

# HMA COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

LGBTQIA+

Quality of Life Study  
City Council Presentation

October 2021

# HMA Community Strategies Research Team

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# LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission

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- Deirdre Doughty
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- Kathryn Gonzales
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- Holly Kirby
- Rebecca Dreke
- Dr. Victor Martinez
- Melissa Taylor
- Brandon Wollerson
- Tarik Daniels

# Community Partners



# Engaged Research Advisory Board

- Provide feedback and guidance throughout the project
- Application process was widely promoted
- Received 35 applications – 11 finalists were chosen
- 73% people of color
- 45% transgender
- Met four times at key stages during project
- \$1,000 stipend for their participation (\$250 per meeting)



# Research Advisory Board



**ALEXANDER ANDERSON**  
*(he/him)*



**KB**  
*(they/them)*



**RICHARD BONDI**  
*(he/him)*



**SHA'NYIA BALTIMORE**  
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**ALEXANDER ZAPATA**  
*(he/him/they/their)*

# Glossary of Terms

- **LGBTQIA+** – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, agender (+others)
- **Intersex** – a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- **SOGI** – sexual orientation and gender identity
- **Gender identity and/or expression** – internal perception of one's gender; how one identifies or expresses oneself.
  - **Cisgender** – a term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth
  - **Transgender** – refers to an individual whose current gender **identity and/or expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth** (may have transitioned or be transitioning in how they are living)
  - **Gender Expansive** - refers to an individual who **expresses identity along the gender spectrum** (genderqueer, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, agender, two spirit)
- **PrEP** (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medicine people at risk for HIV take to prevent getting HIV from sex or injection drug use



# Background

- No previous official city-wide data collection effort to understand the LGBTQIA+ community
- Official demographic data definitions do not typically account for sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)
- The twin public health emergencies underscored the fundamental need to reconceptualize the meaning of community and quality of life
- Of significant note, **people of color represented 43% of individuals who completed the survey** during a time of growing mistrust of government institutions

# Context

- Study was centered in equity
- Highlights traditionally underrepresented populations often unaccounted for in demographic data collection efforts (e.g., queer and transgender people of color, gender expansive individuals, LGBTQIA+ youth, and older adults)
- Conducted during a pandemic and racial unrest, presenting many challenges

# Methodology

- Utilized World Health Organization domains of Quality of Life
- Adapted framework developed by Habitat for Humanity
- Identified 7 outcome domains through community input
- Utilized a mixed-methods, community-based participatory approach

# Methodology

- **Qualitative data:**
  - 30 key stakeholder interviews
  - 2 virtual community town halls (152 participants)
  - 4 focus groups (38 participants)
    - African American
    - Asian American
    - Older Adults
    - Transgender and Gender Expansive individuals
  - A Power Analysis of each outcome sector

# Methodology

- **Quantitative data:**
  - 156-question online survey
    - **2,149** completed responses
    - available in print and in threshold languages
    - average duration 30-minutes
  - Represents 89 zip codes
    - Bastrop
    - Blanco
    - Burnet
    - Hays
    - Travis
    - Williamson



