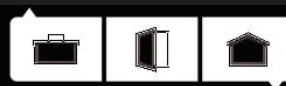


# PITTSBURGH LGBTQIA+ HOUSING RIGHTS RESEARCH

20 March, 2025



**Pittsburgh Commission  
On Human Relations**  
*Education · Collaboration · Enforcement*

An abstract graphic consisting of thick, flowing purple lines that sweep across the page from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines vary in thickness and curve, some branching out like veins or roots.

## **Acknowledgments**

This research was conducted by Outwith Studio on behalf of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations. Many thanks to all who provided input during the research process.

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# Introduction

The LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Research project is an initiative by the City of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations. The goals of the project are to better understand the nature of housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression experienced by city residents and to educate members of the LGBTQIA+ community on how to recognize and address housing discrimination. These twofold goals serve to help CHR increase rates of reporting, build trust, and proactively work to address housing discrimination before it occurs. Outwith Studio, an LGBTQ-led urban planning and research firm specializing in housing issues, assisted with the research.

**Fact-Finding:** CHR began this work with the impression that housing discrimination in the LGBTQIA+ community is underreported in the City of Pittsburgh. This research aims to understand the scope of the issue, as well as current barriers to addressing discrimination within these communities. This included understanding what forms of discrimination were most prevalent, as well as the contexts in which they were most likely to occur. Components of this work included interviews and conversations with local residents and stakeholders, tabling at public events, and a survey.

**Education:** In addition to developing a greater understanding of LGBTQIA+ people's current experience of housing discrimination, this effort also prioritized outreach and education. The project provided information on how to spot housing discrimination and what to do to address it, particularly pertaining to the role of CHR as the City's civil rights enforcement agency. CHR investigates housing discrimination cases and enforces Fair Housing law in the City of Pittsburgh, and has been designated by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) as a substantially equivalent agency to HUD.<sup>1</sup>

## What is Fair Housing/Housing Discrimination?

Discrimination in housing means unequal treatment on the basis of a person's or household's identity by a housing provider, real estate professional, mortgage lender, or related person/business. Discrimination could include harassment, unequal pricing, unequal terms in a contract or lease, refusal to rent or sell, unequal maintenance practices, failure to provide reasonable accommodations, steering potential buyers or renters to certain neighborhoods or away from others, and other

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1 See HUD, "Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP)," [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/partners/FHAP](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/partners/FHAP) (accessed January 31, 2025)



practices. Like other factors related to personal identity, housing discrimination on the basis LGBTQIA+ identity is illegal. The City of Pittsburgh specifically prohibits discrimination based on the following factors, called “protected classes”:

- Age
- Ancestry
- Citizenship Status
- Color
- Disability
- Familial Status (e.g, presence of children)
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Protective and Cultural Hair Textures/Styles and Head Coverings
- National Origin
- Place of Birth
- Preferred Language
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence
- Status as a Medical Marijuana Patient (added September 2024)

Housing discrimination can be based on several of these factors at the same time. LGBTQIA+ people are known to face housing discrimination at rates higher than the general population. This is especially true for LGBTQIA+ people of color.

## **Background and Language**

LGBTQIA+ equal protections are an emerging legal battleground in the United States. Housing rights and the application of Fair Housing law to these communities is of central concern. Although civil rights are sometimes framed within a narrative of linear progress, extending and protecting more categories and people over time, it is important to recognize the reactionary backlash against LGBTQIA+ civil rights currently occurring in the United States. This research focuses on readings of the law that extend further protections of LGBTQIA+ people in the domain of Fair

Housing, a trend within the law for the past several decades. However, there exists simultaneously an effort to diminish the few protections already afforded to these communities and to further disenfranchise and exclude LGBTQIA+ people from the public sphere.

