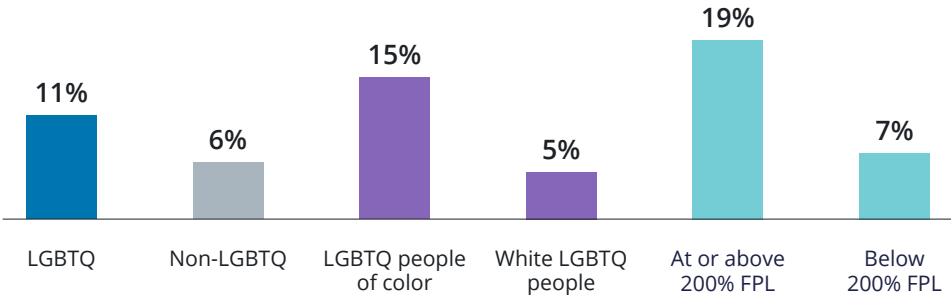
LGBTQ people rent at higher rates than non-LGBTQ people.



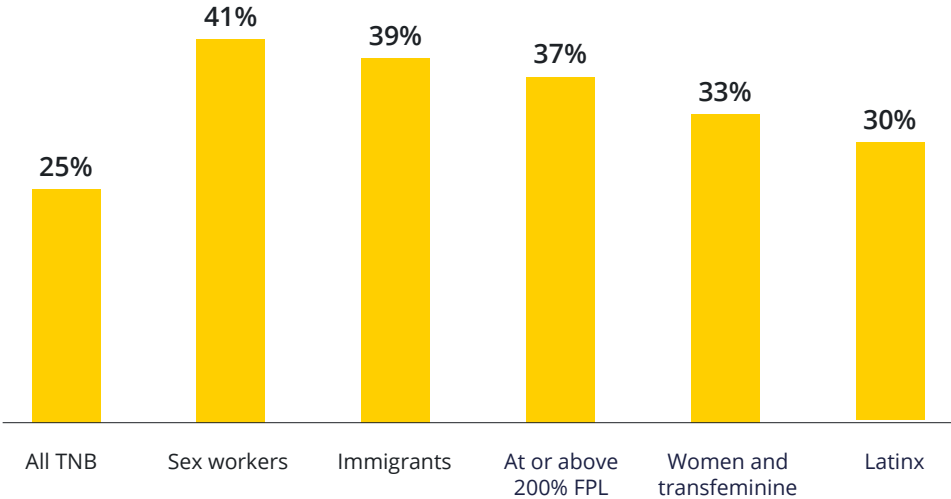
In LA, more LGBTQ than non-LGBTQ adults are housing cost-burdened, defined as spending over 30% of their income on housing.



LGBTQ people are twice as likely as non-LGBTQ people to be unhoused. This is particularly true for LGBTQ people of color and those who have low incomes.



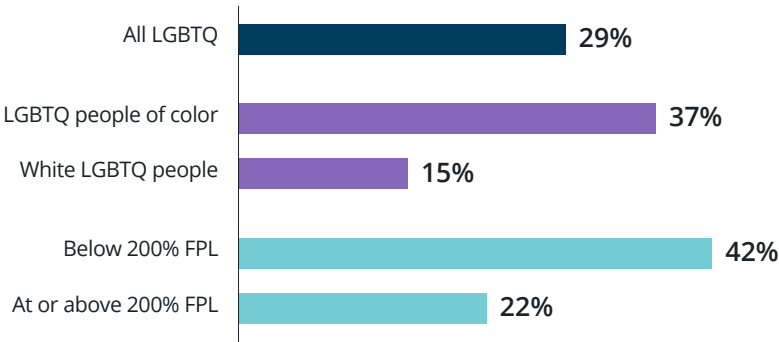
One in four (25%) TNB people surveyed report currently being unhoused, compared to 1% of the general population in Los Angeles County.



SAFETY

People need homes that they can afford and that are safe. For LGBTQ people in Los Angeles, safety means housing that is free from violence, discrimination, and harassment. It also means well-maintained housing located in areas where they are not exposed to environmental dangers.