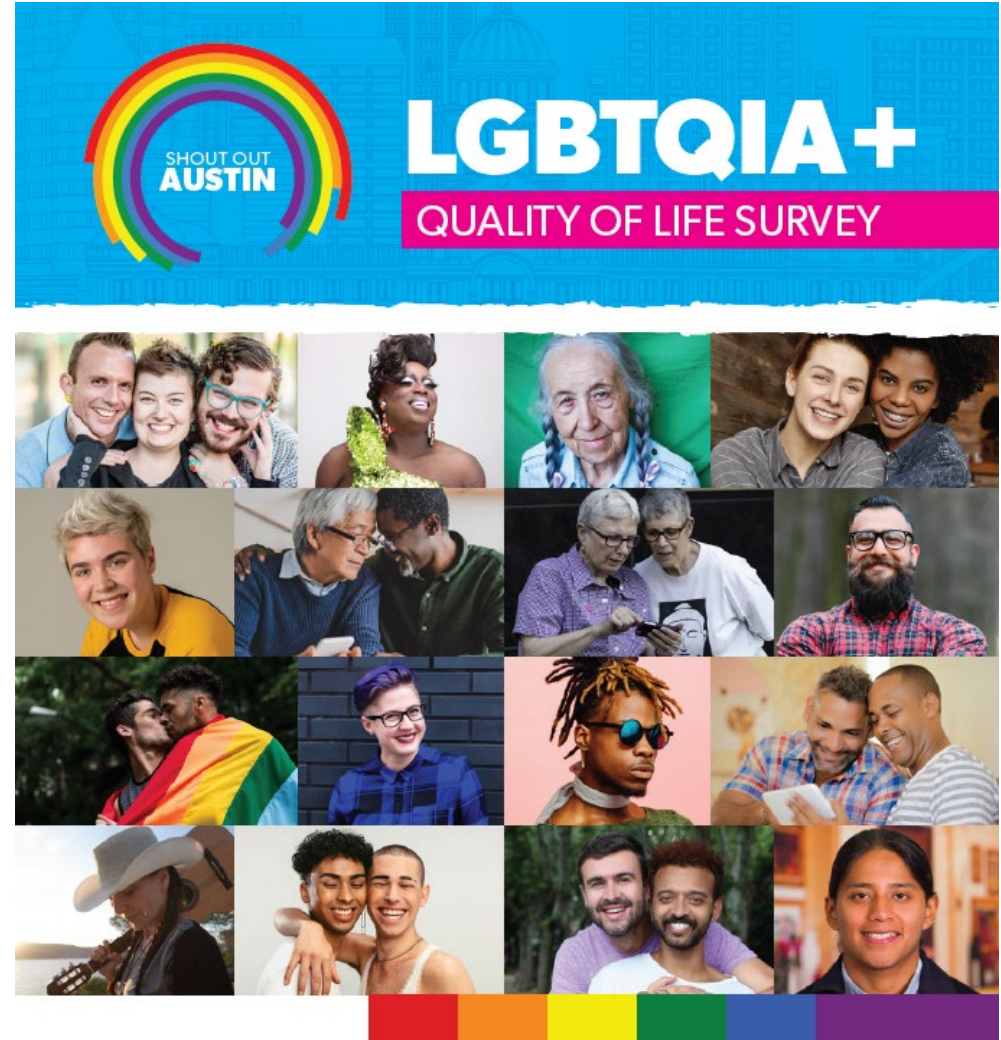
# LGBT Population in US, Texas, and Austin

- The Williams Institute estimates **4.5%** of the total US population is LGBT (July 2020)<sup>1</sup>.
- **4.1%** of the total population is estimated to be LGBT in Texas
- March 2021 study, the **Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown metropolitan has a higher density of LGBT** people, estimated at **90,000 (5.9%)**
- Metro Austin is home to the **3rd largest percentage of LGBT people** in the country (behind Bay Area and Portland).
- With a total population of almost 2.3 million in Greater Austin – between **100,000 - 118,000** are LGBT.