Progressive legal frameworks have long advocated the urgent need for Fair Housing law to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression nationally.<sup>2</sup> These claims are bolstered by the 2020 Supreme Court ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, which held that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity constitutes sex discrimination within the realm of employment.<sup>3</sup> While these serve as the legal basis for current federal civil rights protections, it is worth noting that municipalities wishing to prevent anti-LGBTQIA+ discrimination in housing and other aspects of civil life must affirm these rights explicitly to weather fluctuations in federal interpretation and enforcement. For more information on the current legal landscape related to Fair Housing and LGBTQIA+ people, see Legal Notes.

## Key Terms

While there are important and specific legal definitions for each of the terms below (see Pittsburgh City Code Article V § 651.04 for local legal definitions) these are the non-legal working definitions that have proven most useful and practical for the framing of this research and report.

- **Sexual orientation:** descriptions/categories of identity based on one's attraction to others.
- **Gender/sex identity:** descriptions/categories of identity related to one's experience (personally and socially) of their body and experiences as a man, woman, or other.
- **Gender expression:** the ways in which people act as a man, woman, or other in relation to time-and-place-specific expectations.

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2 Joseph J. Railey, "Married on Sunday, Evicted on Monday: Interpreting the Fair Housing Act's Prohibition of Discrimination 'Because of Sex' to Include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity," *Buffalo Public Interest Law Journal*, vol. 36, (2019): 99.

3 Rigel C. Oliveri, "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination Claims Under the Fair Housing Act After *Bostock v. Clayton County*," *Kansas Law Review*, vol. 69, (2020): 409.

- **SOGIE**: shorthand for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
- **LGBTQIA+**: shorthand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and others.

## Language Caveats

Language is an important part of identity for many people. The “LGBTQIA+ community” is not a monolith, but rather many communities, sub-communities, and individuals, each with their own relationship to terms related to their identity and experience. This research attempts to balance the nuance of these diverse approaches with clarity for policymakers and the public. The project team asks readers to acknowledge the intent and grant the writers grace when the language used necessarily fails to capture all angles of the lived experience.

## Legal Notes

Housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression is prohibited under federal, state, and local law. In general, civil rights laws prevent housing discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics of an individual or household. These characteristics are called “protected classes.” The 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* interpreted “sex” discrimination to include protections of sexual orientation and gender identity/ expression. The *Bostock* case concerned employment, not housing, but the case opened the door for wider protections. A January 2021 Executive Order from the Biden Administration instructed federal agencies to address discrimination because of gender identity and sexual orientation in all domains of civil rights law, including Fair Housing. The Trump administration rescinded that order in January 2025, but Supreme Court’s *Bostock* decision remains in force, and lower courts may bring that interpretation to the Fair Housing domain at a federal level.<sup>4</sup>

At a state level, the *Bostock* interpretation was extended into state law through regulations (16 PA. Code Ch. 41), meaning that sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are protected under the state’s civil rights laws.

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4 The District Court of Rhode Island has explicitly interpreted SOGIE protections into the Fair Housing Act; see *Laroque v. Spring Green Corporation*, Dist. Court, (D. Rhode Island 2024). As of this writing, other courts have presumed the FHA’s protections on the basis of sex include protections for SOGIE but have not decided on that matter explicitly (c.f., *School of the Ozarks v. Biden*, 41 F.4th 992 (8th Cir. 2022); *Kummerow v. Ohawcha.org*, Dist. Court (W.D. Wisconsin 2022); *Levy v. Lawrence Garden Apartments*, Dist. Court (E.D. New York 2023); and *Scutt v. Doris*, Dist. Court (D. Hawaii 2020)).

The City of Pittsburgh’s Code of Ordinances Title VI Article V creates a separate body of anti-discrimination laws that is separate from federal or state laws. These local protections protect the civil rights of Pittsburgh residents regardless of changes at the federal or state levels. Section 659.03 of the Code of Ordinances articulates unlawful practices in housing and lists protected classes in the housing domain. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are explicitly protected under local law.

This research was conducted with reference to current anti-discrimination laws at the federal, state, and local levels. However, the project also took a broader look at discrimination, including other state and local implementations of Fair Housing law, when designing research questions and engagements.

