



NYC'S



A NEW LENS FOR

**HOUSING
PLAN**

HOUSING PLAN FOR
LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Citizens Housing & Planning Council	5
Acknowledgements	6
CHPC Board Of Directors	10
A New Lens for NYC’s Housing Plan	12
NYC & LGBTQ+ Communities	18
A Note on Language.....	25
By the Numbers.....	26
Focus Groups & Interviews	32
Existing Programs.....	33
Why a Housing Plan?.....	34
Housing Plan for LGBTQ+ Communities	36
Housing Plan Summary	64
Citations	66

ABOUT CHPC

Citizens Housing & Planning Council (CHPC) is a non-profit research and education organization focused on housing policy and planning in New York City. Since our founding in 1937, CHPC’s mission has been to develop and advance practical public policies to support the housing stock of the city by better understanding New York’s most pressing housing and neighborhood needs.

For more than 80 years, CHPC’s research and education work has helped shape public policy to improve the city’s housing stock and quality of life in New York City’s neighborhoods. A team of expert research staff is led by a diverse board of practitioners in the fields of urban planning, architecture, zoning and land use law, housing finance and development, and community development.

Our work brings clarity to New York City’s housing issues by presenting research in relatable and engaging ways. Our agenda is practical and always begins with questions, not answers. It is the data, our analysis, and its relevance to the real world that drive our conclusions.

CITIZENS HOUSING & PLANNING COUNCIL

ACKNOWLEDGE MENTS

HOUSING PLAN FOR NYC'S LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

Research & Writing by **Andrea Bowen**

Edited by **Jessica Katz & Sheena Kang**

CITIZENS HOUSING & PLANNING COUNCIL STAFF

Jessica Katz, Executive Director

Sarah Watson, Deputy Director

Sheena Kang, Senior Policy Analyst

Katherine Leitch, Senior Policy Analyst

Madelaine Britt, Policy Analyst

Danny Cabrera, Policy Analyst

Michael Oyelola, Policy Analyst

Vivienne Davis, Administrative Associate

REPORT DESIGN

Kathryn Dreier, Studio MESH

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

ALTMAN
FOUNDATION

 FORD
FOUNDATION

NY
CT THE NEW YORK
COMMUNITY
TRUST

TRINITY
CHURCH
WALL
STREET

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

CHPC is grateful for the expertise shared by the participants in our *Housing Plan for LGBTQ+ Communities*:

Leila Bozorg, formerly NYC HPD

Donald Capoccia, Principal, BFC Partners

Chris Cirillo, Executive Director & President,

Ascendant Neighborhood Development

Sean Coleman, Founder and Executive Director,

Destination Tomorrow

Jako Douglas-Borren, Director of Programs,

Brooklyn Community Pride Center

Ceyenne Doroshow, Founder and Executive Director,

G.L.I.T.S.

Eric Enderlin, President, NYC HPD

Stephen Erdman, Director of Community Land Trust

Initiatives and Analytics, NYC HDC

Somjen Frazer, Principal, Strength In Numbers Consulting

Peter Georgiades, Of Counsel, Wayman, Irvin & McAuley

Cole Giannone, Senior Advisor for Youth Homelessness,

NYC Office of the Mayor

Jahaira Gonzalez, Director of Outreach,

Destination Tomorrow

Jody Herman, Scholar of Public Policy, Williams Institute

Cristina Herrera, CEO and Founder, Translatinx Network

James Lima, President, James Lima Planning + Development

Marcelino Martinez, Franklin Salazar, and Evelyn Torres,

Members, Radiate Consulting

Laura Mascuch, Executive Director,

Supportive Housing Network of NY

Ashe McGovern, Executive Director, NYC Unity Project

Keira McGuinness, Tenant Leader, Stonewall House

Meghan Maury, in their personal capacity

Karen Narefsky, Senior Organizer for Equitable Economic

Development, ANHD

Julieta Salgado, Translator

Rebecca Sauer, Director of Policy and Planning,

Supportive Housing Network of NY

Sarah Schulman, Distinguished Professor,

College of Staten Island

Jeannette Ruffins, CEO, Homeward NYC

Kayt Tiskus, DEIB Consultant, Kayt Tiskus Consulting

Dozens of community members who joined CHPC in focus groups and community interviews assembled from the membership of Brooklyn Community Pride Center, Destination Tomorrow, and Translatinx Network.

CHPC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Chairman: Richard Roberts

President: Mark Ginsberg

VP: Samantha Magistro

Treasurer: Matt Petrula

Secretary: Lisa Blecker

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Robert Ezrapour

Alexander Garvin

Kirk Goodrich

Aileen Gribbin

Mark Levine

Joseph Lynch

Marvin Markus

Richard Singer

William Stein

BOARD MEMBERS

Sandra Acosta

Hercules Argyriou

Richard Barth

Simon Bacchus

Stuart Beckerman

Carmi Bee

Alan Bell

Robert Berne

Anthony Borelli

Thomas Campbell

Rafael Cestero

Emily Chen

Andrew Cohen

Lorraine Collins

James Davidson

Beatriz De la Torre

Linh Do

Martin Dunn

Douglas Durst

Neil Falcone

Erica Forman

Paul Freitag

Danny Fuchs

Deborah Gans

Richard Gerwitz

Jim Gillespie

Sally Gilliland

Elliott Glass

Alexander Gorlin

Rick Gropper

Amie Gross

David Gross

Timothy Henkel

Larry Hirschfield

Kevin Hoffman

William Hubbard

Karim Hutson

Marcie Kesner

Carol Lamberg

Deborah Clark Lamm

Phil Lavoie

Robert Lehrman

Nick Lettire

Jeffrey Levine

Jeremy Levkoff

Richard Lobel

Michael Lohr

Kenneth Lowenstein

John McCarthy

Ron Moelis

Niall Murray

Perry Notias

Anthony Richardson

James Riso

Matthew Rooney

Joseph B. Rose

Robert Rosenberg

Carol Rosenthal

David Rowe

Matthew Schatz

David Schwartz

Avery Seavey

Paul Selver

Ethel Sheffer

Abby Jo Sigal

Jane Silverman

Mark Strauss

Robin Thomson

David Walsh

Adam Weinstein

Valerie White

Alan Wiener

Mark Willis

Emily Youssof

Howard Zipser

EMERITI

Frances Magee

Peter Salins

A NEW LENS FOR NYC'S HOUSING PLAN

New York has an extraordinary housing production goal, unparalleled among U.S. cities. Working in partnership with the housing industry, the City has committed to creating and preserving 300,000 affordable apartments by 2026. New York has become a highly efficient factory for generating affordable housing, with each successive housing plan promising an ever-increasing number of units.

Yet housing policy can have a far greater reach beyond developing a certain number of affordable housing units. Housing policy is about social justice, health, economic development, financial opportunity, stability and mobility, neighborhood revitalization, and many other key aspects of social, economic, and urban policy. An exclusive preoccupation with counting the number of affordable housing units can make us lose sight of the core values underpinning our policies, making it difficult to articulate to communities why the government is building housing in their neighborhoods. Advocates and low-income communities find themselves asking: What is the purpose of this plan? Who is benefiting and how?

When unit-counting is first and foremost, resource allocation and policy priorities are shaped to meet a quantitative goal, rather than to align policy with our values as a city and meet the greatest community needs. Despite the dire conditions of New York City's public housing stock, NYCHA residents have largely been excluded from recent housing plans due to the "unit-counting" lens. Although basement apartment conversions are currently an inefficient and costly way to create new units, streamlining a pathway to conversions would advance financial stability for low-income homeowners and expand affordable housing options for underserved renters.

New York City's current housing plan both benefits and suffers from its preoccupation with counting units. Unit-counting is an effective metric for driving the

gears of government towards a single, clear, quantifiable goal, but loses the broader purpose of housing policy. The range of voices involved in crafting the housing plan has been restricted, and its limited focus has led to growing frustration and sentiment among communities that their needs are not being met.

