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## **Survey of LGBTI residents of Northeast Florida: 75% report everyday discrimination, while most of those who are “out” report acceptance**

The largest survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) adults ever conducted in Northeast Florida finds that three-quarters of LGBTI respondents have experienced “everyday discrimination,” such as being disrespected, threatened or harassed in the past 12 months. Respondents who reported everyday discrimination were most likely to indicate that these experiences were due to their sexual orientation or sex.

A large majority of LGBTI survey respondents were currently employed. However, many respondents also reported lifetime experiences of major discrimination in the workplace, including being unfairly fired from a job, passed over for a job for which they were qualified or denied a job promotion. Respondents most frequently cited their sexual orientation as the reason for the discrimination.

Data from the study also showed that most sexual minority respondents, including those who self-identify as LGB and so forth and those who reported same-gender partners, reported being out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer to someone in their lives, and large majorities said they were out to all of their LGBTI friends, immediate family members and current health care providers. A substantial majority of those who were out reported acceptance from all, most or some of the people who knew they were a sexual minority.

“This study shows us that many of Jacksonville’s LGBTI residents have experienced discrimination in employment, housing, and banking and felt unfairly treated in their interactions with law enforcement,” said lead author Taylor Brown, a project manager at the Williams Institute. “These data can be used to

inform the continued implementation of Jacksonville’s Human Rights Ordinance, which prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and other personal characteristics. Currently Florida’s statewide nondiscrimination laws do not include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These data could prove useful in the development of statewide protections for LGBTI people.”

Researchers at the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, with funding from The LGBT Community Fund for Northeast Florida and in partnership with a local Community Advisory Board, conducted *The Jacksonville-Area Community Assessment* to learn about the composition, experiences and health of adults in Northeast Florida’s LGBTI community. Community members were involved at every stage of this project, from conceptualization through interpretation of results and the generation of recommendations, and were integral to its success.

Michael Meyers, President of The LGBT Community Fund, said “The results of the survey show that we in Jacksonville have significant work to do to achieve full inclusion of LGBTI people into our community, while also showing the value, for many parts of the community, of coming out to move acceptance forward. The LGBT Community Fund will use the survey results to inform our work going forward, and we hope the results will be a basis for broad discussion about issues affecting the LGBTI community.”

Additional findings:

### **Discrimination**

- Three quarters (74.5%) of respondents reported that they had experienced everyday discrimination, such as being treated with less courtesy or respect, threatened or harassed in the past 12 months. Respondents were most likely to indicate that these experiences were because of their sexual orientation (53.6%) or sex (36.5%).
- Many LGBTI respondents reported lifetime experiences of major discrimination related to employment: one in five respondents (19.5%) reported being fired unfairly from a job; over a third (35.9%) reported being passed over for a job for which they were qualified, and 16.8% reported being denied a job promotion.
- LGBTI respondents also reported major discrimination over their lifetimes in other areas: 5.8% reported being unfairly prevented from moving into or buying a house or apartment; 10.2% reported being unfairly denied a loan; and 13.7% reported being unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened, or abused by the police.
- In the past year, African American respondents were more likely to report having been unfairly fired from a job (10.7%), denied a job promotion (8.8%), denied a bank loan (11.5%) and having been stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police (10.1%) than white respondents.
- In the past year, gender minority respondents, who reported a gender identity different from their sex assigned at birth, were more likely to report having been unfairly fired from a job (8.3%), passed over for a job for which they were qualified (34.9%) or denied a job promotion

(15.7%) than cisgender respondents (those whose gender identity is concordant with their sex assigned at birth).

### **Outness and Acceptance**

- Nearly all sexual minority respondents, including respondents who reported being both a sexual minority and a gender minority, reported being out to someone. Majorities reported that all of their LGBTI friends (78.0%) and immediate family members (69.1%) knew they are sexual minorities.
- Substantial majorities of those who were “out” reported acceptance from some, most, or all of those to whom they were out.
- Yet, more than a fifth of sexual minority respondents reported that none of their current bosses or supervisors (27.5%), members of their faith community (22.6%), or current health care providers (21.3%) knew they were sexual minorities.
- Fewer African American sexual minority respondents reported that all of their LGBTI friends (61.7%) or immediate family members (48.8%) knew they were sexual minorities.
- Almost half (49.3%) of African American sexual minority respondents reported that none of their current bosses or supervisors knew they were sexual minorities. Many reported that they had not come out to any members of their faith community (39.3%) or current health care providers (27.4%).
- Many gender minorities were not out to any current boss or supervisor (44.2%) or to any members of their faith communities (36.4%).

### **Other findings**

- Over half (56.4%) had a bachelor’s, graduate or professional degree, and nearly a quarter (44.3%) reported a household income of \$100,000 or more. Most respondents (85.8%) had health insurance.
- However, 10.0% were living in poverty (living below 100% of the federal poverty level), and another 13.0% were “near poor” (living at 100-199% of the federal poverty level).
- Among gender minorities, 20.0% reported being out of work, more than half (52.2%) reported food insecurity in the last 12 months, and two-thirds reported household incomes at the poverty (32.2%) or near poverty (34.5%) levels.
- Over sixty percent (62.8%) of respondents reported being in “partnered” relationships; over forty percent (42.9%) of those with partners were married.
- Almost one quarter (24.5%) of respondents reported having one or more children in their lifetimes, while 12.6% currently had a child under 18 living in their household.
- 26.7% of LGBTI respondents said they belonged to a local house of worship and 43.3% reported that religion was somewhat or very important to them. Among African American respondents, 52.3% reported belonging to a local house of worship and 69.4% said religion was somewhat or very important to them.

- More than a quarter (28.3%) of the sample and nearly two thirds (64.5%) of gender minority met criteria for moderate to severe depression. Most respondents ages 55 and older reported they had done some or a great deal of preparation for their senior years. Among these respondents, top concerns related to aging were not being able to take care of themselves (30.0%) and not having enough money to meet their needs (21.8%).

“Low levels of perceived social acceptance by the local and larger community of Northeast Florida, high rates of poverty among gender minorities and modest levels of outness suggest that efforts to increase social acceptance and trust may improve mental health, on average, among LGBTI residents,” said study investigator Kerith Conron, the Blachford-Cooper Research Director and Distinguished Scholar at the Williams Institute.

Read the [full report](#).

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#### **About The LGBT Community Fund for Northeast Florida**

The LGBT Community Fund for Northeast Florida, a giving circle of The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, was founded in 2014 and pools the collective resources of its members to benefit the LGBT community in Northeast Florida. A steering committee representing members works to develop the grantmaking strategy and guides the work of the Fund. Any member making an annual gift of \$2500 or more can serve on the Steering Committee. To become a member or donate to the Fund, or for more information, visit [www.lgbtnefl.org](http://www.lgbtnefl.org).

#### **About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida**

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida ([www.jaxcf.org](http://www.jaxcf.org)), Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 54<sup>th</sup> year, the Foundation has assets of \$398 million and has made grants of \$450 million since 1964.

#### **About the Williams Institute**

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, a think tank on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy, is dedicated to conducting rigorous, independent research with real-world relevance.

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