## Literature Review

The academic literature on LGBTQIA+ experiences of housing discrimination illuminates that LGBTQIA+ individuals and couples had considerably harder times finding and securing safe and stable housing than their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts, as demonstrated through surveys, interview-based research, and paired testing.<sup>5</sup> Transgender people have been shown to be more vulnerable to discrimination than cisgender members of the LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>6</sup> LGBTQIA+ people of color are also more likely to face discrimination than LGBTQIA+ white people.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to these baseline challenges in the home ownership and rental markets, the literature identifies other phenomena of note for the present research. These include SOGIE-related homelessness, the prevalence of “crashing” and bartering

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5 Samantha Friedman, *et al.*, “An Estimate of Housing Discrimination Against Same-Sex Couples,” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2013); David Schwegman, “Rental Market Discrimination Against Same-Sex Couples: Evidence From a Pairwise-Matched Email Correspondence Test,” *Housing Policy Debate* (2018).

6 Shanna Katarri, *et al.*, “Policing Gender Through Housing and Employment Discrimination: Comparison of Discrimination Experiences of Transgender and Cisgender LGBQ Individuals,” *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, vol 7. no. 3, (2016).

7 Darren L. Whitefield, *et al.*, “Queer Is the New Black? Not So Much: Racial Disparities in Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination,” *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, vol. 26(4), (2014).

economies, and LGBTQIA+ networks of care.<sup>8</sup> LGBTQIA+ individuals experience disproportionately high rates of homelessness. Sexual minority adults are twice as likely as the general population to have experienced homelessness in their lifetime, and a higher proportion of transgender people have experienced recent homelessness than cisgender sexual minorities.<sup>9</sup>

Further research consistently shows that LGBTQIA+ youth, particularly those who are transgender, nonbinary, and/or people of color, are at a much higher risk of experiencing homelessness than their heterosexual, cisgender peers.<sup>10</sup> According to the early insights from the most recent (2022) U.S. Trans Survey, nearly one-third (30%) of respondents had experienced homelessness in their lifetime.<sup>11</sup> In addition to their increased likelihood of experiencing homelessness in the first place, LGBTQIA+ people, especially trans people, are also likely to experience further discrimination within the emergency shelter system.<sup>12</sup>

Progressive legal scholarship seeks to find greater protection and remedy for these forms of discrimination within a Fair Housing framework. Such arguments extend from the Bostock ruling to establish that “sex” discrimination in a Fair Housing context includes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender

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- 8 Nina Jackson Levin, et al., “‘We Just Take Care of Each Other’: Navigating ‘Chosen Family’ in the Context of Health, Illness, and the Mutual Provision of Care amongst Queer and Transgender Young Adults,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 17(19), (2020).
  - 9 Bianca D.M. Wilson, et al., *Homelessness among LGBT adults in the U.S.*, (Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, 2020).; Adam P. Romero, et al. *LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination, and Homelessness*, (Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, 2020).
  - 10 Jonah DeChants, et al., *Homelessness and Housing Instability Among LGBTQ Youth*, (West Hollywood, CA: The Trevor Project, 2021).; Clara Irazábal and Claudia Huerta, “Intersectionality and planning at the margins: LGBTQ youth of color in New York,” *Gender, Place & Culture*, 23:5 (2015).
  - 11 Sandy E. James, et al., *Early Insights: A Report of the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2024).
  - 12 Jaime M. Grant, et al., *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011).; Caitlin Rooney, et al., *Discrimination Against Transgender Women Seeking Access to Homeless Shelters*, (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2016).; Sandy E. James, et al., *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016).