The next housing plan provides an opportunity for communities and policymakers to widen the discussion, articulate new metrics, and develop a shared vision of housing policy for New York City.

A New Lens for NYC’s Housing Plan is an initiative by Citizens Housing and Planning Council (CHPC) to explore this opportunity. CHPC is leading a strategic visioning process to reframe New York City’s next housing plan to look beyond a unit goal. Through research, interviews with housing policymakers and practitioners, stakeholder convenings, public events, and publications, CHPC is bringing new voices into the discussion around New York City’s housing policy and building excitement around new lenses that housing policy could use. CHPC’s multi-pronged engagement series will equip the next generation of policymakers in New York City with a menu of new ideas, approaches, policies, and metrics to build from.

CHPC’s A New Lens for NYC’s Housing Plan report series aims to demonstrate how New York City’s next housing plan could leverage the power of housing policy to advance a wide range of public policy goals, with each publication adopting a different “new lens.” First, data and analysis are used to articulate the needs that housing policy through the new lens could serve and the problems that it could help us solve, establishing clearly defined policy goals. The reports then lay out strategies and objectives for policy reform to advance those goals, illuminating what a housing plan through each new lens could look like.

CHPC hopes that by demonstrating the process of identifying needs, establishing goals, and developing strategies to advance them, the New Lens report series will help catalyze discussion around how the next housing plan could help us develop and advance a shared vision for the future. ■

A New Lens for NYC's Housing Plan



WHAT THE F IS A FEMINIST HOUSING PLAN

Housing policy is rarely discussed as a way to address gender inequality or provide an economic safety net for women. How would we measure our success if the next housing plan was explicitly feminist?



RX FOR HOUSING: HOUSING IS HEALTHCARE

Our health and our housing are connected, especially for households living in poverty. What if the goal of the next housing plan was to improve the health of New Yorkers?



HOUSING PLAN FOR RACIAL EQUITY

Though the legacy of discriminatory housing policies has persisted for decades, NYC has yet to see a housing policy agenda directly aimed to combat racial inequality.



HOUSING PLAN FOR A CITY OF IMMIGRANTS

The next housing plan could advance opportunity for millions of New Yorkers and align the city's housing policy with its past, present, and future as a city of immigrants.



HOUSING PLAN FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

NYC's housing policies must support the LGBTQ+ New Yorkers that have found community in our city for decades.



A GREEN HOUSING PLAN

A NYC housing plan defined by a bold commitment to green principles would help turn the tide of climate change.

VISIT WWW.CHPCNY.ORG TO LEARN MORE.



NYC & LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

There is a story about LGBTQ+ communities and housing in New York City.

The story is that LGBTQ+ people - typically gay, White, cisgender men - moved into low-income neighborhoods, rehabilitated the housing stock, and drove gentrification. This is misleading, and speaks to the importance and complexity of rethinking housing affordability as it pertains to LGBTQ+ people. It is true that some LGBTQ+ people have benefited from the opportunity to buy or rent housing, at low cost, in neighborhoods that are much more affluent today. That is one part of the community.

However, research and community knowledge demonstrate that marginalized, low-income LGBTQ+ people have, for roughly 150 years, moved to affordable New York City neighborhoods and made them safe through strength in numbers.¹ This is what happened in the well-known enclaves of Chelsea, Harlem, and the East and West Villages. No retelling of the Stonewall Uprising is complete without noting that the Stonewall Inn primarily served a working-class clientele. Though of course there are wealthy LGBTQ+ people living in New York, the city owes its primacy as a world destination for LGBTQ+ activism, culture, and history largely to low-income communities.

Contrary to the common narrative about LGBTQ+ communities as wealthy gentrifiers and harbingers of appreciating property values (which, depending on one's perspective, may be described as a real estate success story, or portrayed critically as the source of worsening income inequality in New York City), the reality is vastly more complex. The gentrification that occurred in many of the best-known LGBTQ+ neighborhoods in the 1980s and 1990s was driven in part by LGBTQ+ people dying of AIDS. Gay men and members of what we now think of as the transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary community who died were unable to transfer rent-stabilized apartments to their partners, who were displaced as a result, allowing those apartments to be converted to market rate.² There are LGBTQ+ New Yorkers who live in those neighborhoods to this day, but there are many others who died or were displaced when a partner died, leading to greater housing turnover in the Manhattan neighborhoods best-known for being wealthy, gay enclaves.

Alongside the story of LGBTQ+ New Yorkers and gentrification in core Manhattan, another housing phenomenon – one that is not a well-known part of mainstream New York City history – was occurring: low-income and working-class LGBTQ+ people were creating a form of safety in neighborhoods with more affordable housing stock. Jackson Heights provides a present-day example of a neighborhood that had a gay presence in the early 20th century, and has since maintained enough affordable housing to make it, and the surrounding communities, an organizing hub for working-class LGBTQ+ life.³ Today, there are LGBTQ+ enclaves in Bed-Stuy, Crown Heights, and Brighton Beach, all for unique reasons, continuing this New York tradition.

It is not that these neighborhoods are wholly affordable, or even entirely safe, for LGBTQ+ people. Rather, these neighborhoods have allowed LGBTQ+ people to find some affordable housing and build community with one another in a concentrated geographic location.


In focus groups and interviews conducted by CHPC (see pg. 32), members of LGBTQ+ communities from across New York City noted LGBTQ+ enclaves in East New York and Brownsville in Brooklyn, and in the Melrose, Mott Haven, and Woodlawn neighborhoods of the Bronx. The Pride Center of Staten Island on the North Shore provides services for LGBTQ+ people across the life cycle. Transgender community leader Miss Ceyenne Doroshov is working to ensure that there is a critical mass of LGBTQ+ community members in Woodhaven/Ozone Park, Queens, because she sees it as a safe and affordable community where she has worked and lived for years.

In addition to the well-known neighborhood enclaves in Chelsea and the West Village, there are thriving LGBTQ+ communities all over New York City's five boroughs.

Place matters, especially for vulnerable communities. Communities build safety in numbers. Community centers and other social resources – for public health, legal services, community organizing, and yes, even bars and clubs – grow around a community. The ball community, in which predominantly Black and Latinx⁴ LGBTQ+ people compete in dance-offs and provide a space for community joy (as well as the provision of social services), grew from balls held in Harlem dating back to at least the 19th century.⁵ The Christopher Street Piers were, pre-gentrification, a major site of socialization and effectively a shelter that LGBTQ+ community members used, away from the traditional homeless system, in the interest of communal safety.⁶ To maintain some part of what was being lost as the piers were redeveloped in the 2000s, the organization Fabulous Independent Education Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE) attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to develop an LGBTQ+ community center on the piers.⁷

The NYC LGBT Center has been a mainstay in the West Village, providing community services, places for socialization, and famously, the meeting space of AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), which fought for the survival of people living with HIV/AIDS. The Audre Lorde Project (ALP) is an organization focused on the needs of LGBTQ+ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. ALP started its Safe OUTside the System (S.O.S.) project, premised on community safety and bystander violence intervention, to protect low-income and working-class LGBTQ+ people in Bed-Stuy. In 2017, Brooklyn Community Pride Center (BCPC) moved from Downtown Brooklyn to Bed-Stuy, to be closer to the communities it serves, and because Bed-Stuy has one of the highest new HIV infection rates in the U.S.

Jackson Heights is home to many service providers for immigrant New Yorkers and LGBTQ+ communities, especially LGBTQ+ Latinx people. The Translatinx Network is one of many organizations that provides street outreach for public health in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst. The late translatina activist Lorena Borjas based her service organization Colectivo Intercultural Transgrendio in Jackson Heights, where it continues to operate after her death from COVID-19 in spring 2020. In Brighton Beach, which is home to a Russian-speaking LGBTQ+ community, the service organization RUSA LGBT provides support for immigrants and organizes Brighton Beach Pride.⁸ BCPC is starting a new location in Brighton Beach, in collaboration with RUSA LGBT, for that very reason.



