



Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada



Equity for All:
Key Findings of the *Nevada
Transgender Community
Needs Assessment Survey*

A Report for the 2011 Nevada Legislature

2011

Introduction

While the United States and Nevada can point to significant improvements in and protections of civil rights for its citizens, there continues to be vast inequality for transgender people. This report is brief and these data in no way encompass the complete depth or breadth of discrimination and challenges faced by transgender Nevadans. The authors hope that this report will be an effective guide for understanding and correcting what is a great and too often overlooked injustice.

There are a number of harsh realities that transgender people experience each and every day. Transgender Nevadans suffer prejudice and discrimination when doing such routine tasks as buying clothing and groceries, applying for jobs, eating in restaurants, using public restrooms, driving and traveling in public, and when accessing health care. Unlike discrimination faced by other minority groups, transgender Nevadans have no means of recourse.

Under current Nevada law, discrimination in employment is prohibited on the basis of perceived race, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation. Also under existing Nevada law, discrimination in places of public accommodation is prohibited on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation. Discrimination in employment and places of public accommodation on the basis of gender identity or expression *is* legal in this state and discrimination in places of public accommodation on the basis of sex is *also* legal. Statutes governing non-discrimination in these areas have been expanded several times over past decades but each time these changes have left out

and left behind those most vulnerable to discrimination.

Transgender-inclusive laws are not new. Laws protecting transgender people were first passed in the 1970s and have been steadily increasing and expanding for 40 years without negative consequences to public well-being. Currently, 13 states and the District of Columbia (California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington) have statewide laws banning discrimination on the basis of gender

identity and expression and an additional 134 municipalities do the same. In total, 41% of the US population is now covered by these laws (National Gay and Lesbian

Task Force). Additionally, 15 other states have laws that have been interpreted by the courts as specifically protecting transgender people from discrimination and another nine states (Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Delaware, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New York) have executive or administrative orders that protect public employees from discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression. Sadly, not one single Nevadan is currently covered or protected by these laws.

A person's gender identity and expression are fundamental components of each of our humanity; transgender rights are human rights.



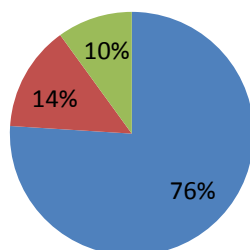
Nevadans Support Transgender Equity

As part of its 2010 non-partisan civic engagement work, PLAN conducted a statewide survey of 1232 registered voters representative of the electorate as a whole. The purpose of this survey was to determine public opinion and gauge support for including transgender Nevadans in the state's Employment Nondiscrimination Act and Public Accommodations statutes. Support for these additions was overwhelming and a significant number of those surveyed mistakenly expressed the belief that such protections were already in effect in this state as well as in Federal law.

- ✚ 76% Support Protecting Transgender Nevadans from Discrimination
- ✚ Support Was Strong Across Different Age Groups, Gender, and Counties of Residence
- ✚ These Results Are Consistent with Dozens of Similar Surveys Conducted Across the Country

Do You Support or Oppose Expanding State Law to Protect Transgender Nevadans from Discrimination in Employment and in Areas of Public Accommodations?

■ Support ■ Oppose ■ Unsure



Needs Assessment Survey Results: Major Barriers Face Transgender Nevadans

Overview and Methodology

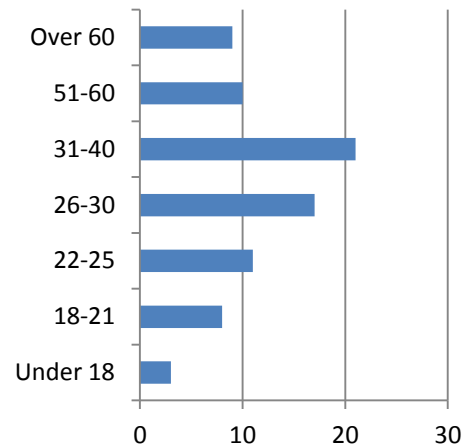
Prior to undertaking legislative advocacy for a social justice issue on behalf of a community, it is necessary to conduct a needs assessment. Thus, PLAN decided to undertake the *Nevada Transgender Communities Needs Assessment* survey. After consultations with various individuals and groups experienced in conducting similar assessments, survey questions were determined and an outreach plan was developed. Between November 2010 and January 2011, 131 self-identified transgender Nevadans completed the assessment. Respondents were recruited from transgender support groups and community organizations such as Equality Nevada and the Translations support group at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada as well as from events such as the 2010 Transgender Day of Remembrance held at the Metropolitan Community Church in Las Vegas.

