

Serving with Pride:

Expanding Information about Nondiscriminatory Service Providers for LGBT Older Adults

Abstract

Current Michigan laws do not explicitly protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons from discrimination. Pending legislation seeks to further erode protections for this community. LGBT older adults thus often struggle to find affirming service providers. Research suggests that such discrimination may contribute to health, income, and employment disparities for LGBT older adults (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013).

To better understand this problem, I worked with SAGE Metro Detroit, a nonprofit that serves LGBT older adults, by surveying 65 organizations about their nondiscrimination policies. While all 65 of these organizations received funding that required a nondiscrimination policy with sexual orientation and gender identity, only seven (or 10%) had such a policy.

In response, we created a resource guide for LGBT older adults, allies, and service providers with innovative icons that signal which organizations and businesses have such policies. Additionally, we required organizations listed to sign a commitment to provide affirming and equal services to LGBT older adults. This process prompted several organizations to adopt improved policies and created a novel resource guide focused specifically on the aging network.

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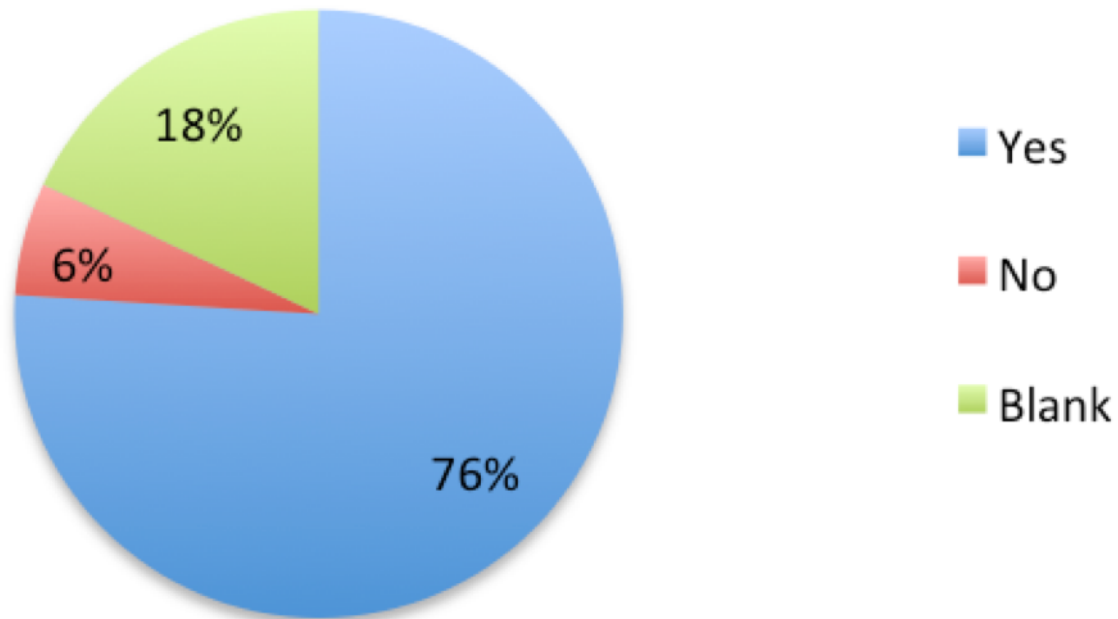
Background

- Discrimination toward LGBT older adults
- Michigan and national laws lack explicit protection
- Challenges in providing affirming care
- Surveyed 65 organizations regarding nondiscrimination policies
- All organizations were required to include language covering gender identity and sexuality orientation to meet agency requirements. Only 7 (or about 10%) had policies that explicitly included this language.