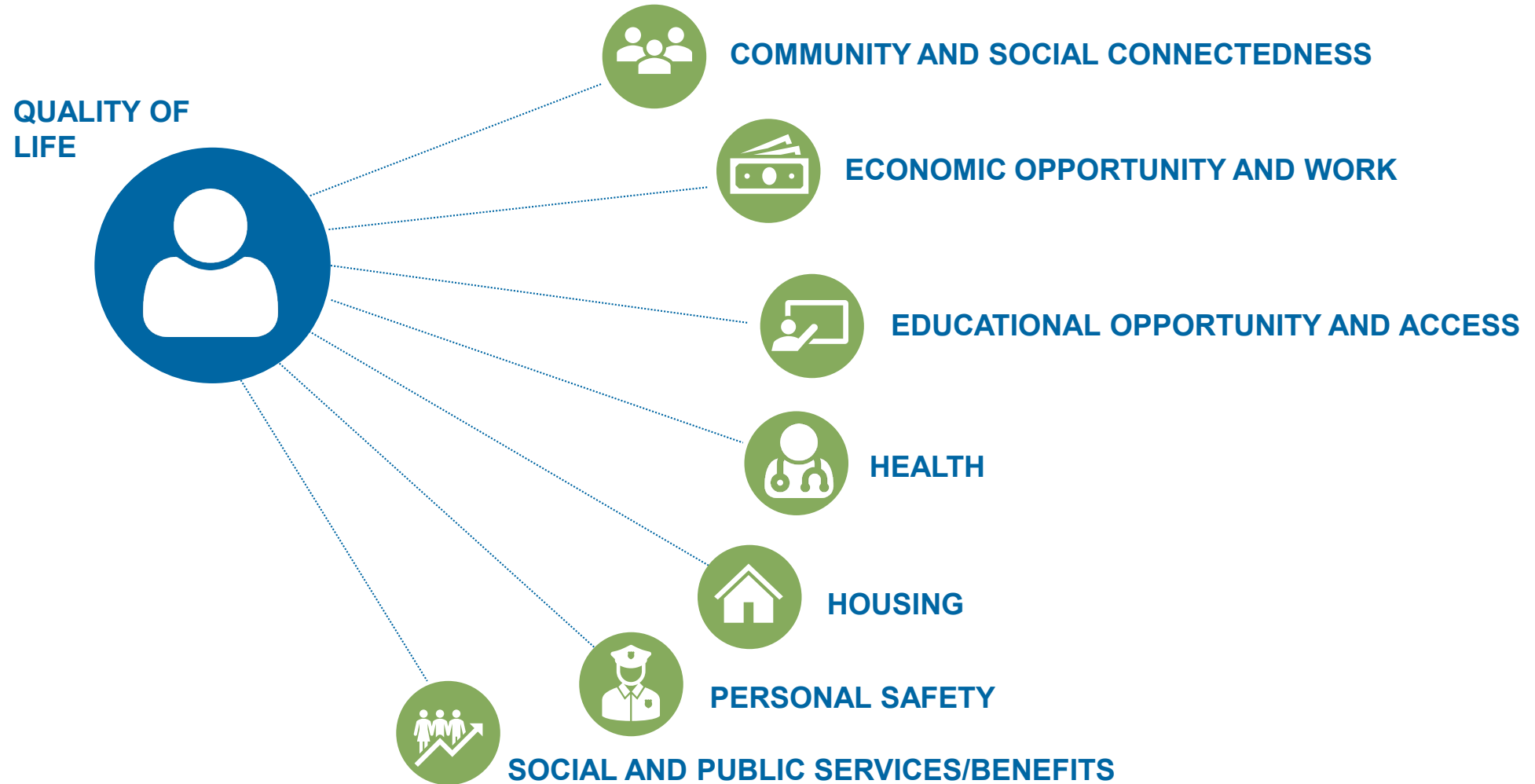
1. Conron, K.J., Goldberg, S.K., Adult LGBT Population in the United States. (July 2020). The Williams Institute, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

# Definition of QoL for LGBTQIA+ People

- Quality of life is the general well-being of individuals and societies, outlining negative and positive features of life.
- It consists of the expectations of an individual or society for a good life.
- These expectations are guided by the values, goals and socio-cultural context in which we live.