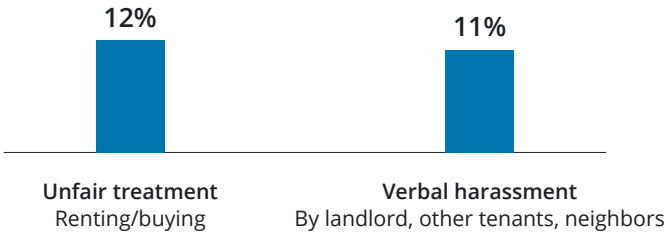
Over 1 in 4 (29%) LGBTQ people do not feel safe in their neighborhoods most of the time. This is particularly true for LGBTQ people of color and those with low incomes.



Discrimination and Harassment

Many LGBTQ people in Los Angeles County report facing discrimination and harassment from their landlords, other tenants, and neighbors. Over one in five (21%) TNB people surveyed who have sought housing in the last five years believed they were denied housing because of their gender identity or their gender expression or appearance.

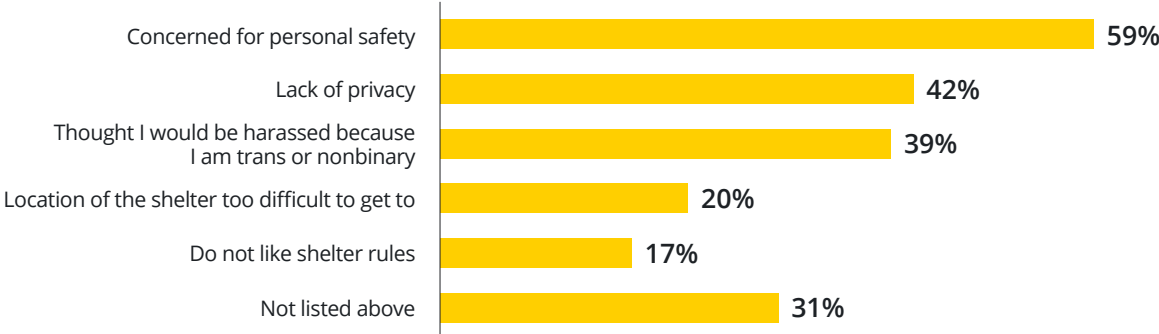
1 in 8 LGBTQ people reported unfair treatment from their landlord or realtor.



Shelter Access

For those who are unhoused, including many TNB people, safety concerns can also mean being afraid to access homeless shelters and other supportive services. More than one-quarter (28%) of TNB people surveyed said they have been denied access to shelters because of their gender identity.

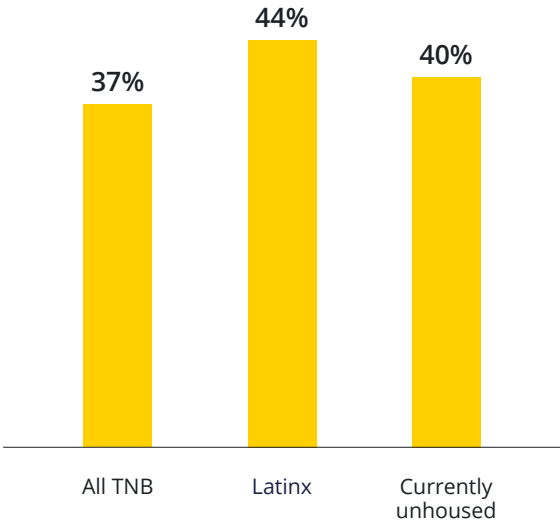
Safety concerns were the top reason unhoused TNB respondents did not access shelters.



Environmental Concerns

LGBTQ people also expressed concerns about safety because their housing was poorly maintained by their landlords or because they were exposed to environmental dangers. Living near highways increases exposure to harmful pollutants, posing serious health risks.