Community builds in a location, and resources build around it. Displacement has deep implications for community safety and trauma.

Even LGBTQ+ people who do not live in enclaves find community within them.⁹ This is a model that Jen Jack Giesking refers to as “constellations.” Giesking cites Bed-Stuy and Crown Heights as gathering spots, both for current residents and for those who have been displaced. The need to find one another in established community spaces, despite physical distance, has become increasingly relevant as more LGBTQ+ people have had difficulty concentrating in areas with safe and affordable housing – especially those who are Black, Indigenous, and Latinx, and/or low-income. The enclaves remain, even if many people cannot afford to live in them.

There is also the profound issue of LGBTQ+ people and their relationship to the concept of family, and its implications for how housing is regulated in New York City. LGBTQ+ communities have institutionalized family structures that do not fit into the framework of housing policy. LGBTQ+ Black and Latinx communities have long established “houses,” or families of choice that may live together as a multi-person unit. New York City’s building classifications, construction and housing maintenance codes are formulated to accommodate nuclear families. As demonstrated by CHPC’s *Making Room* research initiative, our housing stock does not accommodate diverse household types, and housing regulations do not reflect the reality of how we live today.¹⁰ This is particularly true for LGBTQ+ communities.

What does this mean for the creation of housing policy to serve LGBTQ+ people? LGBTQ+ communities need sufficient affordable housing to create safety – ideally, safety in numbers – in particular neighborhoods. We must dig deeper to create opportunities for affordable housing that is responsive to LGBTQ+ experiences. This is a challenging feat, especially in the context of an affordability crisis, illegal discrimination and violence against marginalized groups, overarching deference to nuclear family norms, and the exclusion of people that rely on the underground economy, such as sex workers. For a deeper understanding of what is at stake, and the opportunities and challenges at hand, we must look to the data for details on LGBTQ+ life, in New York City and nationwide.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

This report focuses on the housing needs of what CHPC and others refer to as LGBTQ+ communities.

Why the “+”?

While LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning, there are more identities that face oppression on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression: asexual people, gender non-conforming, non-binary, pansexual, pangender, and so on. Because there are a multitude of identities that cannot be easily accommodated by a simple acronym, this report will follow the current convention of “LGBTQ+.” This report will not define all of these terms, but encourages use of respected resources to learn more about these communities.¹¹

Why communities and not community?

The identities of New Yorkers are diverse and wide-ranging, from sexual and gender minorities alone, to their intersections with race, class, disability, and other identities. Because of this, it is important to note that one cannot generalize about the LGBTQ+ community, so much as talk about the needs of multiple LGBTQ+ communities.

Additional acronyms

This report also use terms such as cisgender, transgender, non-binary (NB), and gender non-conforming (GNC). As not all gender non-conforming or non-binary people identify as transgender, there is increasing use of acronyms such as TGGNC (trans and gender non-conforming), TNB (trans and non-binary), and TGNCNB (trans, gender non-conforming, and non-binary). Survey literature on LGBTQ+ people uses a variety of acronyms; when referring to specific studies, this report defers to the acronyms and terms used within them.

BY THE NUMBERS

LGBTQ+ communities face enormous barriers to economic well-being. This report was written approximately a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused greater hardships for LGBTQ+ people across the U.S.

Since the start of this crisis, per one national survey:

- **Compared to 44% of non-LGBTQ+ households, 66% of LGBTQ+ households have experienced “serious financial problems” (e.g., using up savings, accumulating debt, trouble paying utilities), including 95% of Black LGBTQ+ respondents and 70% of Latinx LGBTQ+ respondents.**
- **25% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported experiencing unsafe or unhealthy housing conditions since the COVID-19 crisis began, compared to 10% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.**
- **56% of LGBTQ+ respondents were renters, compared to 34% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.¹²**

These early findings indicate the potential for LGBTQ+ people to be disproportionately impacted by pandemic-related housing instability. Even before COVID-19, LGBTQ+ people were more housing vulnerable than their straight, cisgender peers. The pandemic has only served to exacerbate and worsen those disparities.

POVERTY & SURVIVAL IN THE UNDERGROUND ECONOMY

LGBTQ+ adults in the U.S. are 15% more likely than their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts to be poor, even after controlling for age, race, employment status, language, education, disability, and other factors that impact poverty risk.¹³

Within the LGBTQ+ population, poverty is especially prevalent among people of color, bisexual and transgender individuals, women, youth, and people living with HIV.¹⁴

In the most recent *LGBT Health and Human Service Needs Assessment in New York State* survey, a periodic study last conducted in 2015 (hereafter referred to as the *NYS Needs Assessment*), 36% of respondents had incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line, making them eligible for a range of public benefits.¹⁵ Respondents of color and TGNC respondents were especially likely to fall into this category. Compared to only 33% of White respondents, 46% of respondents of color had incomes below 200% of the poverty line.¹⁶ In New York City alone, 25% of TGNC respondents were living in poverty.¹⁷ Despite being income-eligible for benefits, only one in five respondents with incomes below 200% of the poverty line reported having used any public benefits within the previous five years.¹⁸

Higher poverty rates in LGBTQ+ communities affect families as well as single adults. The *NYS Needs Assessment* found that, among LGBT respondents aged 25 and over, 40% of those with children in the home were living in poverty, compared to 30% of those not living with children.¹⁹

Poverty requires survival, and survival sometimes requires work by any means necessary. In 2015, the U.S. Trans Survey, which is the largest survey of transgender people nationwide, found that 20% of respondents had been engaged in underground economic work at some point in time, including “sex work, drug sales, and other currently criminalized work,” with 19% reporting having done “some type of sex work...for money, food, or a place to sleep.”²⁰ Stigma and stereotyping make Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ and especially transgender New Yorkers more vulnerable to arrest on suspicion of sex work.²¹ This creates a no-win cycle.

Housing subsidies that require documentation of income and/or criminal background checks may be off-limits to people engaged in sex work, even though housing need is precisely what makes sex work necessary for survival.

HOUSING INSTABILITY & HOMELESSNESS

LGBTQ+ households are disproportionately renters, and many struggle to keep up with housing costs. In a study of 35 U.S. states, only about half of LGBTQ+ respondents were homeowners, compared to 70% of straight, cisgender adults. Rates of homeownership were even lower among respondents of color and transgender people.²² Exclusion from homeownership, higher poverty rates, and barriers to economic mobility put LGBTQ+ communities at greater risk for housing insecurity. 36% of respondents to the *NYS Needs Assessment* reported experiencing housing insecurity, with respondents of color reporting insecurity at higher rates than White respondents.²³

Households that are struggling to keep up with housing costs may be forced to sacrifice paying for other basic needs, such as food and healthcare. Such tradeoffs are common among LGBTQ+ families with children, whose basic needs are more expensive due to the cost of childcare. The *NYS Needs Assessment* found that 42% of LGBT respondents with children in the home had experienced food insecurity, and 44% had experienced housing insecurity, at some point in the last year. During the same period, 36% of LGBT respondents without children in the home had experienced food insecurity, and 33% had experienced housing insecurity.²⁴

Financial insecurity and high housing costs may lead residents to live in substandard conditions that can be hazardous to safety and health. This issue is especially prominent among LGBTQ+ older adults. In a 2017 survey of LGBTQ+ people in New York City, in which nearly three out of four people surveyed were 55 to 75 years old, 23% of respondents lived in substandard housing.²⁵

The share of LGBTQ+ older adults of color (37%) living in substandard housing was twice that of White LGBTQ+ older adults (18%). Meanwhile, one-third of transgender and gender non-conforming older adults were living in substandard housing, compared to fewer than one in four of their cisgender peers.²⁶

LGBTQ+ youth face additional challenges to housing security. LGBTQ+ youth who face rejection from their birth families may be pushed out of their homes. Many also face pushout from schools, which can have long-term impacts on the ability to attain income and housing.²⁷ In the *NYS Needs Assessment*, 15% of survey respondents ages 16-24, including 27% of those of color, “had been homeless as a result of being LGBT.”²⁸

Higher levels of housing insecurity put LGBTQ+ communities at greater risk for homelessness. 18% of respondents to the *NYS Needs Assessment* reported having been homeless at some point in their lives. Meanwhile, people of color and TGGNC people were far more likely to have experienced homelessness than White and non-TGGNC respondents.²⁹ Discrimination in the housing market makes it more difficult for LGBTQ+ people, especially those who are transgender, gender non-conforming, and people of color, to transition out of shelter, secure and maintain permanent housing.