identity.<sup>13</sup> While initial scholarship on LGBTQIA+ Fair Housing post-Bostock did not mention shelters, further legal scholarship has extended these logics to advocate that if the Fair Housing Act applies to homeless shelters (which there are strong arguments and evidence for, but is a subject of legal contest as it is not explicit in the text of the FHA) then LGBTQIA+ people should be empowered to seek legal remedy under the Fair Housing Act for the discrimination they experience in homeless shelters.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond, or perhaps as a reaction to, the unique challenges facing LGBTQIA+ individuals in formal emergency shelter systems, there also exists a rich history of informal networks of care and mutual aid amongst LGBTQIA+ people to support each other's housing needs.<sup>15</sup> Stories of grassroots support structures and radical alternatives to formal/institutional/normative service providers have always been a critical aspect of the work of the contemporary gay liberation movement in the US. In the early 1970's, Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P Johnson founded STAR House, a project of their gay liberation movement, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (S.T.A.R.), to provide housing and material support, as well as emotional care and empowerment to their street family, primarily transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) youth.<sup>16</sup> During the early AIDS crisis in the 1980s and early 90s, independent group living models like the Shanti AIDS Residency Program in San Francisco provided safe and dignified accommodations, as well as subsidized housing and medical care and community/emotional support to people with AIDS.<sup>17</sup>

These networks and forms of collective care are experiencing broader interest and popularity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, but have in fact been championed by sick and disabled trans and queer people of color for decades.<sup>18</sup> Contemporarily,

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13 Oliveri, "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination After Bostock", 2020.

14 Alaina Richert, "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Homelessness Post-Bostock", *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, vol.56(1), (2022): 217.

15 Brendon T. Holloway, et al., "For Us, By Us," in *Exploring Sexuality and Disability: A Guide for Human Service Professionals*. (Routledge, 2023); Dean Spade, *Mutual aid: building solidarity during this crisis (and the next)*, (Verso, 2020).

16 Stephan L. Cohen, *The Gay Liberation Youth Movement in New York: "An Army of Lovers Cannot Fail"* (Routledge, 2008): 114–127.

17 Helen Schietinger, "Housing: A Critical Need for People with AIDS," *Community Development Journal* vol. 24, no. 3, (1989): 195–201.

18 Alexia Arani, "Mutual Aid and Its Ambivalences: Lessons from Sick and Disabled Trans and Queer People of Color", *Feminist Studies* 46(3), (2020): 653–662.

extensive networks of mutual aid, and informal support structures including the prevalence of “crashing,” continue to be an essential element in addressing queer and especially trans homelessness. These community-based arrangements, which are often preferred to navigating formal social services, recognize the specific expertise and value that trans and queer people bring to addressing the needs of their own communities, both material and emotional.<sup>19</sup> While the history of mutual aid in LGBTQIA+ housing is critical to the communities’ survival, these informal systems must also be complicated. Informal care networks may be more inclusive of LGBTQIA+ people, but often entail less accountability and regulation than formal services. These can involve bartering—including the bartering of sexual favors—that can sometimes entail coercion.<sup>20</sup>

In rental housing broadly, and the public voucher program specifically, rules banning unauthorized tenants from residing in the home and restrictions on who may be considered an authorized tenant direct scrutiny towards and demand disclosures of residents’ intimate relations that can be particularly harmful to LGBTQIA+ residents.<sup>21</sup>

## Research and Engagement Process

### Interviews

Conversations, both formal and informal, were central to this work. The project team gained an understanding of the LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights landscape in Pittsburgh from talking to attendees at Pittsburgh Pride, local residents, and follow-up conversations with survey participants. We also spoke to social services providers and those working within the housing ecosystem to understand their perspective on the issues at hand. Certain professionals with specialized expertise spoke to an individual sub-topic or issue, including a developer of an emerging LGBTQIA+-friendly Senior Housing project, which will be Pittsburgh’s first of its kind following recent national trends.

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19 Edith England, “‘Homelessness Is a Queer Experience’: Utopianism and Mutual Aid as Survival Strategies for Homeless Trans People,” *Housing Studies*, (2022).

20 Evangeline Heiliger, “Queer economies: Possibilities of queer desires and economic bodies (because ‘the economy’ is not enough)” in *Global Justice and Desire* (Routledge, 2015): 195.

21 Rahim Kurwa, “The New Man in the House Rules: How the Regulation of Housing Vouchers Turns Personal Bonds Into Eviction Liabilities,” *Housing Policy Debate*, 30, no. 6 (2020): 926–49.



