



OPPORTUNITY STARTS AT HOME COLORADO

LGBTQ+, Housing, and Homelessness

Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community face legal and societal barriers that disproportionately impact their ability to access housing, shelter, and health services. As a result, they experience homelessness at higher rates than heterosexual individuals that are similarly situated in terms of income, family size.

Family rejection, structural discrimination, neglect, and abuse because of their sexual and gender status push many LGBTQ+ youth into homelessness.¹

- Between 20–45% of LGBTQ+ youth experience homelessness while only 7–10% of the general youth population do.²
- **Black LGBTQ+ youth are 4 times more likely to experience homelessness** than white, non-LGBTQ+ youth.³
- 1 in 5 transgender individuals have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.⁴
- People who have been incarcerated are 13 times more likely to experience homelessness,⁵ and **LGBTQ+ people are 3 times more likely to experience incarceration** than non-LGBTQ+ people.⁶
- One Colorado's Closing the Gap Report suggests LGBTQ+ populations are more likely to lack health insurance and rate their health as poor.⁷ Without affordable, quality housing, their health may be further jeopardized.

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¹ Download.ashx (akt.org.uk)

² LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination, and Homelessness - Williams Institute (ucla.edu)

³ Serving Our Youth - Williams Institute (ucla.edu)

⁴ Homeless transgender individuals | Gender Affirming Health Program (ucsf.edu)

⁵ Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people | Prison Policy Initiative

⁶ Incarceration Rates and Traits of Sexual Minorities in the United States: National Inmate Survey, 2011–2012 - PMC (nih.gov)

⁷ OCEF_BK-Closing The Gap 9-19.indd (one-colorado.org)

Housing Discrimination

- Until February 2021, no federal law protected gender identity from discrimination in housing. Previously, LGBTQ+ people needed another factor of discrimination to file a legal claim.⁸
- Despite being protected under Colorado’s Fair Housing Law, **discrimination based on LGBTQ+ status still occurs**, including refusal to rent, unequal terms and conditions, discriminatory financing, refusal to sell, and retaliation against someone who has exercised their fair housing rights.⁹
- Same-sex couples are less likely to receive a response to rental inquiries compared to heterosexual couples.¹⁰
- **1 in 4 transgender individuals report experiencing housing discrimination** in the past year.¹¹
- Social service providers and homeless shelters often fail to appropriately serve LGBTQ+ people, denying them shelter or resources based on their gender identity. Transgender and non-binary people are often inappropriately housed in gendered spaces with which they may not identify. This increases risk of violence and harassment.



I think losing your home creates an instability and a distrust of community, almost a paranoia about how the streets will treat you. Being unhoused is traumatic in itself, and then you have these messages of not being accepted and not deserving, particularly, young LGBTQ+ youth and adults who have internalized such negative, oppressive messages.

Nadine Bridges, executive director of One Colorado, lost her home in her teens, and now she heads the state’s leading LGBTQ+ advocacy organization.

⁸ Issue Brief-LGBTQ and Homelessness_2021 FINAL.pdf (coloradocoalition.org)

⁹ <https://one-colorado.org/lgbtq-resources/anti-discrimination-laws-colorado/>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ www.hrc.org/resources/fair-and-equalhousing-act

Moving Forward

Housing is fundamental to the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ Coloradans. It is essential for LGBTQ+ policy to focus on equitable access to affordable housing and for housing policy to center the specific needs of this community. Policy solutions may include:

- Developing housing affordable to individuals and families with limited income and assets;
- Funding universal housing vouchers so all eligible households can access subsidies;
- Targeting outreach for public benefits programs to LGBTQ+ people;”
- Identifying LGBTQ+ youth who are housing insecure and providing interventions;
- Grow safe shelter options for LGBTQ+ people; and
- Investing in services and programming that are responsive to LGBTQ+ needs, including patient-centered, inclusive, trauma-informed care.

LGBTQ+ status should not prevent individuals and families from accessing safe and stable housing. Long Standing barriers to housing can be addressed through inclusive housing policy.



Opportunity Starts at Home: Colorado

From better health to food security to good education, housing is foundational to every aspect of well-being, building stronger communities, promoting economic growth, and providing opportunities for everyone to thrive.

Our Colorado-based, multi-sector coalition is working in coordination with the National Low-Income Housing Coalition to generate widespread support for local, state, and federal policies that correct long-standing racial inequities and economic injustices that have prevented access to affordable, quality housing for people with low incomes.

Learn more and see coalition partners at www.ColoradoCoalition.org/OSAH