# Quality of Life Outcome Sectors

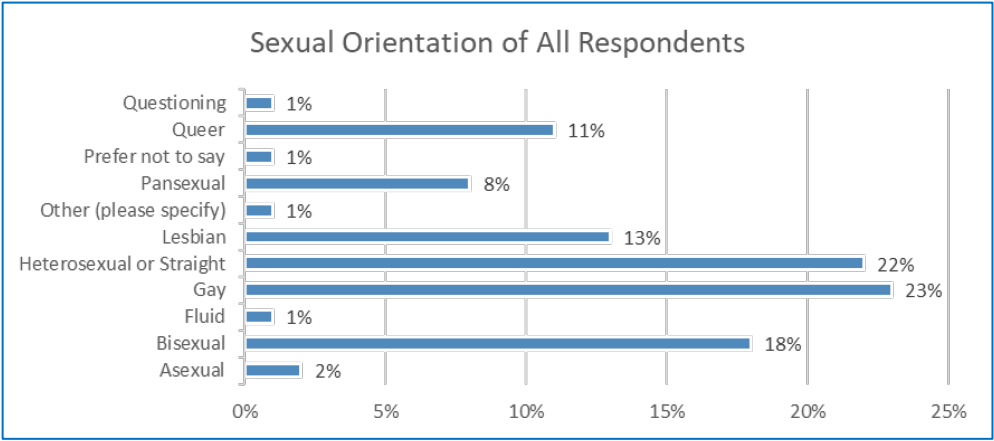
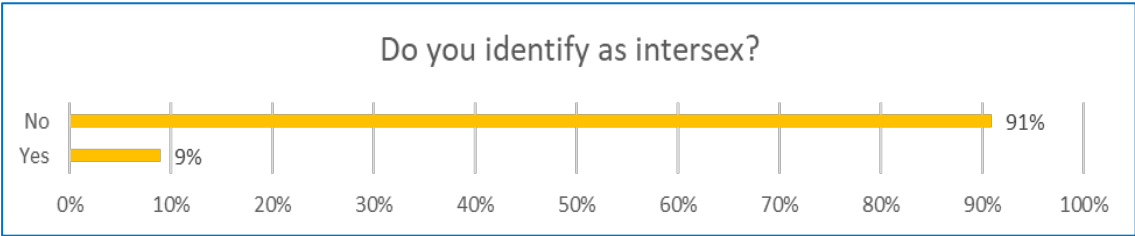
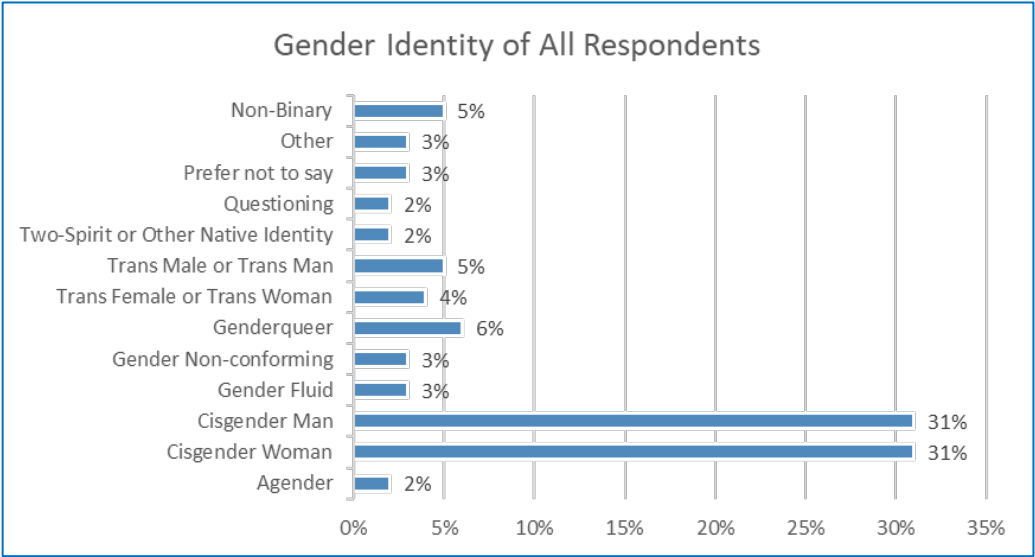
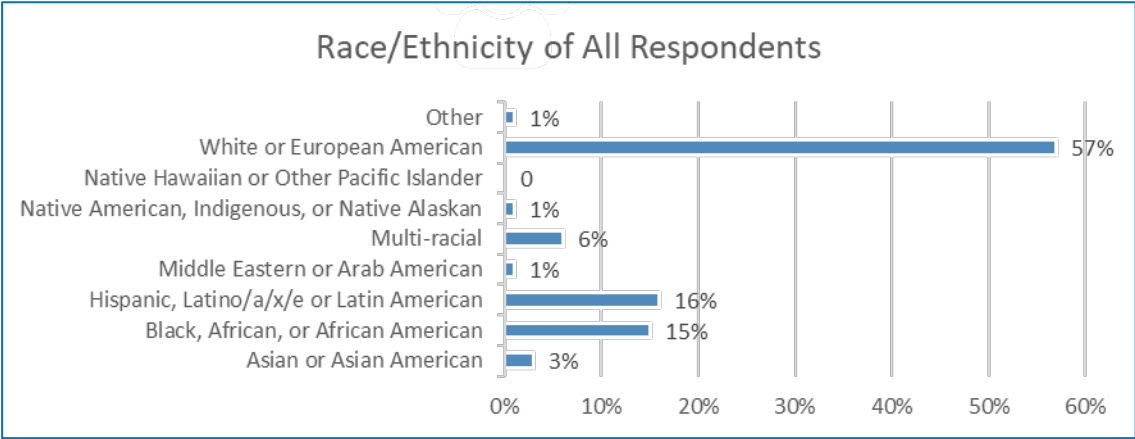






# Community Survey (2,149 people)

43% people of color



Amnesty International estimates that 1.7% of the world population is intersex.  
Planned Parenthood estimates that 1-2 people in 100 in the U.S. are intersex.