Findings from the US Trans Survey indicate that, among transgender respondents in New York State:

- **21% had been evicted, denied housing, or otherwise discriminated against in the housing market because of being transgender.**

- **27% had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.**
- **11% had experienced homelessness in the last year because of being transgender.³⁰**

VIOLENCE

According to the Williams Institute, “LGBT people are nearly four times more likely than non-LGBT people to experience violent victimization, including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated or simple assault.”³¹ Transgender people in particular face disproportionate levels of violence. Among New York City respondents to the 2015 *NYS Needs Assessment* survey, 28% of trans and gender non-conforming individuals had faced physical violence, and 24% had experienced unfair treatment by police.³²

Violence deprives many LGBTQ+ individuals of access to resources for people experiencing homelessness, including emergency shelter and social safety net options to support the transition back into permanent housing. A 2017 Comptroller’s Office survey of LGBTQ+ New Yorkers found that only 30% of respondents who had experienced homelessness utilized the City’s shelter system. Of those that did enter shelter, 79% reported feeling very unsafe, 11% reported feeling unsafe, and only 11% reported feeling safe. Among respondents who felt safe in shelter, the most common reason cited for feeling unsafe was other shelter residents, followed by shelter staff and neighborhood residents.³³ 30% of New York respondents to the U.S. Trans Survey reported having avoided shelter out of fear of being “mistreated as a transgender person.”³⁴

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

CHPC conducted focus groups and interviews to ensure that this report incorporated firsthand knowledge of the lived experience of low-income LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. Although policymakers and social scientists are advancing crucial efforts to improve data around LGBTQ+ New Yorkers and their needs, the field is still relatively new, and many gaps remain. Supporting data with the perspectives of LGBTQ+ New Yorkers was a vital component of CHPC's research.

Brooklyn Community Pride Center (BCPC), Destination Tomorrow, and Translatinx Network supported CHPC in pulling together three focus groups, as well a series of individual interviews, with their constituents. CHPC logged basic demographic information and engaged in long-form discussion with dozens of LGBTQ+ New Yorkers representing all five boroughs. The focus group with Translatinx Network was conducted in both English and Spanish with simultaneous translation.

Throughout this report, CHPC provides quotes, edited and condensed for clarity, that elucidate many of the major arguments heard from community members.



“Quotes from CHPC interviewees and focus group participants appear in this format throughout the next chapter.”

EXISTING PROGRAMS

The City of New York has a history of providing specialized services, including housing services, to LGBTQ+ people. Efforts include:

- Stonewall House, the first NYCHA infill project, which is specifically geared towards LGBTQ+ seniors.
- A requirement for supportive housing providers in the NYC 15/15 program to provide specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth.³⁵
- Marsha's House, a shelter run by Project Renewal for LGBTQ+ young adults experiencing homelessness.
- Unity Works, a workforce program specifically for LGBTQ+ runaway and homeless youth.
- LGBTQ+ Community Outreach Workers - navigators for LGBTQ+ New Yorkers in the public hospital system.
- A partnership with Destination Tomorrow to provide temporary housing for sex workers.³⁶
- Dedicated LGBTQ+ liaisons in many City agencies.
- True Colors Residences, two supportive housing projects dedicated to LGBTQ+ youth run by Homeward NYC.
- Housing for people living with HIV, provided by HIV/ Aids Services Administration (HASA).
- A supportive housing building in the Bronx, run by the Jericho Project, for formerly homeless veterans and at-risk LGBTQ youth.³⁷
- Shared housing for LGBTQ+ youth, created by Ali Forney Center & Ascendant Neighborhood Development through HPD's ShareNYC pilot program.³⁸

These are only a few of many New York City programs that serve the needs of LGBTQ+ communities.

WHY A HOUSING PLAN?

In spite of the important efforts of both the City and its community partners, as the data shows, LGBTQ+ communities face housing instability resulting from a wide range of forces. For LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, increased vulnerability to homelessness is coupled with the fear of experiencing violence in homeless shelters.

New York must develop more safe and affordable housing, while simultaneously preserving LGBTQ+ enclaves in neighborhoods where LGBTQ+ people can find safety in numbers, access to LGBTQ+ affirming social services, and a sense of community. The City must eliminate provisions from affordable housing programs such as public housing and rental vouchers that effectively prevent LGBTQ+ people from being able to use them. Finally, New York must ramp up data collection to better understand the needs of LGBTQ+ people and reform policy to meet those needs.

**WE MUST RETHINK
OUR AFFORDABLE
HOUSING TOOLKIT
WITH A NEW LENS ON
LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES
TO BETTER MEET THE
NEEDS OF LGBTQ+
NEW YORKERS.**



HOUSING PLAN FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

NYC's housing plan can help secure the city's future as a haven for LGBTQ+ communities by leveraging housing policy to eliminate structural barriers to housing access, preserve housing affordability, ensure safety in communities, and better understand housing needs.

1. End the brutal bureaucracy.
2. Fund LGBTQ+ affirming housing specialists.
3. Preserve LGBTQ+ enclaves.
4. Help LGBTQ+ communities generate wealth through housing.
5. Reform building & zoning codes to empower diverse family arrangements.
6. Build more LGBTQ+ affirming senior housing.
7. Strengthen the housing system for LGBTQ+ youth.
8. Build more deeply affordable housing.
9. Prioritize location and community organizing for subsidized LGBTQ+ housing.
10. Improve data collection.

END THE BRUTAL BUREAUCRACY.

1

New York City's social safety net is vital to impoverished LGBTQ+ people, yet can be inefficient and overly complex. The bureaucratic barriers inherent to the mixture of funding streams, procedural and eligibility requirements that make up the social safety net are generally harmful to low-income people. As repeatedly noted by participants in CHPC focus groups, some barriers are particularly harmful to LGBTQ+ people. The City should take definitive steps to simplify the process by which New Yorkers in need can access public benefits.

It takes at least six months for a New Yorker experiencing homelessness to complete the byzantine, multi-step process to access an apartment that was set aside specifically for him, her, them, or any other pronoun someone may use. While the complexity of this process has negative impacts for anyone, it is especially problematic for LGBTQ+ people, in particular transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people, as these groups are more vulnerable to violence in the shelter system.



“It’s very difficult for the girls to get benefits... They get rejected. Everything is a no, so they feel like waste their time. It’s a process that people have to deal with emotionally, mentally. You have to have a lot of patience to... communicate.”

The systems used by City agencies to route people experiencing homelessness to supportive housing favors individuals who are frequent users of city shelters, excluding LGBTQ+ New Yorkers who avoid the shelter system.

HRA's Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS) and Standardized Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) determine the priority of each shelter resident for supportive housing. Various data sources determine an individual's priority, including the 2010e supportive housing application, which includes a combination of system contacts and functional impairments, as well as other “vulnerability factors.”³⁹

Consider the scenario of a homeless transgender woman who is out of the shelter system. She avoids formal healthcare system utilization because she has faced mistreatment from doctors due to her trans identity.⁴⁰ Other social service experiences were negative, and she is among the LGBTQ+ people below the poverty line who do not utilize social services.⁴¹ Nevertheless, she has a reasonable fear in the shelter system that she may be at risk of violence from other clients. Despite her vulnerability, her lack of system contacts may keep her at a lower priority for receiving supportive housing.