## Interactive Exhibit

An interactive exhibit on Fair Housing and LGBTQIA+ history/geography in Pittsburgh served both the project's fact-finding and educational goals. Temporarily staged at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's East Liberty Branch for one week in August, and then at the QMNTY Center in East Allegheny from August to September, the focus of the exhibit was a zine-making activity about individual housing stories and the meaning of queer home. The exhibit framed this particular research initiative within the larger context of housing discrimination, providing an overview of Fair Housing Law and the City of Pittsburgh's protected identity classes. It also included narratives about LGBTQIA+ individuals' likelihood of experiencing homelessness and face discrimination in the emergency shelter system, as well as highlighted local places and narratives that engage with the meaning of queer home and interface with issues of discrimination within Pittsburgh, contemporarily and historically.

*Figure 01: Exhibit at East Liberty Branch Library*





Some of the local stories highlighted in the exhibit included:

- As the generation that pioneered early LGBT liberation ages, there is an increasingly recognized national need for LGBTQIA+ friendly senior housing. Pittsburgh's Mosaic Apartments will open in Fall 2025 to meet this need, allowing LGBTQIA+ seniors to access the housing and services they need free of discrimination from staff, or other residents.
- Responding to the condition that 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQIA+, the emergence of LGBTQIA+-focused social services and providers of short term emergency housing services for LGBTQIA+ young people in Pittsburgh.
- Brewer's Bar + Hotel was a historic Pittsburgh bar catering to the LGBTQIA+ community. The hotel rooms above the bar served for many years as emergency shelter for LGBTQIA+ individuals who faced identity-based family rejection. During the early years of the AIDS epidemic, many gay men spent their final days living at Brewer's.

After exploring this underrepresented history of their city, participants were invited to share their own reflections on the nature of queer home and their personal housing journey through a zine. A zine is a self-published, non-commercial print-work that is typically produced in small, limited batches. Their content may be written, drawn, photographed, collaged, or any other medium. They may be text- or image-based, and are a form of creative self-expression. The activity provided a template as well as blank materials for participants to share their own thoughts on the issues presented in the exhibit. Some questions and prompts that participants were encouraged to explore included:

- Tell us about your journey through housing in your life.
- What does "home" mean for you as a queer person?
- How has the idea of chosen family changed your relationship to home?
- How has "home" affirmed or suppressed your LGBTQIA+ identity?
- What challenges have you faced in securing housing that is safe, stable, and affordable?

As part of the display, participants were also invited to add their completed zine(s) to a community library, where additional visitors could peruse theirs and others' stories. The zine template is included for reference or future use in Appendix TK. In this way, participants became co-creators of the visual and narrative elements of the exhibit. Stories shared through this format described a wide range of living arrangements and all emphasized experiences of precarity in housing, as well as difficulty paying bills and with the significant expense of housing. Some details that stood out included discomfort around a lack of privacy in their living arrangements and the strong connection between housing arrangements/choices and care work. Educational materials on what to do when facing housing discrimination and how to contact/file a complaint with CHR were also provided.

Figure O2: Housing Discrimination Handout

## What to do if you have faced **housing discrimination?**

**Document everything.**  
Use written communication like email or text, follow up verbal conversations with written summaries, take photos, save requests and confirmations made through online systems, etc.).

**Talk to an advocate.**  
Contact organizations like the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh (fhp.org) or Neighborhood Legal Services (nlsa.us) to connect with legal advocates who can give advice.

**File a complaint with CHR.**  
The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (CHR) can help if discrimination took place in the city within the last year. CHR can mediate conflict and get restitution. They may refer to other similar agencies that are best equipped to handle your case.

**Don't act before you're ready.**  
Talk to an advocate before you take matters into your own hands (by withholding rent, breaking terms of a contract, etc.).