# Key Themes

Greater Austin is home to a large (est. 100,000 – 118,000) and vibrant LGBTQIA+ community with many influential organizations and activities.

- There is a **high degree of acceptance** by chosen family and friends.
- Two-thirds of survey respondents indicate a **high satisfaction of overall quality of life** and three-quarters feel their life is meaningful.
- There is a great desire and **need for a community center** led by community members that provides a safe space for people to convene with their chosen family.

# Key Themes

**Societal stressors, structural racism, and discrimination impact the quality of life for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Austin.**

- Half reported a diagnosis of neurodivergence (anxiety, depression, PTSD, ADHD)
- Increase living and housing costs, gentrification, and poor public transportation impact QoL and drive racial and ethnic disparities.
- 4 of 5 respondents believe **racism is a public health crisis**.
- Half knew someone in Austin who experienced a **physical threat or attack** and half reported experiencing **verbal abuse or harassment** in Austin because they are LGBTQIA+.

# Key Themes

It is challenging for LGBTQIA+ organizations to bridge racial and socio-economic divides within the LGBTQIA+ community.

- Need to **address racism** within and outside the queer community with more thought and attention (not always “us” vs. “them”).
- Need to **lift and invest in smaller and less influential organizations** that provide services exclusively on behalf of queer PoC.
- Need for more intentional **engagement of queer PoC and transgender individuals** in community building and organizing.

# Key Themes

There is a need for high-quality, affordable, culturally responsive, integrated health care.

- Most respondents (63%) reported **worrying about their health**.
- Need for more culturally responsive and gender-affirming providers.
- 41% of respondents did not share their LGBTQIA+ identity with their provider
- 19% of respondents **had never heard of PrEP**.
- Need for more health education and increased health literacy in the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Need for substance use disorder harm reduction strategies. Alarming, of 114 respondents who indicated they injected drugs, **80% shared needles or injection equipment**.
- 12% of respondents had **thoughts of suicide**.

# Key Themes

**Personal safety and intimate partner violence are issues of heightened concern for the LGBTQIA+ community.**

- Personal safety is a concern.
- **Only 6%** indicated a high degree of acceptance in schools.
- Sexual harassment and abuse are prevalent within the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Nearly half experienced **verbal abuse or harassment** from strangers.
- Queer PoC, youth, and transgender/gender- expansive individuals disproportionately experienced **negative interactions with law enforcement**.
- 41% are somewhat uncomfortable or very uncomfortable seeking help from police.



# Key Themes

**LGBTQIA+ community members seek affordable housing, economic stability, access to education, and equal rights.**

- Affordable housing and economic opportunity ranked as the most important areas of concern.
- Two-thirds report spending 30% or more of their monthly income on housing, and a staggering 17% report spending 50% or more.
- 10% report currently being or having **experienced homelessness**
- Over half reported some level of financial difficulty, while 11% experienced significant financial difficulties when completing this survey.
- Protecting transgender and gender-expansive people from discrimination in hiring and at work was ranked as the **most important policy priority** for the City of Austin.

# Key Themes

**Some community members are systematically more affected by social stressors, racism, lack of safety, economic insecurity, and lack of access to needed services.**

- Queer people of color, youth, and transgender/gender-expansive individuals have greater percentages of health disparities, education and income inequality, and dissatisfaction with quality of life.
- Transgender people of color experience the highest burden.

# Context to Key Recommendations

- Recommendations reinforce the strategies of the City of Austin's Strategic Direction 2023.
  - Economic Opportunity & Affordability (EOA)
  - Mobility (M)
  - Safety (S)
  - Health and Environment (HE)
  - Culture & Lifelong Learning (CLL)
  - Government That Works for All (GTW)
- Recommendations align to the City's cross-cutting values of Equity, Affordability, Innovation, Sustainability and Resiliency, Proactive Prevention, and Community Trust and Relationships.

