

CHICAGO LGBT COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

DATA SUMMARY
PRESENTATION
2012

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In September 2011, The LGBT Community Fund Steering Committee retained Morten Group to conduct a needs assessment for the LGBT community¹ in the Chicago metro area. The purpose of the needs assessment was twofold: **1) to gather data about the assets, needs and challenges of the LGBT community in the Chicagoland area to 2) inform future funding decisions of the Steering Committee.**

¹Please note that the phrase "LGBT community" is used throughout this report as an umbrella term to refer to all individuals who identify as LGBTQ. However, the term is something of a misnomer as "the LGBT community" is not monolithic, which is a commonly held misconception. While this term is used for simplicity and brevity, it should be underscored that Chicago's "LGBT community" in fact consists of many overlapping smaller communities and subcultures. Moreover, not all individuals who identify as LGBT take part in community life within the structured settings reflected in the institutions and organizing models represented within this report.

OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data were collected over an 11-week field period from October to December of 2011, using a "snowball" sampling method where four main data collection methods were utilized:

1. Online surveys
2. Community drop boxes with data collection cards
3. Focus groups
4. Individual interviews

The following report contains both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data collected.

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS

Data was collected from a diverse respondent pool of over 2,000 Chicagoans representing a wide variety of sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, races, socioeconomic backgrounds and residential areas. Demographics differed considerably between data collection vehicles; this report presents major demographic highlights across the four instruments of data collection, and subsequently provides specific characteristics of the respondents for each respective data collection vehicle.

KEY IDENTIFIED NEEDS FROM LGBT COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY

The report is divided into two main sections. The first section of the report focuses on five key needs in the Chicago LGBT community as identified by survey takers, the survey being by far the largest data collection vehicle. The five major needs identified include:

1. Affordable health services and care
2. Employment
3. Access to government benefits, rights and services
4. Discrimination
5. Community safety and violence

KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES FROM MULTIPLE DATA TOOLS

The second section of the report focuses on seven major themes found across multiple data collection vehicles. These seven themes are:

1. Senior needs
2. Similarities between youth needs and senior needs
3. Family needs

4. Needs of the unemployed and underemployed
5. Diversity within the community
6. The impact of the recession on the community
7. The need to focus financial resources on existing services and under-served areas

COMPARATIVE DATA

An extensive amount of data was collected through this process and where possible, a comparative analysis was conducted with similar local and national studies, and other qualitative research. Most of the comparison data used, as with most studies, was designed to highlight targeted findings about specific populations and where possible, provide comparisons.

The LGBT Community Needs Assessment, in contrast, was conducted to provide a broader view of the many communities that comprise Chicago's LGBT community at large and utilize the existing data selected to make comparisons to relevant categories throughout our data analyses. Further, because of the diversity of respondents represented within the data collected by the LCNA, the capacity to make greater comparisons among sub-groups within Chicago's LGBT community now exists.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concluding section of the report outlines concrete funding recommendations based upon the data collection. This report is supplemented by a companion process report that includes all documents used in data collection, as well as further funding recommendations from individual interviews with community stakeholders.

MORTEN GROUP

Morten Group, led by President Mary F. Morten, was established in November 2001 to focus on clients in the nonprofit, for-profit, and foundation fields. Morten Group provides a customized approach to solve organizational and resource development challenges and to explore new opportunities. Morten Group offers expertise in building communities of inclusion and access, succession planning, trustee recruitment and retention, and film and video production.

WHEN SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED TO IDENTIFY THE TOP LGBT COMMUNITY ISSUE IN CHICAGO THAT NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED:



TOP 7 KEY IDENTIFIED THEMES ACROSS DATA TOOLS

1. Unique Needs of LGBT Seniors:

LGBT seniors face serious needs in the areas of affordable housing, access to governmental and nonprofit resources, feeling safe to access those resources, vocational services and health care.

“There needs to be a more visible group of LGBT community elders for those who are more isolated...”

2. Commonalities Between LGBT Seniors and Youth:

LGBT youth and seniors have a great deal in common when it comes to needs. However, in addition to needing housing, resources, employment and health-care support, youth are also facing safety issues, including feeling unsafe while navigating their community and feeling targeted by the police.