“You see MALE on my paper, you still call me ‘she.’ You see MALE on my ID, you see male on my birth certificate, everything says male, male, male, male, male... Stop disrespecting me! And literally that right there... mentally-wise, it messes me up, to the point that I’m going to get out, or I’m going to get locked up.”

We must implement streamlined processes for LGBTQ+ people and other individuals who are at risk in the shelter system (e.g., those at risk of gang violence) to move into supportive housing or receive housing vouchers in a manner that is more responsive to individual needs. While a coordinated entry system is necessary and useful, any such system should also take into account the needs of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness whose unique safety and security needs lead them to avoid the mainstream shelter system (a group which also includes veterans, for several reasons), or who are living in shelter but maintain a reasonable fear of being there.

Meanwhile, as New York State moves towards the decriminalization of sex work, it will be important to consider how housing policy can help break the cycle of poverty for people who engage in sex work, either by choice or as a matter of survival. Yet another example of brutal bureaucracy’s impacts on LGBTQ+ people, restrictions around rental assistance programs limit the ability of some LGBTQ+ New Yorkers to benefit from them.

As previously noted, a sizable portion of transgender communities engage in sex work. Some housing programs bar people with criminal histories, or a history of sex work in particular, from participating.⁴² Other programs do not mention sex work or have more liberal policies related to criminal history, but maintain strict documentation requirements for proving household income that would be impossible for someone who derives income from sex work to meet. Whether you believe that sex work is work, or that it is criminal activity to be discouraged, barring individuals engaged in sex work from the very housing programs and economic supports they need to avoid it is counter-productive.

To create a housing system that is responsive to LGBTQ+ community needs, we must improve and streamline the processes to gain access to housing and other social services. ■

FUND LGBTQ+ AFFIRMING HOUSING SPECIALISTS.

2

Landlord discrimination against LGBTQ+ people is a reality that has been repeatedly confirmed in empirical research, and was voiced by numerous community members participating in CHPC’s focus groups. To reduce landlord discrimination, assistance from an LGBTQ+-affirming housing navigator should be provided to all LGBTQ+ people who obtain housing vouchers. The navigator should serve as a partner in the housing search process and be available during interactions with landlords to guard against potential discrimination.



“When we do go to landlords, you have to be very skeptical, because you can never make a second first impression.”

The LGBTQ+ Community Outreach Worker initiative in the NYC Health and Hospitals system provides a successful precedent that the City can build from to create a program for LGBTQ+ housing navigators. Navigators must have manageable caseloads so that clients can receive individualized attention. The program should align with existing Safe Haven and Homebase programs to reach out to street homeless and unstably housed LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, and provide placement support services to those leaving incarceration and foster care. ■

PRESERVE LGBTQ+ ENCLAVES.

3

Community location matters, especially for LGBTQ+ communities and others that are vulnerable to violence and marginalization. Safety in numbers and community institutions are necessary to maintaining livelihoods. Low-income LGBTQ+ people have a long history of banding together in neighborhood enclaves to create these benefits for themselves and one another.

We must preserve these communities and protect them as havens for LGBTQ+ New Yorkers today and in the future.

The City has many tools at its disposal to preserve the built and residential composition of neighborhoods. Historic Districts are frequently used to protect the physical integrity of historically and culturally significant areas in New York City, despite the fact that their disproportionate application in Whiter, more affluent areas has often served to maintain the demographic makeup of those neighborhoods.⁴³ With the creation of Joint Live-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) in the 1980s, the City leveraged zoning to protect SoHo/NoHo as a hub for artists, who were moving to the area in increasing numbers. JLWQA exclusively allowed certified artists to live in SoHo/NoHo, although it was (and remains) zoned for manufacturing uses.⁴⁴

The ongoing process to rezone SoHo/NoHo has raised complex questions around the fairness of JLVQA, given the neighborhood's transformation into a predominantly White, affluent neighborhood over the last 30 years.⁴⁵ Still, JLVQA demonstrates the ability of policymakers to protect at-risk communities concentrated in a particular neighborhood. The City of New York acted to ensure that SoHo/NoHo could remain a haven for low-income artists. The City has – and has always had – a vested interest in preserving LGBTQ+ enclaves and the benefits they provide LGBTQ+ New Yorkers.

Increased safety, proximity to community networks and institutions, access to affirming social services, and other benefits of living in an LGBTQ+ enclave are important to the physical, mental, and economic health of low-income LGBTQ+ New Yorkers.

We cannot stop short of using the tools at our disposal to protect and preserve LGBTQ+ communities. Increasing affordable housing options in existing LGBTQ+ enclaves will give more low-income LGBTQ+ New Yorkers the opportunity to live in them. Zoning, tax, and financing tools can be leveraged toward this end by encouraging the creation of more deeply affordable housing in target neighborhoods, and making it easier for LGBTQ+ affirming housing providers to site projects in them.

It is equally important to ensure that the residents who built community in these neighborhoods are protected. The NYC Rent Freeze Program helps low-income seniors and New Yorkers with disabilities stay in rent-stabilized housing by capping their rental payments.⁴⁶ This model could be expanded and modified to target longstanding, low-income tenants in LGBTQ+ enclaves that are at risk of losing a critical mass of LGBTQ+ residents.

Health data, such as morbidity and mortality indicators, provide important insight into neighborhood conditions and needs. Poor health indicators often mirror housing and economic challenges faced by immigrant communities, communities of color, and LGBTQ+ communities alike. Using health data to identify target neighborhoods for housing policy interventions could help protect the community networks on which many New Yorkers rely.



“Let’s say it was a random apartment they gave me in a very, very upper-class nuclear family building somewhere in a wealthy neighborhood. I’m so grateful for the apartment, but I don’t feel at home. I also want more to housing. Housing is complex, it’s not just about a room. Something where there’s also community, location, access to community is kept in mind.”

Preserving and strengthening low-income LGBTQ+ enclaves also calls for increased support for the countless small businesses and non-profits that have helped build community in those neighborhoods.

Bars, restaurants, and other local retail often serve as central meeting places and community anchors in LGBTQ+ neighborhoods. Arts and cultural institutions, social service providers, and other non-profit organizations play an integral role in community support networks. We must prioritize the ability of nonprofits and local businesses that serve a particular community to stay in place.

While not a housing intervention in itself, there are many ways in which City housing agencies could help advance this goal. For example, when issuing RFPs for development sites in LGBTQ+ neighborhoods, HPD could prioritize development teams that include at least one LGBTQ+ affirming housing provider or organization — or proposals that provide ground-floor commercial and community facility spaces to tenants serving the LGBTQ+ community. ■

HELP LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES GENERATE WEALTH THROUGH HOUSING.

4

LGBTQ+ people face myriad disadvantages in aspiring to homeownership. Many LGBTQ+ individuals are excluded from intergenerational wealth transfer due to disconnection from their families. Along with lower incomes, barriers to economic opportunity, and discrimination in the housing market, this makes it more difficult for LGBTQ+ communities to obtain mortgages and afford housing. The National Community Reinvestment Coalition found “a consistent pattern of higher costs both in closing fees and interest rates for same-sex borrowers.” Same-sex couples from BIPOC communities, which have been systematically excluded from homeownership and the opportunity it provides to build intergenerational wealth, face even greater disadvantages.⁴⁷

Recognizing these challenges, the City should expand down payment assistance for LGBTQ+ borrowers. Down payment assistance programs are a highly effective tool for increasing access to homeownership among low- and moderate-income households. Studies have furthermore found no effect of down payment assistance on loan performance.⁴⁸

Down payment assistance is a low-risk way to increase homeownership in communities that have historically been excluded from its benefits.



“If I could design a program... I would first create a team that would be able to identify places in NYC to find queer people who are looking for affordable housing. So, that may include many shelters... major cultural centers, Brooklyn Community Pride Center, LGBT Center... It would be great to have a monopoly over a space. Housing projects specifically for LGBTQ people. An entire apartment building is bought, in a neighborhood that has some resources you can work with.”