Questions in the survey included: basic demographics, education, employment, personal safety and exposure to violence, access to health care, legal concerns, policy priorities, and several open ended questions so that respondents could share and elaborate on personal stories. All survey forms were anonymous and individual answers kept confidential to ensure that persons could not be identified through their responses to questions or demographic characteristics.

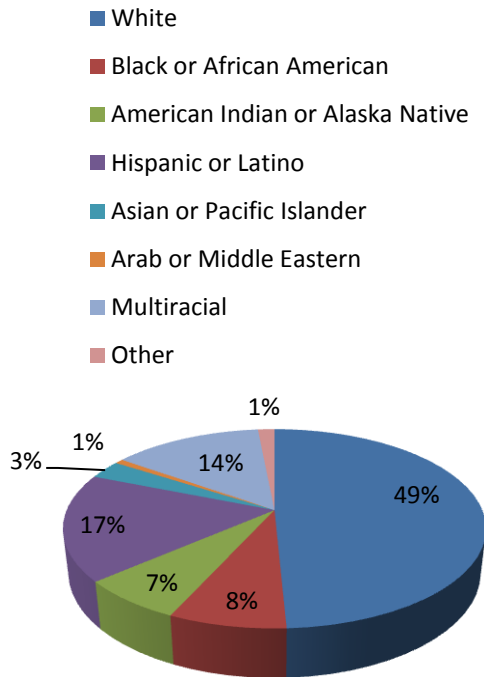
Survey Respondent Demographics

- Respondents Reside in Clark, Washoe, Carson, Esmeralda, Douglas, Lyon, Nye, and Storey Counties
- One-Third of Respondents Have Children
- Over One-Third Posses College Degrees
- 30% Identify as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual
- 64% Are Registered Voters
- Racial Diversity of the Survey Respondents Reflects the State

Age Groups (%)



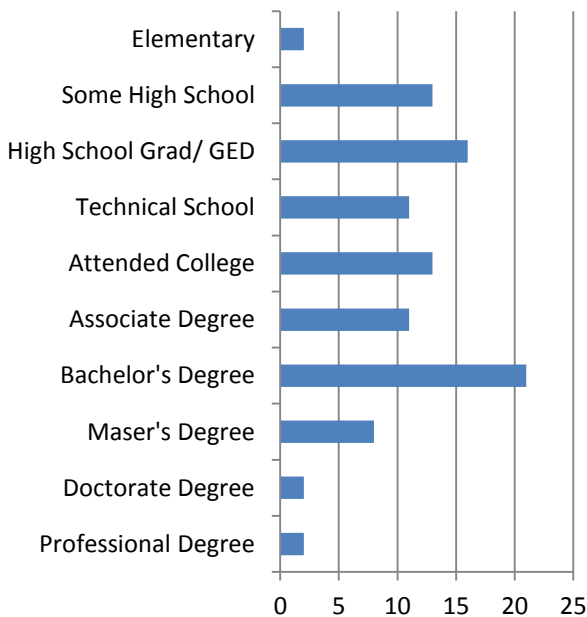
Race



Discrimination in Employment and Public Accommodations

- Discrimination in Employment/Public Accommodations and Access to Health Care Consistently Ranked as Having the Greatest Negative Impacts on Respondents' Daily Lives
- Unemployment and Underemployment Was Experienced at Twice the Rate as That of the General Population
- Vast Racial Disparities Exist for Nevada's Transgender Communities, With Rates of Unemployment and Lack of Access to Health Care at Several Times That of the General Population
- 41% of US citizens live in jurisdictions with anti-discrimination statutes inclusive of gender identity and expression. Nevada is not among them.

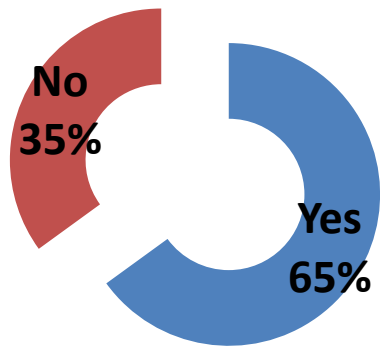
Highest Education Level Obtained



Findings of our survey reveal that experience of discrimination and bias based on gender identity and gender expression is nearly universal among Nevada's transgender citizens.

