

# Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America

April 2018

*Foundational evidence for understanding the scale, scope, and urgency of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness in America*

As a nation, we have an obligation to keep our young people out of harm's way so that they can lead productive lives and contribute fully to our communities. Every day of housing instability and the associated stress represents a missed opportunity to support healthy development and transitions to productive adulthood. Voices of Youth Count gives voice to young people across America who lack the support they need to achieve independence.

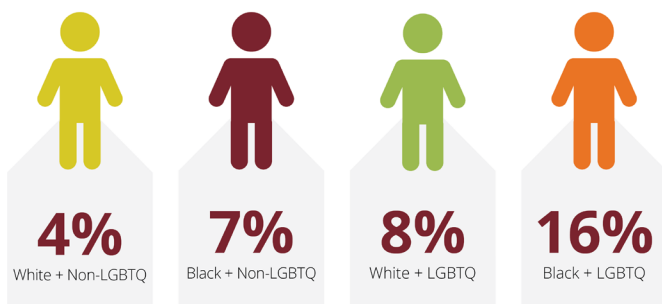
*Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America* is among the first national assessments of the increased risks that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) young people face when they experience homelessness. The findings show that LGBTQ young adults are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness as their non-LGBTQ peers.

They are also at greater risk for experiencing high levels of hardship, including higher rates of assault, trauma, exchanging sex for basic needs, and early death. Black LGBTQ youth, especially young men, have the highest rates of homelessness.

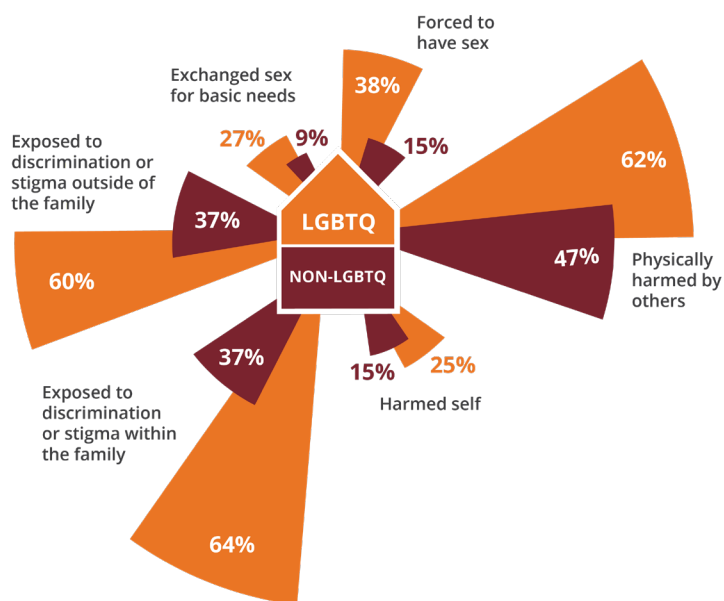
Although the challenges facing LGBTQ youth are sizable, Voices of Youth Count also points to solutions that can help protect youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. By acting on these recommendations, we can help shape positive and healthier futures for our young people, our communities, and our nation. Young adults want to be accepted and seen not simply for their sexual or gender identity, but as holistic and valuable human beings with multidimensional identities and stories of both struggle and resilience.

**No more missed opportunities.**

Youth who are black *and* LGBTQ reported the highest rates of homelessness



LGBTQ youth endured especially high levels of adversity among youth experiencing homelessness



## Recommendations

1. Provide enhanced **training to providers** to identify and respond to the trauma and hardship faced by this population.
2. Engage **LGBTQ youth as full partners** in strengthening systems and services.
3. Encourage community organizations working with runaway and homeless youth to initiate **more sensitive data** collection about sexual orientation and gender identity.
4. Enhance **guidance in federal grants that serve young people** so these resources can better support LGBTQ and minority LGBTQ youth.
5. **Locate LGBTQ-sensitive outreach, services, and housing options** in or near predominantly black and multiracial communities **equitably**.
6. Evaluate the **most promising interventions** to determine their effectiveness for LGBTQ youth. The federal government can take the lead by providing evaluation funding for core interventions.