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## Survey

The project team conducted a small online survey to get a general understanding of housing experiences and housing discrimination. The survey was viewed 1,690 times, begun 156 times, and submitted by 67 respondents. Further investment in communications pathways to LGBTQIA+ people could support these and related goals and endeavors of CHR. The results of this survey appear in part III in full, and contribute to the qualitative findings/themes identified in part II along with other engagement activities.

## Tabling

In an effort to get the word out about the initiative, the project team conducted in-person engagement on the street, or “tabling,” at Pride 2024 (Friday and Saturday) and at City in the Streets – Knoxville. These efforts intended primarily to collect general input on LGBTQIA+ experiences of housing and discrimination and share CHR resources and contact information.

Figure 03: Interactive Mapping Activity at Pride



# Qualitative Results

Through the engagement methodologies described in the previous section, especially short-answer responses on the survey, zines, and various conversations/ interviews, a number of themes emerged regarding LGBTQIA+ experiences of housing discrimination. The experiences, concerns, and issues that LGBTQIA+ Pittsburgh residents raised—as distilled in the following section—illuminate systemic barriers and unique unmet needs for LGBTQIA+ people accessing safe and stable housing.

## Notable Forms of Rental Discrimination

### Privacy Concerns

For LGBTQIA+ individuals, privacy is a significant concern in finding and maintaining safe and stable housing. Disclosing one's LGBTQIA+ identity to a real estate agent, seller, landlord, or property manager is a fraught occurrence. Requirements involving legal documents and identification, which may include gender markers or names that do not align with one's gender identity and expression, often out residents or housing seekers, subjecting them to possible discrimination. Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals are most impacted by these requirements, leaving them vulnerable to discriminatory practices. Respondents shared similar privacy concerns regarding the nature of their intimate and romantic relationships, especially those with same-gendered individuals and those in polyamorous or nonmonogamous relationships. Tenants were often uncertain when to disclose their identities, if at all, and how disclosure might affect their chances of securing or maintaining housing. Individuals seeking housing describe changes in attitudes from housing providers upon meeting in person, when the difference in their gender identity and expression from assumptions made based on email communications alone become apparent, or when their intimate relationships become evident. In some instances, these interactions resulted in a refusal to rent or end of communication. Renters are most impacted by these barriers to housing, although they may be present in the ownership market as well.<sup>22</sup>

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22 Shai Karp, "Private Government at Home: Landlord Power and Rental Residential Domination in the United States," *Politics & Society*, (2024).

## Withholding Maintenance

One of the more pervasive forms of discrimination reported by renters in particular was landlords withholding necessary maintenance or failing to take official actions when issues arose. Respondents described situations where landlords refused to address code violations and building safety concerns, perform routine maintenance, or respond to maintenance emergencies in a timely and urgent manner, particularly when they knew or suspected a tenant to be part of the LGBTQIA+ community. This form of discriminatory neglect is particularly difficult to prove when the connection between maintenance neglect and a tenant's sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression is suspected but not explicit. Discriminatory maintenance by a landlord or property manager against a tenant is illegal, and recent legal scholarship has advanced the idea that neglect motivated by discrimination against neighboring residents may be similarly illegal.<sup>23</sup>

Withholding security deposits was another tactic reported by LGBTQIA+ tenants. In some cases, landlords seemed to disproportionately withhold deposits from LGBTQIA+ tenants without cause, or with vague justifications that seemed to be rooted in bias. For example, landlords sometimes claimed that damage had been done to the property when no such damage had occurred, or they refused to return deposits on the grounds of supposed "behavioral issues," which some tenants believed were tied to their identity.

## Harassment

Respondents described incidents of landlords or property managers making homophobic or transphobic comments, and refusing to engage with them based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. For some, this escalated to more overt and even violent forms of mistreatment, including the use of homophobic and transphobic slurs, as well as slurs related to race and disability. In some more extreme cases, respondents described sexual assault by landlords or property management/maintenance staff. These assaults were often exacerbated by power imbalances, with landlords using their position of authority to manipulate or intimidate tenants into silence. More frequently, residents experienced intentional and persistent verbal discrimination (including misgendering) by landlords and property management officials who had access to legal documents or other private information that outed the residents as a means of

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23 Michelle Y. Ewert, "Things Fall Apart (Next Door): Discriminatory Maintenance and Decreased Home Values as the Next Fair Housing Battleground", *Brooklyn Law Review* vol. 84(4) (2019).



demeaning and belittling them. Other respondents described spurious accusations made against them, including escalations involving law enforcement. This particular form of harassment is disproportionately harmful to Black and indigenous people of color, trans and gender non-conforming, and individuals with mental illnesses, and others whose identities are disproportionate subjects of police violence.