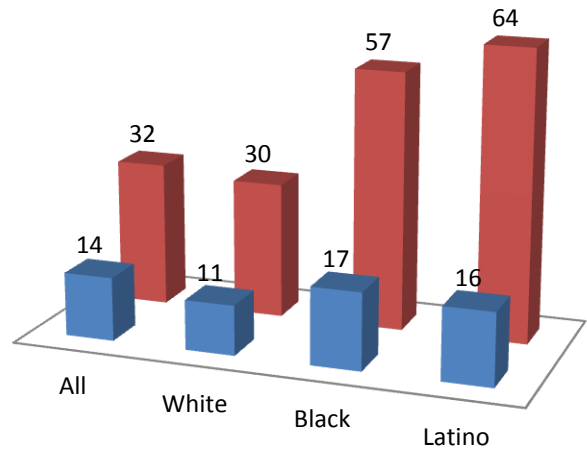
The extraordinary levels of unemployment and underemployment contribute to severe economic insecurity and homelessness among Nevada's transgender communities, creating a further strain on state and county services as well as private hospital emergency rooms.

Have You Experienced Workplace Discrimination Due to Gender Identity/Expression?

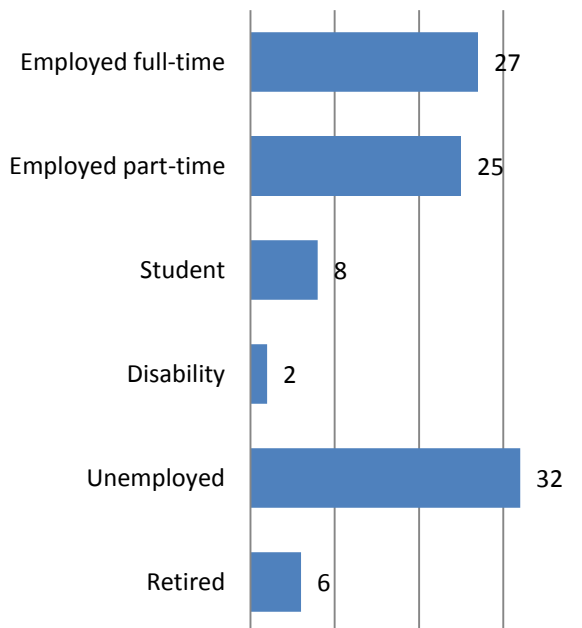


Unemployment % by Race

■ Total Population ■ Transgender



Employment in Transgender Communities (%)

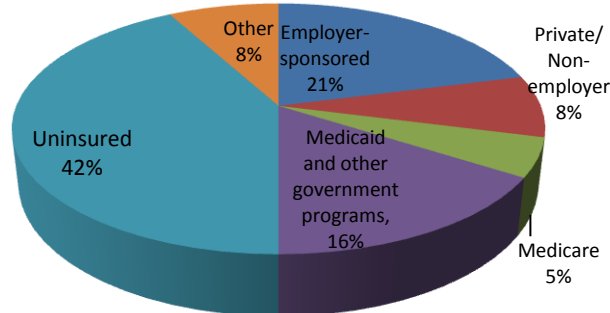


Access to Health Care

- ✚ 53% Reported Experiencing Discrimination While Seeking Medical Services
- ✚ One Half of Respondents Do Not Have a Health Care Provider for Routine Care
- ✚ Nearly Two-Thirds Did Not Know Where to Obtain Care in Their County

Many of our respondents are without access to health care due largely to a lack of access to affordable insurance. Another significant contributing factor stems from discomfort in discussing or “coming out” as transgender. This causes a tremendous strain on hospitals through uncompensated care and emergency room visits as last resort. This also leads to the need for transgender persons to rely upon governmental social services for health care coverage. This lack of access only adds to Nevada’s current fiscal crises.

Health Insurance Coverage



The largest provider of health care insurance/coverage is through private employers. In fact, half of Nevada's citizens receive their health insurance through an employer-sponsored plan. So, it makes sense to move people towards gainful employment where they are far more likely to obtain health care coverage.

Safety and Public Accommodations

In addition to public spaces, Nevada's public accommodations statutes cover access to emergency services and hospitals. A lack of protection against discrimination in these areas poses a great risk for the health and safety of transgender Nevadans.

- ✚ 56% Reported Experiencing Domestic Violence
- ✚ Reports of Discrimination in Public Accommodations or Housing Was Nearly Universal
- ✚ 75% Reported Bullying and Harassment as a Result of Their Gender Identity of Expression

The near universal exposure to harassment and discrimination combined with limited access to

appropriate health care also places transgender people at great risk to depression and suicide.

Studies have shown that as a means of last resort, some people will participate in underground or 'street economy' as a last resort in order to gain access to shelter and food. This also leads to increased exposure to and risk of diseases and sexual assault for transgender persons.

- ✚ 10% Have Exchanged Sex for Food or Shelter in the Last 6 Months

Contrary to what many have been told, public accommodation such as restroom facilities pose a tremendous risk to the safety of transgender persons due to an inability or fear of using the gender-appropriate restroom.