# Overall Recommendations

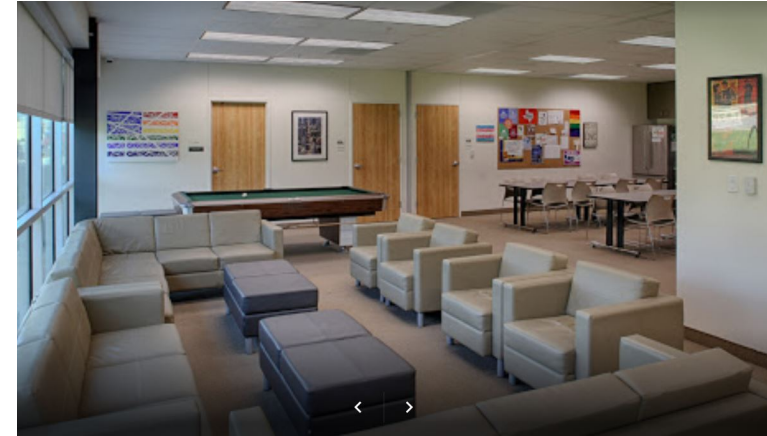
1. Enhance sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data collection.
2. Develop affordable housing opportunities.
3. Address health disparities and create a pipeline of culturally competent providers.
4. Lead with anti-racist policies, investments, and strategies.
5. Bolster support for queer PoC.
6. Prioritize the needs of transgender and gender-expansive individuals.
7. Invest in the establishment of an LGBTQIA+ community center.

# 314 Community Centers in the US

<https://www.lgbtcenters.org/>



Houston, Texas



Dallas, Texas



Tulsa, Oklahoma



Los Angeles, California



# Key Recommendations by QoL Domain

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Continue to center equity in all policy and financial resource allocations and that those allocations be inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ population
2. Continue to provide representation and visibility of people of color within city government.
3. Enforce and hold agencies accountable to the Mayor's mandated training "Undoing Racism"

# Key Recommendations by QoL Domain

## Community and Social Connectedness

1. Investing in an LGBTQIA+ cultural center and cultural district that is inclusive of all community sectors
2. Empower and provide resources for the Austin LGBTQ commission to bring LGBT organizations and stakeholders together in workshops or townhalls.
3. Form a transgender/gender-expansive council through the office of the mayor.

# Key Recommendations by QoL Domain

## Economic Opportunity

1. Provide low-cost loans or grants to LGBT entrepreneurs to start a new business, expand current operations and workforce, or buy new equipment.
2. Increase the minimum wage to a wage where LGBTQIA+ people can not only survive but thrive.
3. Enact **employment non-discrimination ordinances** with strong, clear penalties and robust enforcement for violations.

# Key Recommendations by QoL Domain

## Health

1. Fund transgender health care that are accessible, especially to youth.
2. Prioritize and provide resources for the HIV Planning Council's 2017-21 Austin Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan and adopt the National Ending the HIV Epidemic strategies to reduce HIV transmission among queer and transgender PoC.
3. Develop a pipeline (internships, etc.) and establish financial incentives to attract LGBTQIA+ Asian, Black, and Hispanic healthcare providers (MD's, MA's, therapists).

# Key Recommendations by QoL Domain

## Housing

1. Increase awareness and access to rental assistance programs to offset housing costs.
2. Rectify housing affordability plan that supports and invests in developing the housing options and inventory and protects and incentivizes Black and Hispanic-owned businesses.
3. Investigate/review all contracts to long-term use of public land.
4. Invest in the building of low- and middle-income housing and divesting from luxury development in low- and middle-income areas.
5. Enforce **housing non-discrimination ordinances** with stronger penalties for violations.

# Key Recommendations by QoL Domain

## Safety

1. Divestment from current policing models of safety and investing in a broader range of social response.
2. Create a cadre of LGBT community liaisons for APD that represent LGBTQIA+ Black, Latino, Asian, and other subpopulations.
3. Mandate ongoing LGBTQIA+ cultural competency training that addresses stigma, implicit bias, and racism for APD and all public safety personnel.
4. Advocate for a state law that would ban the use of “gay panic” and “trans panic” legal defenses. A list of the 15 states that have enacted this type of legislation can be found here: [Gay/Trans Panic Defense Laws](#).

# HMA COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Thank You!!

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