LGBTQI Hawai‘i:
A Needs Assessment of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Intersex Communities in the State of Hawai‘i

Executive Summary

2013
Although the State has passed many progressive policies related to LGBTQI people, such as bias crime protections, anti-discrimination laws, and civil unions, little data is available about the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Intersex communities in Hawai‘i. This report outlines the preliminary findings of the LGBTQI Hawai‘i Needs Assessment conducted in the summer of 2013, the largest ever conducted in the State of Hawai‘i. Further reports will outline difference by county, by sex/gender identity, and by sexual orientation, but these preliminary findings provide a strong overview of the LGBTQI community in Hawai‘i.

**Sample Demographics**: Of the 710 LGBTQI respondents:

- 48.6% identified as cisgender men and 27.5% identified as cisgender women. 23.9% of respondents identified as transgender men or women, gender nonconforming men or women, or genderqueer/androgynous.
- 50.1% were gay men or men who have sex with men, followed by women who identified as lesbians or women who have sex with women (24.1%), then bisexual/pansexual men and women (17.6%), asexual (1%), and other sexualities (7.2%).
- Ages ranged from 18-83.
- 35.2% lived in the rural counties of Hawai‘i (Maui, Kaua‘i, and Hawai‘i).
- 45.8% reported living with a romantic partner, followed by living alone (21.8%), or with family of origin (15.0%).
- The majority of respondents identified as white/Caucasian (53.4%), followed by Native Hawaiians (12.0%), with strong representation from Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American/Alaskan respondents.

**Relationships and Families**: When asked about relationships and families, respondents shared that:

- 21.7% of respondents were single and not dating, while the majority (over 75%) were involved in some type of committed relationship.
- 23.4% of respondents also had children, the majority of whom had biological children, followed by children they consider their own but with whom they did not have a legal or biological relationship, and least frequent was legally adopted children.
- 16.9% of respondents also reported that they, or someone else in their household, currently provide care or assistance for an adult aged 60 or older, or an adult with a disability.
Education, Employment, Earnings, and Savings: Respondents reported relatively strong employment and high rates of educational attainment, but also having negative experiences of discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

- 58% of the sample had a bachelor’s or graduate degree, and 20.9% are currently enrolled in school.
- Income ranged from those who had earned less than $10K up to those who made over $100K in the last 12 months.
- 44.4% reported that they currently had an emergency fund and 56.8% had retirement savings.
- 5.7% were unemployed.
- 4.3% of participants reported that they are currently in the military and another 11% are Veterans of the armed services.
- A significant portion of respondents reported being bullied/harassed at work, 23.1% for sexual orientation and 12.9% for gender identity. A large portion of respondents had also been sexually harassed, denied employment, and had lost job opportunities due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, qualitative comments showed high levels of subtle discrimination and discomfort that created hostile work environments for LGBTQI people in the State.

Health and Well-being: The majority of respondents reported that their overall health was good or very good, but that having access to regular medical care was a deep concern due to experiences of rejection or discrimination by health and social services providers in the State.

- 42.3% reported that they had some type of chronic health or mental health condition.
- 18.4% of LGBTQI respondents used tobacco products at least occasionally.
- 11% of the sample did not currently have health insurance.
- 27.7% reported that they don’t have a doctor that they see regularly.
- Many had been treated poorly while receiving, or had been denied treatment from, physical or mental health care or social service providers because of sexual orientation (16.1%) or gender identity/expression (9.7%).
- 8.5% had delayed seeking care because of their sexual orientation, and 7.1% because of their gender identity or expression.
- Of those transgender people seeking hormones for gender transition, 14.6% said that they wanted to begin but could not find a provider.

Crime and Safety: Although Hawai‘i is famous for being the “Aloha State,” respondents reported experiencing sexual orientation-motivated and gender identity/expression-motivated crimes at rates similar to those found in the continental United States.

- Respondents reported concerns about being visibly LGBTQI (such as by holding hands with a same-sex partner) while in public in Hawai‘i.
• 39.2% had been victims of sexual orientation-motivated crime and 24.2% had been victims of gender identity/expression-motivated crimes, the majority of which were varying forms of intimidation/harassment.

• 71% of those whom had been victimized due to sexual orientation/gender identity did not report to police, citing fear of discriminatory treatment, poor case handling, fear of retaliation, and being embarrassed/ashamed.

**Sense of Community and Community Priorities:** Most respondents were happy to be living in Hawai‘i and reported overall life satisfaction. The majority of respondents reported that in five years they intended to still be in Hawai‘i, but of those who thought they might leave, the majority cited economic/career concerns, followed by the high levels of homophobia and the fragmented LGBTQI community as reasons to leave. Many respondents also expressed deep concerns about some vocal and discriminatory Christian churches which were negatively impacting their lives. Last, respondents ranked their top five social service and policy/social priorities. They were focused primarily on 1) safety for youth, 2) increased family recognition (though marriage and routes to legal parenting) as well as caring for elders, 3) strengthening the LGBTQI community, 4) overall safety, and 5) trainings for public officials and service providers.

**Recommendations:** Taken together, these results provide information about a vibrant and strong set of communities within our State who face many challenges. There are many ways to make meaningful impacts in the lives of LGBTQI people in the State of Hawai‘i.

1. **The State needs to do more to clarify and strengthen LGBTQI relationships and families.** Marriage equality was certainly at the top of many people’s priority list, but so too were other family issues, such as securing second parent adoptions, clarifying legal adoptions by couples, and opening pathways for fostering and subsequent adoption.

2. **Creating and enforcing clear anti-discrimination policies to protect youth from harassment** by students, staff, teachers, and other public officials is critical to ensure safety for LGBTQI youth.

3. **Expansion, education and enforcement of existing legal protections.**

4. **Training for law enforcement, public officials, service providers, educators, and health professionals.**

5. **Promoting way to strengthen the visibility, coordination, and efficacy of the LGBTQI community and service agencies.**

6. **Continued dialogue with the faith community.**

7. **Making more LGBTQI-specific services available in the community.**

8. **More research on the LGBTQI communities in Hawai‘i** needs to be funded and supported to better understand the many needs of our diverse ‘ohana.

Please read the full report for more detailed information about the survey, survey results, and these recommendations.
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