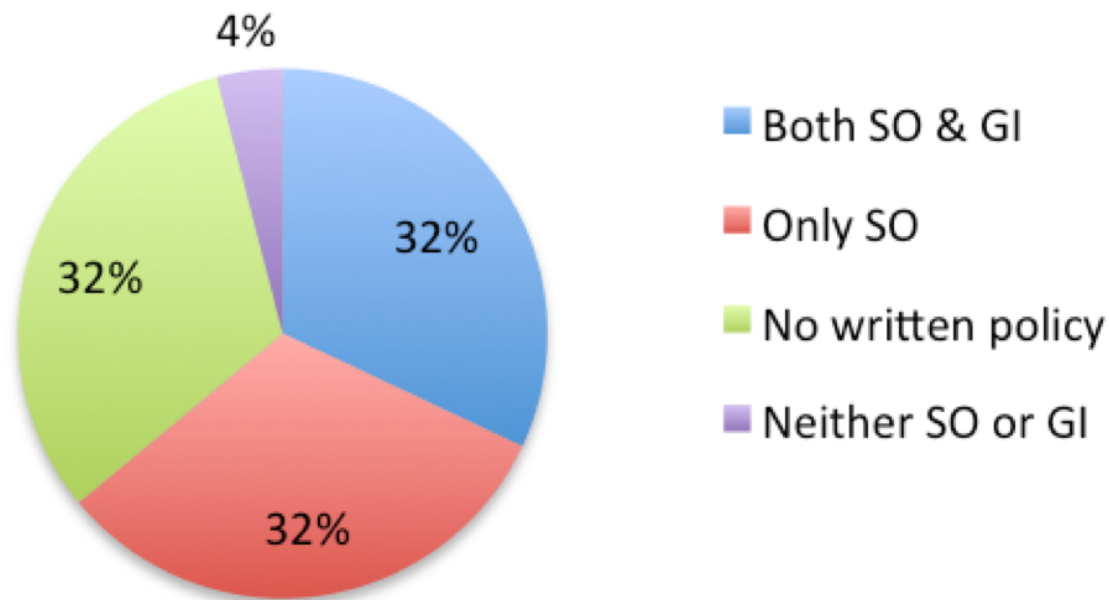
Survey Overview

Survey Section	# of people who engaged in the survey action to the left
Clicked Link (but did not complete any section of the survey)	65
Introductory Questions (Finished introductory questions about the nature of the business)	55
Nondiscrimination Policy (answered questions about policy)	54
LGBT-related training (answered questions about whether or not the business participates in trainings about serving LGBT people)	45
Resource Guide (answered questions about whether they wanted to be included in Resource Guide)	41

Percentage of Whether or Not Nondiscrimination Policy Explicitly Includes Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity



Percentage Breakdown of Coverage for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity among Businesses who Said Their Policy Explicitly Included Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity



Trainings

Does your organization participate in any trainings about how to best serve LGBT people?

- Yes (15/45 or 34%)
- No (17/45 or 38%)
- Not at this time, maybe later (5/45 or 11%)
- Other (8/45 or 18%)
- NOTE: 30/45 businesses did not say “yes.”

Objectives

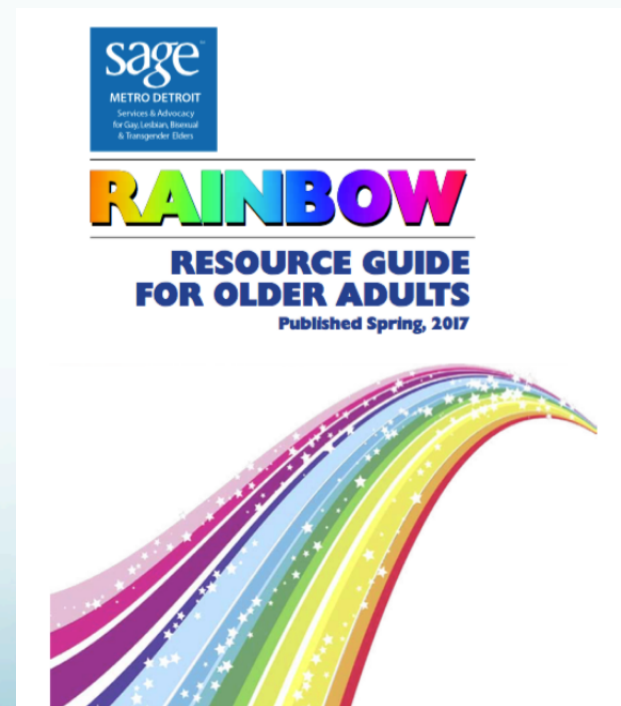
- Create a resource guide with at least 50 businesses or service providers in Southeast Michigan that sign a commitment to provide affirming and equal services to LGBT older adults
- Create a database with the nondiscrimination policies of each organization/business listed in the guide that allows us to determine the scope of coverage and compare changes over time.
- Distribute electronic and hard copies of the guide to service providers in Southeast Michigan

Challenges

- Labor and Time-Intensive
- Vetting
- Logistical Coordination
- Navigating Diverse Opinions within Community Partnership Organization for Resolving Questions of Scope and Implementation

Impact

- Policy Change for Diversity and Inclusion
- Stronger Community Partnership with SAGE Metro Detroit
- Resources and Information
- Training



Lessons Learned

- Written v. Verbal Verification
- Timing
- Database Efficiency
- Systematic Reviews

Library Partnership

- Support: Darlene Nichols
- Database Efficiency
- Systematic Reviews
- Research Literature

Further Work

- Follow-up with organizations/businesses that lacked nondiscrimination policies to see if they changed their policy to include sexual orientation and gender identity, and if so, was this change prompted from the requirements in the guide?
- Continue working on systematic analysis and literature review of meso-level policy interventions among service providers' to understand and expand nondiscrimination policies.

Acknowledgements

- SAGE Metro Detroit Resource Guide Committee
- Lilly Estenson
- Darlene Nichols
- UM Library