

Survey of LGBTQIA+ Older Adults in California: From Challenges to Resilience

FAQ

Why now?

In California, about 5 percent of nearly 10 million mid-life and older adults identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or sexual and/or gender minority (LGBTQIA+). Despite their significant numbers and roles in communities across the state, relatively little is known about the health and well-being of these hundreds of thousands of older Californians. What we *do* know suggests disparities in health and well-being that we cannot hope to address without more comprehensive, accurate data.

California's Master Plan on Aging (MPA) includes goals for equity and inclusion. Without accurate information about California's LGBTQIA+ population and their unique life experiences, we won't have a complete picture of aging across California's regions and populations.

What is the significance of the *From Challenges to Resilience* survey?

Data on the aging experiences of California's LGBTQIA+ population have never been collected before, so this survey will form a **baseline** to track progress in delivering services that meet immediate needs, as well as policies that improve health and well-being in the future and distribute resources equitably.

It's important to have a **comprehensive, accurate picture that covers the entire state**. To offer insights about the experiences of marginalized and underserved LGBTQIA+ communities, the survey team oversampled Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and Asian Pacific Islander (API) communities, as well as rural and frontier communities.

Some smaller studies, such as a COVID-19 study of LGBTQIA+ older adults in San Francisco, suggest higher rates of isolation, depression and suicide ideation, all of which could be addressed with **more responsive and accessible services**.

What are some initial findings from the survey analysis?

People responded to the survey from every census region in California. Overall findings indicate that race/ethnicity and gender identity intersect to compound inequities. Most survey respondents (86%) gave high ratings to their quality of life, while 14% rated their quality of life as fair or poor. People of color and transgender respondents had higher

numbers rating their quality of life as fair or poor. Suggestions from the survey team to address this inequity include continuing to expand the collection of sexual orientation/gender identity (SOGI) data across state-level collection forms and requiring multilingual and gender expansive-affirming design of services, resources, and research.

Among the over 4,000 survey respondents, common themes that illuminate some of the challenges LGBTQIA+ older adults face included: barriers to access; lack of social support, especially when caregiving; and ongoing mistrust of providers and authorities. The survey report outlines recommendations to address these challenges, including additional behavioral health support, increasing provider training, and expanding services provided by trusted local LGBTQIA+ organizations.

Who funded, designed, and conducted the survey?

The California Department of Aging (CDA) is funding the survey, analysis, and reporting.

Other partners include Openhouse, a trusted voice in service provision to mid-life and older adults; the Sexual and Gender Minority Health Equity Lab at the University of California, San Francisco, which designed and deployed the survey with the help of an Advisory Committee; the Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services at the University of California (UC) Berkeley; and the Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS) and the Banatao Institute at UC Berkeley.

Where can people learn more about the survey and view the findings?

Both a summary report and more comprehensive version include key findings as well as implications for changes in research, policy, and services. The reports can be accessed via the CDA website, https://aging.ca.gov/Survey_of_LGBTQIA/.