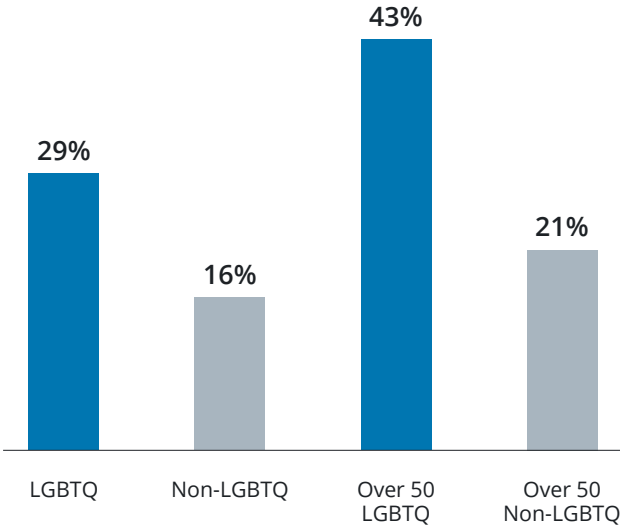
About 40% of TNB people surveyed live within 1,000 feet of a highway, compared to 11% of all Southern Californians.



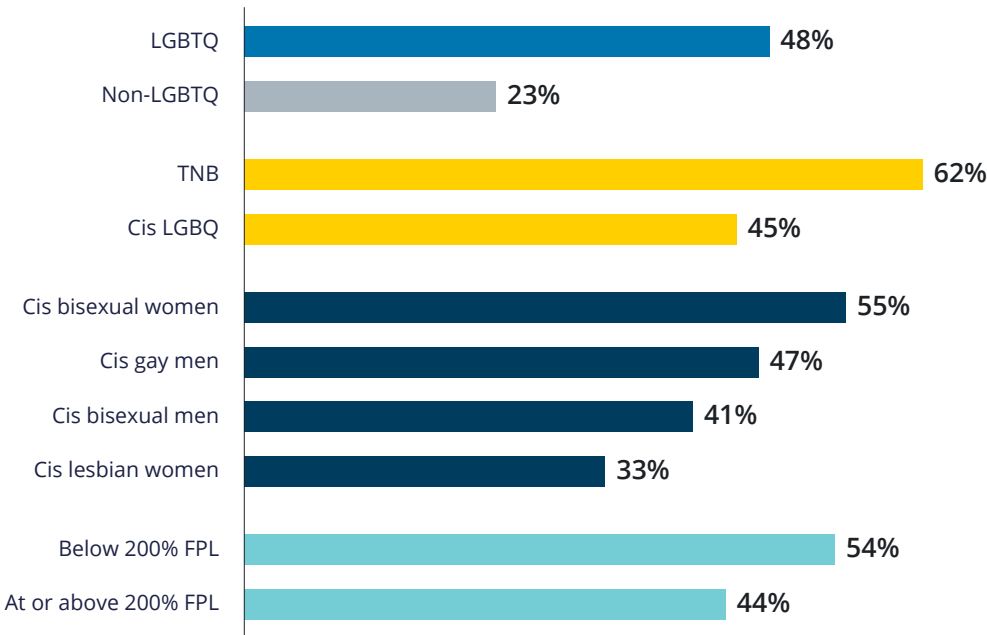
COMMUNITY

Where we live is also the foundation of building connections with family, friends, and community. This is especially important for LGBTQ people in Los Angeles County, particularly those who are older and who are more likely to live alone. For them, feeling unsafe can lead to isolation and loneliness and being disconnected from social and community support.

LGBTQ adults are more likely to live alone than non-LGBTQ adults.



LGBTQ adults are twice as likely to be lonely as non-LGBTQ adults.



RECOMMENDATIONS

LGBTQ people who participated in the surveys provided the following recommendations:

- Create more safe and affordable housing
- Lower rents and expand rent control
- Educate landlords and realtors and enforce LGBTQ housing discrimination protections
- Increase the capacity of TNB-affirming shelters and transitional housing
- Partner with community groups to address the needs of TNB, youth, and older people

REFERENCES

- [Communities of Resilience: The Lived Experiences of LGBTQ Adults in Los Angeles County](#)
- [Para Mi Punto de Vista/From My Point of View: Results of the 2023 LA County Trans & Nonbinary Survey](#)
- [Civic Engagement of LGBTQ Adults in LA County and Recommendations for Local Elected Officials](#)