“The government should put up the building and put it up just for us.”

There is a strong “for us, by us” ethic in BIPOC LGBTQ+ communities that informs Miss Ceyenne’s efforts, and others (like Audre Lorde Project’s aforementioned S.O.S. project). There are multiple pathways to empowering communities to create safe and affordable housing, and these methods have the enormous benefit of rebuilding the trust of BIPOC LGBTQ+ communities who have felt systematically excluded from, or even brutalized by, government programs. ■

When given the opportunity, LGBTQ+ communities can help meet their own housing needs in ways that also provide for the generation of community wealth.

One recent example is provided by Miss Ceyenne Doroshow, who was able to raise enough money to purchase an apartment building in Woodhaven/Ozone Park, where she is now providing housing for LGBTQ+ people. The City should encourage this kind of community action by providing loan assistance, with minimal strings attached, to members of marginalized communities who want to provide low-cost housing to their own community members.

REFORM BUILDING AND ZONING **5** CODES TO SUPPORT DIVERSE FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.

There is a strong concept in LGBTQ+ life of “chosen family.” Stemming from multiple factors—including family rejection, the need for LGBTQ+ people to find one another and build a cohesive structure for protection and love, the tradition of older LGBTQ+ people mentoring younger LGBTQ+ people in what communities recognize as a type of parent-child relationship—LGBTQ+ people tend to consider many people outside of their biological family as family. Some of us may recognize the concept of a “house” — a grouping of predominantly Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ people (with a strong transgender presence) — from the TV show *Pose*, the documentary *Paris Is Burning*, and, if you’re an LGBTQ+ person in New York City, simply living in community.

LGBTQ+ people have, through necessity, redefined family. Housing policy needs to catch up with this reality.

Current building and construction codes prevent the development of housing typologies best suited to meet the needs of non-nuclear family households. Outdated assumptions around family and community impact not only the physical housing stock but also the system to access housing, social services, and public benefits.

Even New Yorkers in relatively normative household arrangements can be negatively impacted by these restrictions. Code restrictions make it difficult to create studio apartments that would help meet overwhelming demand among single adults. Social service providers report that larger families experiencing homelessness often face more difficulty finding permanent housing.⁴⁹ The more irregular the family arrangement, the harder it is to find and afford suitable housing.

New York City’s regulatory framework does not provide for a broad enough conception of family, and prevents housing from being designed to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ families.

Diverse LGBTQ+ family arrangements date at least as far back as the 19th century. It is long past time to reform housing codes, housing placement processes for people experiencing homelessness, and other housing-related systems to match LGBTQ+ family life.

While some LGBTQ+ New Yorkers live in nontraditional family structures, some simply choose to live alone. Despite the fact that 32% of New York City households are comprised of single adults,⁵⁰ our housing codes prohibit SROs and micro-units that could serve as a useful housing resource for LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. SROs, which are currently operated as a housing service model, were once simply housing that could be rented on a flexible basis:

by the day, week, month, or year. This structure allowed single people to utilize low-cost housing depending on their need. However, the new construction of SROs has been prohibited for decades, and many former SROs have been converted.⁵¹ Those that have been preserved are often used for supportive housing, which is a critical model for chronically homeless and disabled New Yorkers, but cannot be accessed by someone who simply chooses to live alone and does not mind sharing facilities.

SROs went from being a housing option to a housing program, a change that limited both their flexibility and utility.⁵² Amending regulations to allow for SROs or micro-units would create critical housing resources for single adults in need of deeply affordable housing. ■

BUILD MORE LGBTQ+ AFFIRMING SENIOR HOUSING.



LGBTQ older adults need more housing and specialized services. In a 2017 survey of LGBTQ+ older adults in New York City, nearly one-quarter of respondents earned less than 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). LGBTQ+ older adults of color, as well as transgender and gender non-conforming older adults, reported living in substandard housing at disproportionately high rates. Many LGBTQ+ seniors are also aging with HIV/AIDS and other physical and mental health needs.⁵³

Many LGBTQ+ older adults are unable to rely on family and other social institutions that cisgender and straight seniors can depend on as they age.

In recent years, New York City has financed the construction of two new affordable housing buildings with services geared toward LGBTQ+ older adults. These efforts, led by SAGE, Help USA, and BFC partners, have created LGBTQ+ senior housing in Fort Greene, Brooklyn and Crotona Park in the Bronx. Another non-profit developer, Stonewall Community Development Corporation, is also building housing to serve the specific needs of LGBTQ+ seniors in New York City.

Despite these successful pilot programs, many of the diverse housing and care needs of LGBTQ+ older adults remain unmet. LGBTQ+ seniors appear to have greater needs for dementia support than their non-LGBTQ+ peers.⁵⁴ Violent attacks upon BIPOC people, especially older adults, emphasize the importance of physical safety, an ever-present need for LGBTQ+ populations.

The COVID-19 crisis is invariably re-traumatizing for an aging generation of LGBTQ+ people who experienced the mass death of their friends and lovers to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In a 2017 survey of LGBTQ+ older adults in New York City, 58% of nearly 1,000 respondents said that they were “likely to leave current housing for a financial or health or safety reason.”⁵⁵ At the same time, two out of three respondents indicated wanting to stay in their current housing for at least the next five years, demonstrating the need for a variety of programs to help people age in place, including supportive services, financial assistance, and housing stability programs.⁵⁶

New York must build on the examples set by recent pilot projects to meet the housing and care needs of LGBTQ+ seniors. By pairing City resources with the experience and expertise of community partners, we can ensure that LGBTQ+ communities have access to safe and healthy housing as they age. ■

STRENGTHEN THE HOUSING SYSTEM FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH.

7

Despite growing rhetorical and political emphasis on LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in the last decade, the LGBTQ+ youth community is still underserved, and more resources must be devoted to meeting its housing needs. Housing policies should be redesigned to enable LGBTQ+ youth to live in ways more aligned with how they have traditionally built community.

Housing programs for youth do not provide the same level of flexibility that more privileged youth have. Stably housed youth with financial resources and family support can choose to live with multiple roommates, in smaller groupings, or, if they choose to live on their own, they can eventually save to afford that. Youth in the homeless services system typically have more restrictions on who they can live with, and it is often difficult to use voucher programs with roommates or changing housing arrangements.

Housing programs for youth should make it easier to add people to a lease or occupancy agreement after the initial signing, and allow youth to retain housing vouchers even when their living situation changes.



“I feel like there’s this whole stereotype where it’s like ‘Hey, I’m homeless,’ boom, there’s housing! No, that is not how it goes. If I knew that, I would have taken that a little more into consideration before my parents did what they had to do... ‘Oh hey, you’re homeless, and you’re also LGBT? Well then give me housing!’ No. That’s a myth. That’s a lie, get that delusion out of your head.”

Adults receiving rental assistance through City FHEPS can combine their vouchers to rent an apartment together. Youth recipients should be allowed to benefit from the same flexibility. The City is launching a pilot program to encourage youth to combine vouchers in summer 2021; we strongly encourage this experimentation. In supportive housing, a more robust Moving On program would help young adults transition into a less structured setting.

Homelessness prevention is also critical for LGBTQ+ youth. New York City funds efforts to connect youth in the foster care system with non-parental kin who could potentially provide a home. Similar efforts should target LGBTQ+ youth in shelters who may have been disowned by their parents, but have supportive extended family members. There is a dearth of services for LGBTQ+ young adults, and most youth experiencing homelessness are served

by shelters for families and single adults.⁵⁷ This suggests, as per the analysis of Chapin Hall, that the City should “develop a strategy for coordination, knowledge sharing, and smooth transitions between youth and family services in the city,” and also “pilot and evaluate flexible, quickly deployable non-residential intervention options.” These may include cash assistance, as well as rapid rehousing, more coordinated interagency case management, kinship and other “natural supports in the community” that could keep youth out of homelessness, or strengthen their ability to get out of homelessness.⁵⁸ ■



“Because of my age, I was given Single Room Occupancy in a building that secured me a room. Whoever my other roommates were, there were many dimensions of street life, so be it. The accountability and stability was on me having my own room. That gave me an opportunity to grow whatever way I could.”

