

Southern Survey Key Findings: *Business and Employment Conditions of LGBTQ Southerners*

Ryan M. Roemerma, Eric R. Wright, Joshua Simpkins, Michael Jo Saint,
Ana LaBoy, Renee Shelby, Courtni Andrews, and Madison Higbee

This fact sheet provides key findings from responses provided by 6,502 LGBTQ¹ adults who completed the LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey living in *Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, or West Virginia*. Overall study design and methodology is available in the full study protocol.²

CORPORATE RESPONSE TO ANTI-LGBT LEGISLATION

LGBT Southerners want corporations and their leaders to take a stand against anti-LGBT efforts

When state governments are threatening to pass, or have already passed, anti-LGBT legislation LGBTQ Southerners overwhelmingly want companies to commit to supporting their LGBT community and employees:

72%

Want companies to support LGBT communities and employees in the state

29%

Want companies to threaten to pull their company of the state

26%

Want companies to not conduct business in the state

To stop passage of anti-LGBT legislation:

- 40.4% of believe company leadership should meet with elected officials
- 23.2% believe the company CEO or owner should speak out against proposed legislation
- 16.7% believe the company should give money to organizations working to stop anti-LGBT legislation

LGBT Southerners know how to use their purchasing power. In the past year:

- 70.4% of LGBT Southerners decided *to buy* a product/service because the company that provides it is supportive of LGBT rights
- 75.2% of LGBT Southerners decided *not to buy* a product/service because the company that provides it is not supportive of LGBT rights

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

The majority of LGBT Southerners work in for-profit companies or in the government

- 43.8% are employed by a for-profit company
- 25.2% are employed by either the local (6.3%) state (15.7%) or federal (3.2%) government
- 18.6% are employed at a non-profit agency
- 11.9% are self-employed

More than half report their company doesn't offer LGBT (cultural) competency training

- 22% of LGBT Southerners report their company offers a LGBT cultural competency training
- 77.9% report their company either does not offer a training (52.5%) or they don't know (25.4%)

Most respondents report their companies have non-discrimination policies³ but transgender employees are less likely to feel they are upheld

- 56.7% report they work for a company that has a non-discrimination policy that protects sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Only 58.6% of transgender employees feel its upheld, compared to 81.5% of cisgender men and 71.1% of cisgender women employees

Most respondents say their company does not have an LGBT employee resource group (ERG⁴)

- 53.9% report their company does not have an ERG
- 32.9% don't know if their company has an ERG
- 13.2% report their company has an ERG

¹ LGBTQ means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning. During the survey period LGBT was used; the fact sheet reflects this.

² Wright, Eric R., Ryan M. Roemerma, and Madison Higbee. 2018. *LGBTQ Institute Southern Survey: Design and Methodological Overview*. Atlanta, GA: The LGBTQ Institute at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Available at: www.lgbtqsouthernsurvey.org

Wright, Eric R. 2017. Community Partner Information Packet, was available to survey partners at: www.lgbtqinstitute.org/southernsurvey17

³ A policy that protects sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

⁴ An ERG is a voluntary, employee-led group whose goal is to foster diversity and inclusion in the workplace in accordance with the company's mission and values.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Transgender people and those who identify as other gender are less likely to work full-time

- 44.2% of transgender and 46.2% of other gender respondents report working full-time; compared to 59.2% who identify as cisgender men and 54.4% who identify as cisgender women

Overall unemployment is low; but Hispanic LGBT Southerners report higher rates

- Overall, LGBT Southerners report lower unemployment rates (2.8%) than the national average* of around 4% during the survey period
- Hispanics are more likely to be unemployed (5.5%) than other LGBT Southerners

ACCEPTANCE AND OUTNESS AT WORK

Younger workers are less likely to be “out” about their sexuality with people they work closely with compared to older workers

- 36.9% of 18-29 year old employees are “out” compared to 65.8% of 50-59 year old employees

LGB employees feel their workplace is accepting of their sexual orientation; bisexual and other sexual orientations are less likely to be “out”

- The majority of LGB Southerners report their workplace is very (48.6%) or somewhat (38.4%) accepting of their sexual orientation. 13% report their workplace is not too (9.5%) or not at all (3.5%) accepting of lesbian, gay, or bisexual people
- Gay and lesbian employees are much more likely to be “out” to all or most coworkers (approximately 64%) than employees who identify as bisexual (20.7%) or some other sexuality (33.2%)

Transgender employees are less likely to be “out” to coworkers or feel accepted

- Transgender respondents report their workplace is very (28.8%) or somewhat accepting (40.1%) of transgender employees. 31.1% report their workplace is not too accepting (18.5%) or not at all accepting (12.6%) of transgender employees
- Over half (54.7%) of transgender employees are “out” about their transgender identity to only a few (21.3%) or none (33.4%) of the people they work closely with at their job

EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination in the Workplace

Across the board transgender Southerners are routinely discriminated and harassed at much higher rates than their LGB peers (*see table below*). Transgender people are:

- Three times more likely to have been denied a job and twice as likely to be physically harassed or harassed verbally or in writing
- Twice as likely to either stay in a job they would have preferred to leave or have left a job because of discrimination
- Transgender Southerners are less likely to seek promotions, talk about personal topics, or participate in social activities with coworkers

<i>In the past 12 months have you...</i>	<i>LGB</i>	<i>Transgender</i>
Avoided talking about personal topics with coworkers, supervisors, or bosses	59.4%	76.4%
Avoided participating in after work social activities with coworkers, supervisors, or bosses	34.7%	54.0%
Stayed in a job you would prefer to leave	15.0%	35.2%
Been harassed verbally or in writing by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	12.9%	24.7%
Changed jobs	9.2%	20.2%
Did not seek a promotion or raise	9.0%	22.9%
Been sexually harassed by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	6.0%	6.9%
Denied a job you applied for	4.8%	19.8%
Received a negative job evaluation	3.9%	10.9%
Denied a promotion	3.8%	8.5%
Fired from a job	3.0%	7.3%
Been physically harassed by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	2.5%	5.0%
Been sexually assaulted by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	0.9%	1.8%
Been physically assaulted by another co-worker, supervisor or boss	0.6%	2.1%

* The national unemployment average throughout the duration of the survey period was between 4.1% and 4.4%. National Council of State Legislatures: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/national-employment-monthly-update.aspx>