



COVID-19 and LGBTQ+ Communities

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LGBTQ+ people were already at risk

LGBTQ+ people came into the COVID-19 pandemic at **greater economic risk** due to poverty, immigration status, and discrimination:

- [One in five LGBTQ+ people](#) in the US were living below the poverty line compared to only 16% of straight, cisgender people.
 - [Poverty rates](#) were even higher for trans people (29%), particularly for Black (40%) and Latinx (45%) trans people.
- One in 10 DACA recipients, and around 267,000 undocumented people generally, [identify as LGBTQ+](#).
- Only 22 states and DC have [explicit housing protections](#) for sexual orientation and gender identity.
 - 73% of LGBTQ+ people [fear discrimination](#) in seeking housing.
 - 48% of seniors in same-gender couples [have been discriminated against while](#) seeking senior housing.
- Until the Supreme Court ruled on June 15, 2020 that LGBTQ+ workers are protected from workplace discrimination under [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1965](#), LGBTQ+ workers in [25 states](#) did not have any state-level workplace discrimination protections. LGBTQ+ workers still need to access an attorney and to prove discrimination in court, which poses significant barriers for low-income people in particular.

The combined deterrents of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, lack of access to healthcare, and high rates of unemployment make LGBTQ+ people **less likely to receive the healthcare they need** to survive and thrive, especially during a global pandemic:

- 17% of LGBTQ+ people [did not have any health insurance](#)—compared to just 12% of non-LGBTQ+ adults—with higher rates faced by LGBTQ+ people of color (23%) and transgender people of color specifically (32%).
- 29% of transgender people and 8% of LGBTQ+ people [reported](#) being outright refused service by a healthcare provider because of their gender or sexual identity.
- 22% of trans people and 8% of LGBTQ+ people avoided treatment due to [discrimination](#).
- On June 12, 2020, the Trump Administration published a new rule that removes protections for transgender people and women who have had an abortion from the non-discrimination protections in the Affordable Care Act (Section 1557). [The rule](#) also no longer requires notification of the right to receive translation services and access to information in multiple languages, presenting challenges for people who do not speak English as a primary language. The rule change will impose further barriers for LGBTQ+ people by increasing the chances they will be denied care, or will avoid seeking healthcare altogether.

The COVID-19 pandemic is hitting the LGBTQ+ community hard

- Trans people of color (26%) and trans people generally (19%) had substantially [higher rates of unemployment](#) than the general population (12%) as a result of COVID-19.
- [5 million LGBTQ+ workers](#) (40% of LGBTQ+ adults) are employed in industries that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. These industries have increased exposure to the coronavirus or have faced mass reductions or layoffs due to the economic fallout.
 - For LGBTQ+ workers facing furlough or lost jobs, this can also mean the loss of employer-sponsored healthcare just when it is needed most.
- Harassment and [discrimination of LGBTQ+ people](#) means that queer and trans people face economic discrimination, and fare even worse during economic downturns.
- Black LGBTQ+ people, and Black trans people [in particular](#), are facing ongoing [police violence](#) and economic crises amidst the coronavirus pandemic that is also disproportionately [killing Black people](#).

LGBTQ+ people must be included in COVID-19 relief

LGBTQ+ people face ongoing discrimination in employment and elsewhere, barriers to health care and stable housing, and disproportionate violence. The needs of LGBTQ+ people must be addressed explicitly in COVID-19 relief legislation.

H.R. 748, CARES Act (signed into law on March 27, 2020)

In addition to increases in unemployment insurance and direct payments to struggling families, the bill also [increased funding](#) for HIV/AIDS care and treatment, housing assistance (HOPWA) for people with HIV/AIDS, and additional funding for HUD's Emergency Solution Grants to help homeless people. Investments in programs serving people experiencing homelessness are critical for LGBTQ+ people because of the high rates of [housing instability](#) among LGBTQ+ youth, especially youth of color. These measures were important, but don't go far enough to address the economic and health needs of LGBTQ+ population.

H.R. 6800, Heroes Act (passed the House on May 15, 2020 but stalled in the Senate)

In addition to extending many of the essential provisions in the CARES Act, [the Heroes Act](#) contains a nondiscrimination provision to prevent relief programs from discriminating against LGBTQ+ people. It also works to prevent youth LGBTQ+ suicide. In addition, the Heroes Act [includes](#) the [Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act](#), which would encourage LGBTQ+ hate crime data collection. While LGBTQ+ people are targeted with violence at higher rates and no national database currently tracks these attacks, [some LGBTQ+ advocates](#) have called for alternative solutions to hate crimes laws, noting that many LGBTQ+ people, especially people of color, have experienced [harassment from the police](#).

H.R. 5, Equality Act (passed in the House on May 17, 2019 but stalled in the Senate)

Immediate relief for LGBTQ+ people is essential, but the factors that put LGBTQ+ people at greater risk will remain until LGBTQ+ discrimination is addressed comprehensively. [The Equality Act](#) would include LGBTQ+ people in major civil rights laws, and would also expand on the protections of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include providers of services, therefore [extending further protections](#) for women and people of color as well.