BUILD MORE DEEPLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

8

Discourse and advocacy on LGBTQ+ housing emphasizes the needs of youth and older adults, but, to paraphrase a local organizer: low-income LGBTQ+ people turn 25 every day.

Housing for LGBTQ+ populations must not be limited to young adults and older adults; people of all ages in between face serious housing needs as well.

This calls for the creation of more deeply affordable housing, particularly within the 0-30% AMI band. The City should prioritize projects serving extremely and very low-income households, and streamline the development process so that housing resources are made available sooner.

The development of affordable housing for extremely low-income households must be paired with rental assistance to cover operating costs and ensure continuing affordability over the long term. In order to benefit LGBTQ+ communities, rental assistance programs must be designed and administered in an affirming manner. Programs must accommodate grey market economic activity and nontraditional household structures, and be inclusive of the TGGNC communities whose documents may not match their identity.



“What people don’t know about New York LGBT housing is - does it exist? I did a lot of calling around... are there services for adults, if you’re LGBT?”

Federal action on the creation of a Universal Section 8 program would have a transformational impact on allowing all New Yorkers to live in affordable housing.⁵⁹

There are also models for supporting LGBTQ+, and TGGNC communities specifically, that New York City could replicate. The City of San Francisco’s program Our Trans Home SF includes a rental subsidy for TGGNC people who are at risk of homelessness, as well as an 18-room house with supportive services for TGGNC people currently experiencing homelessness.⁶⁰ Los Angeles provides transitional housing specifically for TGGNC people.⁶¹

New York should join other major cities in funding innovative forms of TGGNC and LGBTQ+ housing. ■

PRIORITIZE LOCATION AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING IN SUBSIDIZED LGBTQ+ HOUSING.

9

Stonewall House, a housing development with targeted services for LGBTQ+ older adults, is a collaboration between SAGE, NYC's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), NYCHA, and BFC Partners. It was built as an infill project adjacent to two NYCHA developments in Fort Greene - Whitman and Ingersoll Houses. While Stonewall House is remarkable in that it is the first example of LGBTQ+ targeted senior housing, its opening shortly before the onset of COVID-19 has caused some setbacks. While Stonewall House has a strong tenant organization, the COVID-19 crisis has limited the ability of Stonewall House tenants to build relationships with their neighbors in Ingersoll and Whitman Houses, including LGBTQ+ residents and allies.

Following the example of Stonewall House, which is located in a BIPOC LGBTQ+ enclave, future developments serving LGBTQ+ communities should be sited in or near existing LGBTQ+ hubs.



“Let’s say you’ve gone and gotten an apartment. I’m the only queer person in the building, and maybe I don’t see a lot of people like me in the neighborhood. To get to other community or other resources, I’m a bit far away, I don’t feel so comfortable, you know?”

Although COVID-19 created unanticipated barriers for Stonewall House, the example highlights the importance of community organizing and the need for organizing efforts to support new LGBTQ+ housing developments in the future.

The City should directly support organizing efforts to ensure that tenants of new, government supported-projects are able to build connections with their LGBTQ+ neighbors and access community support networks. ■

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION. 10

Strides are being made at both the federal and municipal levels to improve the collection of data relating to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE). The U.S. Census Bureau will begin collecting SOGIE information in the American Community Survey, a key source of demographic data for policymakers, as early as 2021.⁶² These changes will provide for greater clarity than the overly simplistic questions currently included in the survey. In New York City, Local Law 128 of 2016 and Local Law 76 of 2018 require City social service agencies to collect SOGIE information. However, many government tools for data collection still either lack SOGIE questions altogether, or include SOGIE questions of limited scope.

Meanwhile, LGBTQ+ people may avoid survey takers or be reticent to share their information with the very systems that have victimized them in the past.

Research has shown that “concealment” in data collection stems from the fear of being identified or located by systemic actors such as police, immigration enforcement, and landlords. These issues, which account for some of the biggest gaps in data on people experiencing homelessness, increase the potential for inaccuracies and make reliable data more difficult to collect.⁶³

Best practices for SOGIE data collection include: create a safe environment and train data collection staff; specify what is being collected and provide definitions or introductions when warranted; assess gender identity and sex assigned at birth with a two-step approach (with limited exceptions); acknowledge that identities can be complex and culturally specific; and plan how the data will be analyzed and reported.⁶⁴

Along with embracing these best practices, New York City could improve data collection by:

- **Including SOGIE questions in the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS);**
- **Including SOGIE questions in surveys that track housing discrimination, access to credit and mortgages, and related issues;**
- **Prioritizing and expanding data collection around LGBTQ+ New Yorkers experiencing homelessness;**
- **Shaping methods and strengthening protections to help New Yorkers feel comfortable sharing information with data collectors;**
- **Working with State agencies that provide housing to facilitate data sharing. ■**

A HOUSING PLAN FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES



- END THE BRUTAL BUREAUCRACY.** 1
- FUND LGBTQ+ AFFIRMING HOUSING SPECIALISTS.** 2
- PRESERVE LGBTQ+ ENCLAVES.** 3
- HELP LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES BUILD WEALTH THROUGH HOUSING.** 4
- REFORM BUILDING AND ZONING CODES TO EMPOWER DIVERSE FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.** 5
- BUILD MORE LGBTQ+ AFFIRMING SENIOR HOUSING.** 6
- STRENGTHEN THE HOUSING SYSTEM FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH.** 7
- BUILD MORE DEEPLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** 8
- PRIORITIZE LOCATION AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR SUBSIDIZED LGBTQ+ HOUSING.** 9
- IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION.** 10

CITATIONS

1. Chauncey, G. (1994/2019). *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940 (Updated Edition)*. New York, NY: Basic Books.; Ryan, H. (2019). *When Brooklyn Was Queer*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
2. Schulman, S. (2013). *Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
3. Martinez, A. "Queer Cosmopolis: The Evolution of Jackson Heights," In Doan, P. (ed.) *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces*. New York, NY: Routledge, p. 167-180.
4. The use of Latinx and other related terms is discussed in: Noe-Bustamante, L., Mora, L., & Lopez, M.H. (2020). "*About One-in-Four U.S. Hispanics Have Heard of Latinx, but Just 3% Use It*." Pew Research Center.
5. Stabbe, O. (April 11, 2016). "*Queens and queers: The rise of drag ball culture in the 1920s*." Blog Post, National Museum of American History Behring Center. Accessed April 2021. History of the ball community is also detailed in: Chauncey, *Gay New York*; Ryan, *When Brooklyn Was Queer*.
6. A recounting of the importance of the piers and the efforts to save them can be found in: Goh, K. (2015). "Place/Out: Planning for Radical Queer Activism," In Doan, P. (ed.) *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces*. New York, NY: Routledge, p. 217:234.
7. Id.
8. *Rusa LGBT Homepage*. Accessed April 2021.
9. Gieseeking, J. J. (2020). *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
10. For more info, please visit: <https://chpcny.org/making-room/>.
11. Green, E.R., Maurer, L.M. (2015). "*Glossary of Terms*," The Teaching Transgender Toolkit: A Facilitator's Guide to Increasing Knowledge, Decreasing Prejudice & Building Skills. Ithaca, NY: Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes; InterACT Advocates for Intersex Youth. (2021). "*Intersex definitions*."; Human Rights Campaign. (n.d.) "*Glossary of Terms*."
12. Movement Advancement Project (2020). *The Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ Households in the U.S.*, p. 2-3.
13. Badgett, M.V. L., Choi, S.K., & Wilson, B.D.M. (2019). "LGBT Poverty in the United States: A study of differences between sexual orientation and gender identity groups." The Williams Institute at UCLA.
14. Romero, A.P., Goldberg, S.K., & Vasquez, L.A. (2020). *LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination, and Homelessness*. The Williams Institute at UCLA.
15. Frazer, M.S. & Howe, E.E (2016). *LGBT Health and Human Services Needs in New York State: A Report from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment*. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center: New York, NY, p.3.
16. Ibid.
17. Frazer, M. S., Dumont, M. S., & Howe, E. E. (2017). Custom Data Request: Transgender and Gender Nonconforming New Yorkers: An analysis of data from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment. Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc.
18. Frazer, M.S. & Howe, E.E (2016). *LGBT Health and Human Services Needs in New York State: A Report from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment*. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center: New York, NY, p. 3.
19. Id., p. 4
20. James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, p. 158.