Additional discrimination also manifested in less direct forms, such as disparate treatment regarding decoration. Tenants who wanted to express their identities through the decor in their apartments (such as rainbow flags or other LGBTQIA+ symbols) reported pushback from landlords or property managers, who either refused to allow such decorations or imposed penalties for having them on display.

LGBTQIA+ individuals reported that their neighbors were the most common perpetrators of harassment. This form of discrimination, although ubiquitous, is one that is likely to go unreported. Many respondents described incidents of verbal harassment and disparaging comments, intimidation, vandalism, and even threats from neighbors, particularly in areas of the city with lower LGBTQIA+ representation, where the LGBTQIA+ community was less visible or accepted. These incidents were likely to be resolved interpersonally or left unresolved. One of the central questions emerging from these accounts was whose responsibility it is to address harassment perpetrated between neighbors. If both the perpetrator and the aggrieved party are residents of the same building, development, or facility with a common landlord, property management company, or condominium association, it may be possible to hold that third party responsible for addressing harassment by a neighbor.<sup>24</sup> This relief often relies on the willingness of an authority (landlord, condo association, shelter staff) to intervene, which respondents reported mixed experiences of. For many individuals, for whom there is no shared provider, limited relief options were available. This leaves many LGBTQIA+ residents in a vulnerable position, unable to find a resolution to the harassment they face from neighbors through a Fair Housing framework.

## Emergency Shelter and Informal Care Networks

LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking emergency housing face significant barriers to receiving essential services. Some local shelters were described as unsafe, unfriendly, or outright discriminatory. Residents cited instances where they were refused accommodations or turned away based on their gender identity. The fear

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24 Federal appeals courts are split on the question of landlord liability in cases of tenant-on-tenant harassment; see *Francis v. Kings Park Manor, Inc.*, 944 F.3d 370 (2d Cir. 2019) and *Wetzel v. Glen St. Andrew Living Community, LLC*, 901 F. 3d 856 (7th Cir. 2018).

of being placed in gender-segregated shelters that did not align with their gender identity results in many LGBTQIA+ people, especially trans people, not being able to access vital emergency housing resources. Some shelters are actively avoided by the community.

Many respondents described relying on informal networks of care. This often looked like turning to friends, chosen family, or the wider LGBTQIA+ community for housing support. These arrangements can involve those experiencing precarity “crashing” with others, as well as those who experience relative housing stability providing emergency housing or engaging in “pay what you can” arrangements for other LGBTQIA+ people. Respondents also described nontraditional arrangements that involve other forms of care work being tied to housing, often subsidizing monetary compensation. These informal care networks reflect a rich history of mutual aid between LGBTQIA+ people in the housing space.<sup>25</sup>

## Key Intersections

Experiences of housing discrimination by LGBTQIA+ people were not limited to experiences based solely on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. While people who spoke with the project team listed several other protected classes as bases of discrimination against them, two protected classes emerged as especially common: disability and race.

### Disability

For LGBTQIA+ individuals with disabilities, housing discrimination was compounded by issues of accessibility and accommodation. Respondents with mobility challenges and other physical disabilities reported inadequate accommodation for their needs, and a refusal by landlords to accommodate them, compounding experiences of disrespect and belittling which they perceived being based on or related to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. Issues with landlords denying residents the ability to have service and support animals were common, including obfuscating bureaucratic processes, not maintaining adequate paperwork and records, and repeatedly calling the validity of the animal’s presence

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<sup>25</sup> Edith England, “Homelessness Is a Queer Experience.” 2022.

into question.<sup>26</sup> Individuals also reported landlords using their disability status as a manipulation too, even threatening retaliation. These discriminatory practices further complicated their search for and ability to maintain stable housing.