“My life would have been so much easier if they had more services for GLBT teens/youth...”

3. Supports Needed by LGBT Families:

LGBT families with children report needing child care assistance

and support around helping their child(ren) to deal with bullying from other children. Some respondents also reported the need for support groups/opportunities for same-sex couple children to interact and develop friendships.

4. Needs of the Unemployed and the Underemployed:

Livable wages, accessing government support programs, needing strong employment networks, and having the Chicago Police Department respond to one’s needs were listed as top needs across groups.

“More resources [are] needed for bus fare to get back and forth to job interviews, job training...”

5. Diversity and the LGBT Community:

Many participants urged the LGBT community as a whole to begin to recognize and celebrate its own diversity. The community has many strengths, including its diversity (economic, cultural, racial, occupational and wide ranging skills), creativity, determination to be treated equally and resilience.

“We need to transcend racial and geographic barriers. There is not a lot of intersectional work being done...”

6. The Recession and the Impact on the LGBT Community:

Unemployment and under-employment are exacerbated by discrimination. Like many other communities, the recession has affected the LGBT community, but this impact is compounded by the additional discrimination that members face as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity.

“When jobs are more scarce, any type of difference: gender non-conforming, race...it’s already hard, so it becomes harder.”

7. Existing Resources and Under-served Areas:

In this economic climate, resource providers serving the LGBT community face serious funding challenges. Therefore, the focus should be on how to 1) best utilize existing resources/ maximize results; and 2) support new innovative practices in underserved areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Morten Group LGBT Needs Assessment Team was very fortunate to have a broad base of support and participation in this data collection effort.

Thank you to the more than 60 community and business organizations that served as community partners and the more than 20 LGBT leaders and allies in the Chicagoland area who publicized, supported and participated in the data collection activities.*

We are deeply grateful to everyone who filled out a survey or data card, participated in a focus group, or completed a telephone interview.

We are also grateful to Loyola University Chicago’s Center for Urban Research and Learning, particularly David Van Zytveld, Koonal Patel, Will Bolton and Gina Lopez, for their support during the early stages of the development of the Needs Assessment project as well as their comparison data analysis efforts during the final stages of the process.

Special thanks are also due to Dr. Bianca Wilson of the Williams Institute, Dr. Lourdes Torres of DePaul University, Dr. James H. Lewis of The Chicago Community Trust, and Jason Cox of the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce, for their invaluable input regarding the development of the online survey.

Thanks are also given to our eight facilitators and interviewers for their hard work and dedication to the project: Tony Alvarado-Rivera, Simon Aronoff, Cece Lobin, Ryan Meher, Mairita Smiltars, Christina Smith, Alicia T. Vega, and Marisol Ybarra.

We thank the Steering Committee of The LGBT Community Fund - James L. Alexander (Co-Chair), Prudence R. Beidler (Co-Chair), Ramesh Ariyanayakam, Denise C. Foy, Ken O’Keefe, Judith C. Rice, and Patrick Sheahan – as well as The Chicago Community Trust, The Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust, and the Francis Beidler III and Prudence R. Beidler Foundation for funding the needs assessment and for their commitment

to providing philanthropic support to underrepresented and often marginalized populations.

Thank you to the reporters, public media professionals and bloggers who took the time to cover the Needs Assessment: Stephen Chaitman of The Windy City Times, Belhú Sanabria of La Raza, Emmanuel García of Homofrecuencia, Anna DeShawn of The Anna DeShawn Show, Rod McCullom of Rod 2.0 and the writing teams at In Our Words blog and XQSi Magazine.

Special note of thanks for the exemplary leadership and dedication provided by Liz Thomson for serving as our Asian Language Liaison, Andrea Densham for her efforts surrounding the Evanston focus group, and Tracy Baim for graciously providing essential contact information and the support of Windy City Times with numerous articles.

*A list of participating organizations, businesses and LGBT leaders and allies can be found at <http://www.lgbtfund.org> and at <http://mortengroup.com/lgbtneedsassessment.php>.