21. Kaplan, J., & Sapient, J. (December 7, 2020). *"NYPD cops cash in on sex trade arrests with little evidence, while Black and Brown New Yorkers pay the price."* *ProPublica*. Accessed April 2021.
22. Romero, A.P., Goldberg, S.K., & Vasquez, L.A. (2020). *LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination, and Homelessness*. The Williams Institute at UCLA.
23. Frazer, M.S. & Howe, E.E (2016). *LGBT Health and Human Services Needs in New York State: A Report from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment*. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center: New York, NY, p. 3.
24. Id., p. 4.
25. Frazer, MS, Howe, E. Dumont, M.S. and Montiel, K. (2017). *Housing for LGBTQ Older Adults in New York City: Survey Results*. New York: Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc. and Stonewall Community Development Corporation, p. 6.
26. Ibid.
27. Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). *Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund, p. 5.; Frazer, M.S. & Howe, E.E (2016). *LGBT Health and Human Services Needs in New York State: A Report from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment*. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center: New York, NY, p. 22.
28. Id., pg. 3
29. Id., pg. 3
30. *2015 U.S. Transgender Survey: New York State Report*. (2017). Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, p. 2.
31. Flores, A.R., Langton, L., Meyer, I.H., & Romero, A.P. "Victimization rates and traits of sexual and gender minorities in the United States: Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017." *Science Advances* 6: no. 4 (2020). DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aba6910.
32. Frazer, M. S., Dumont, M. S., & Howe, E. E. (2017). Custom Data Request: Transgender and Gender Nonconforming New Yorkers: An analysis of data from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment. Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc.
33. Schechter-Steinberg, Z., Saltonstall, D., & Holguin, E. (2017). *Results of a Survey of LGBTQ+ New Yorkers*. The Office of the NYC Comptroller, Bureau of Policy and Research.
34. *2015 U.S. Transgender Survey: New York State Report*. (2017). Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, p. 2.
35. NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) (2017). "Request for Proposals: Provision of Congregate Supportive Housing.," NYC HRA (2017). "Request for Proposals: Provision of Scattered-Site Supportive Housing for Young Adult Families."
36. Murphy, T. (March 11, 2021). *"Sean Coleman Made His Dreams Of Housing for NYC's Trans/GNC Sex Workers Come True."* *TheBody*. Accessed April 2021.
37. REW Staff (July 11, 2015). *"Construction Starts on Homes for Veterans, LGBT Youth."* The Jericho Project, originally published in Real Estate Weekly (REW).
38. Ascendant Neighborhood Development Corporation (2020). *"ShareNYC Project Gains Momentum,"* Blog Post, accessed June 2021.
39. NYC HRA (2019). *"Understanding the New York City Standardized Vulnerability Assessment."* PowerPoint Presentation, accessed April 2021.
40. *2015 U.S. Transgender Survey: New York State Report*. (2017). Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, p. 3.
41. Frazer, M.S. & Howe, E.E (2016). *LGBT Health and Human Services Needs in New York State: A Report from the 2015 LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment*. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center: New York, NY, p. 19.
42. Breakstone, C. (2015). *"I Don't really Sleep': Street-Based Sex Work, Public Housing Rights, and Harm Reduction."* *CUNY Law Review* 18: no. 2.; New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) (October 14, 2020). *"New York City Housing Authority Changes to Policies Related to Criminal Justice,"* Request for Public Comment, accessed April 2021.

43. Ellen, I.G., McCabe, B.J., Torrats-Espinosa, G. (2020). *"How Can Historic Preservation Be More Inclusive? Learning from NYC's Historic Districts,"* In *Preservation and Social Inclusion* (ed. Erica Avrami), New York: NY, Columbia Press.
44. "Envision SoHo/NoHo" (2019). Report prepared by BfJ Consultants for the Envision SoHo/NoHo Working Group. Available at: <https://www.envisionsohonoho.nyc/>.
45. See for example: Kang, S. & Katz, J. (2020). *"Rezoning SoHo/NoHo for a More Equitable New York City."* Citizens Housing & Planning Council (CHPC).
46. NYC Department of Finance (2018). *2018 Report on the New York City Rent Freeze Program*, p. 2-4.
47. Richardson, J. & Shakira, K.K. (2020). *"Same Sex Couples and Mortgage Lending."* National Community Reinvestment Coalition.
48. See, for example: Stegman, M. Riley, S.F., & Quercia, R.G. (2019). *"A Cautionary Tale of How the Presence and Type of Down Payment Assistance Affects the Performance of Affordable Mortgage Loans."* Working Paper prepared for the Center for Household Financial Stability at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.; Freeman, A. & Harden, J.J. (2014). "Affordable Homeownership: The Incidence and Effect of Down Payment Assistance." *Journal of Housing Policy Debate* 25, no. 2: 308-319. DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2014.915226.
49. Focus groups & interviews with housing providers & practitioners, conducted by CHPC for its *Housing Plan for LGBTQ+ Communities* during March and April 2021. See more on pg. 32 of this report.
50. CHPC *Making Room* analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 1-Year Estimates for the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS).
51. Stern, Eric & Yager, Jessica. *"21st Century SROs: Can Small Housing Units Help Meet the Need for Affordable Housing in New York City?"* NYU Furman Center, February 2018.; Sullivan, Brian J. & Burke, Jonathan. "Single-Room Occupancy Housing in New York City: The Origins and Dimensions of a Crisis." *CUNY Law Review* 17, no. 1 (2014): 113-143. <https://www.doi.org/10.31641/clr170104>.
52. Ionova, M. (June 3, 2013). *"The \$80-a-Week, 60-Square-Foot Housing Solution That's Also Totally Illegal."* *Next City*. Accessed April 2021.
53. Frazer, MS, Howe, E. Dumont, M.S. and Montiel, K. (2017). *Housing for LGBTQ Older Adults in New York City: Survey Results*. New York: Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc. and Stonewall Community Development Corporation, p. 6.
54. Matias, D. (July 17, 2019). *"LGBTQ Americans Could Be At Higher Risk for Dementia, Study Finds."* NPR.
55. Frazer, MS, Howe, E. Dumont, M.S. and Montiel, K. (2017). *Housing for LGBTQ Older Adults in New York City: Survey Results*. New York: Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc. and Stonewall Community Development Corporation, p. 11 & 24.
56. Id., p. 24.
57. Figures are for New York State. Data retrieved March 2021 from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) *"State of Homelessness: 2020 Edition"* data dashboard.
58. Morton, M.H., Kull, M.A., Chávez, R., Chrisler, A. J., Carreon, E., & Bishop, J. (2019). *A Youth Homelessness System Assessment for New York City*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
59. Yglesias, M. (July 9, 2020). *"Joe Biden's surprisingly visionary housing plan, explained."* *Vox*.
60. Our Trans Home SF (2019). *"Services."* Accessed March 2021.
61. Flores, J. (November 19, 2019). *"In race to house homeless, LA makes space for transgender women."* *Curbed*. Accessed March 2021.
62. Personal Communication with Meghan Maury, in their personal capacity, May 11, 2021.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.





CHPC
NEW YORK CITY

CITIZENS
HOUSING
PLANNING
COUNCIL