Additional Considerations/Conclusions

- ✚ The findings of this community survey correspond to similar surveys conducted across the country

Equity in state law for transgender Nevadans is not only the right thing to do, but it makes great economic sense and great public policy as way of upending many underlying causes of economic insecurity, homelessness, inadequate access to health care, personal safety risks, food insecurity, and reliance on government assistance.

In closing, including gender, gender identity and gender expression in our state's laws may not solve all the social problems for these communities in Nevada but it is an important first step and will let all Nevadans know that their government values them and recognizes each of its citizens as equal under the law.

We must speak with one voice that every Nevadan be given the opportunity to work and live safely

and in peace. Please end this injustice and stop the cycle.

“Equity for All,” the needs assessment survey, research and report of findings were made possible through the generous support of the Gill Foundation’s State Equality Fund.

Additional Resources

For additional information regarding this study, contact Michael Ginsburg (702) 791-1965 or mginsburg@planevada.org

We must not compromise or be lead to believe that Nevadans are not ready to remedy injustice.

Gill Foundation www.gillfoundation.org

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force www.thetaskforce.org

Movement Advancement Project www.lgbtmap.org

TransOhio www.transohio.org

National Center for Transgender Equality www.ncte.org

Terminology

The terminology used in this guide as well as the general definitions listed here are only a small representation of the words people may use to describe gender, individual identity, sex, sexuality, and orientation. It is important to note that gender identity is experienced by the individual, emphasizing the importance not to categorize people.

Androgyny (androgynous) someone who identifies and/or expresses both or neither of the two culturally defined genders

Assigned Gender (sex assignment) determination, typically by the physician present at the birth, of the gender of a newborn

Binary Gender System culturally defined code of acceptable behaviors which teach that there are men and women, masculine and feminine, and that there is nothing outside this system.

Bisexual (Bi) person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted to those of either gender

Bottom Surgery "below the waist", to either create a vagina or a penis and testicles

Cisgender those who do not transgress societal gender roles

Cross-Dressing (Also Transvestite, Transvestitism) person who wears the clothing considered typical for another gender on occasion, but does not desire to change their gender

Drag (also Drag King, Drag Queen, Female/Male Impersonator) wearing the clothing of another gender, often with exaggerated cultural/stereotypical gender characteristics

Effeminate (feminine) person (usually male) who expresses and/or presents culturally/stereotypically feminine characteristics

F2M/FTM (female to male) person who was female bodied at birth and who identifies as male, lives as a man, or identifies as masculine

Femme (Feminine) person who identifies with being a woman

Gay (homosexual) person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender

Gender Role behaviors, traits, thoughts, and dress expected by a culture of members of a particular sex

Gender Queer used by some people who may or may not fit on the spectrum of trans, or be labeled as trans, but who identify their gender and their sexual orientation to be outside the assumed norm

Gender Reassignment Surgery--GRS (also Sex Reassignment Surgery--SRS) surgical refashioning of genitalia, generally seen as a derogatory term

Heterosexual (straight) person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to those of the opposite gender

Homophobia irrational fear of love, affection, and erotic behavior between people of the same

Homosexual (gay) An individual who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to those of the same gender.

Hormone Therapy (also Hormone Replacement Therapy, HRT, Hormonal Sex Reassignment) administration of hormones to affect the development of secondary sex

In the Closet being secretive about an individual's own sexual orientation and/or gender identity

Internalized Homophobia (Internalized Transphobia) internalization of negative messages/feelings about oneself and/or one's group

Intersexed individual born with full or partial genitalia of both genders, or with underdeveloped or ambiguous genitalia

Lesbian person who identifies as a woman and who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender

M2F, MTF, Male-to-Female Used to identify a person who was male bodied at birth and who identifies as a female, lives as a woman, or identifies as feminine.

Masculine trait, behaviors, thoughts, dress, and other manner viewed by a culture as typical of males

Passing ability to present oneself in another gender than which they live full-time or in which they were assigned at birth

Queer someone who aligns themselves with the trans, bisexual, lesbian, and gay community, a term which is often taken back in a positive way for self-identification

Straight (heterosexual) individual who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the opposite gender

Top Surgery surgery "above the waist," usually breast augmentation for MTFs and breast reduction for FTMs

Transgender (also trans) those who transgress societal gender norms; often used as an umbrella term to mean those who defy rigid, bipolar gender constructions, and who express or present a breaking and/or blurring of cultural/stereotypical gender roles

Transition period during which a transgender individual begins to live a new life in their gender

Transphobia (also genderphobia) irrational fear of those who are perceived to break and/or blur cultural/stereotypical gender roles

Transsexual derogatory term used to describe transgender people