## Race

Racial discrimination was foregrounded as a primary axis of discrimination, particularly by LGBTQIA+ individuals of color, especially Black individuals. These discriminatory experiences involved overt harassment from neighbors, and broad sentiments of exclusion from social/public life in certain areas and neighborhoods. As gentrification further encroaches on neighborhoods with historic connections to the LGBTQIA+ community, some residents, especially those experiencing multiple marginalizations (such as Black trans women) expressed feeling that such areas were, “not for us anymore.” Respondents also described experiences of overt harassment from real estate brokers and the use of blockbusting-like statements regarding a home’s perceived value based on neighborhood demographics and protected classes, as well as disparate treatment of individuals of different races by the same mortgage lender.

## Queer Family Structures

In Fair Housing law, “familial status” is a protected class that means the presence of children under 18 years of age (or potential presence of children due to a person’s pregnancy status or status as someone undertaking an adoption process). Pittsburgh’s City Code implements this definition in its civil rights article (see §651.04(cc)). This protection is important and is a key protection for LGBTQIA+ parents. However, a broader and less technical question of discrimination against LGBTQIA+ families arises in the experiences of participants in this research.

Within LGBTQIA+ communities, “family” can mean family of origin or queer “chosen family,” or some more nebulous combination of these various forms of kin. One important consideration in the effort of affirmatively furthering Fair Housing for LGBTQIA+ individuals is a broader consideration of what constitutes a family, legally, beyond normative family structures (or the mere presence of children traditionally

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26 This is particularly insidious as it disregards the evidence of vast positive healing and stabilizing effects of companion animals, especially for LGBTQIA+ People experiencing housing insecurity. See: Rachel M. Schmitz, *et al.*, “Radical Healing in Precarity: LGBTQ+ Young People’s Approaches to Life Challenges and Aspirations through Pet Caregiving in the Context of Homelessness”, *Youth* 3(1), (2023), 50–69.



articulated as “familial status”). This includes non-legally recognized intimate partners (including multiple partners), as well as various relationships of care that evade normative classification or recognition as a family. Respondents described facing explicit discrimination around non-normative family structures that are related to but not necessarily inherent results of their LGBTQIA+ identities.

Discrimination against non-normative family structures may be codified within Pittsburgh’s zoning law, which defines a family as an unlimited number of persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, but only up to three persons unrelated in those ways. This upper threshold for non-normative families could enable discrimination in certain cases. By contrast, the City’s civil rights article defines “family” differently, so as to include persons “related by...affinity,” with no explicit cap on the number of people in that non-normative family. Interpretation of that clause may open the door for protection of non-normative family structures, though that protection is not explicit.

## **Pittsburgh as Informal Sanctuary**

In an evolving national landscape that is increasingly hostile to LGBTQIA+ people (and particularly trans people and identities), Pittsburgh was viewed by many respondents as a place of relative relief from discrimination. Many individuals shared stories of moving to Pittsburgh from hostile familial or political environments, or both. These experiences were congruent with further sentiments of feeling dejected by discrimination experiences in Pittsburgh, which ran counter to their initial perception or aspiration for living here. While respondents described expecting some level of discriminatory treatment in other parts of the county—especially more rural areas and parts of the Rust Belt and Appalachian regions surrounding Pittsburgh—they saw this city as a relative respite from a hostile political environment that produces discrimination. When respondents did experience discrimination in Pittsburgh, they expressed a sense that there was nowhere more accepting they could go, especially within the same range of affordability. As the national political landscape continues to limit the number of places that LGBTQIA+ people can live and exist in public safely, the role of cities like Pittsburgh with relatively strong civil rights protections on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are increasingly important. In the same vein, the disappointment, sadness, anger, and fear that results from experiences of discrimination in these places of informal sanctuary is intensified.

## Role of Economics/Class

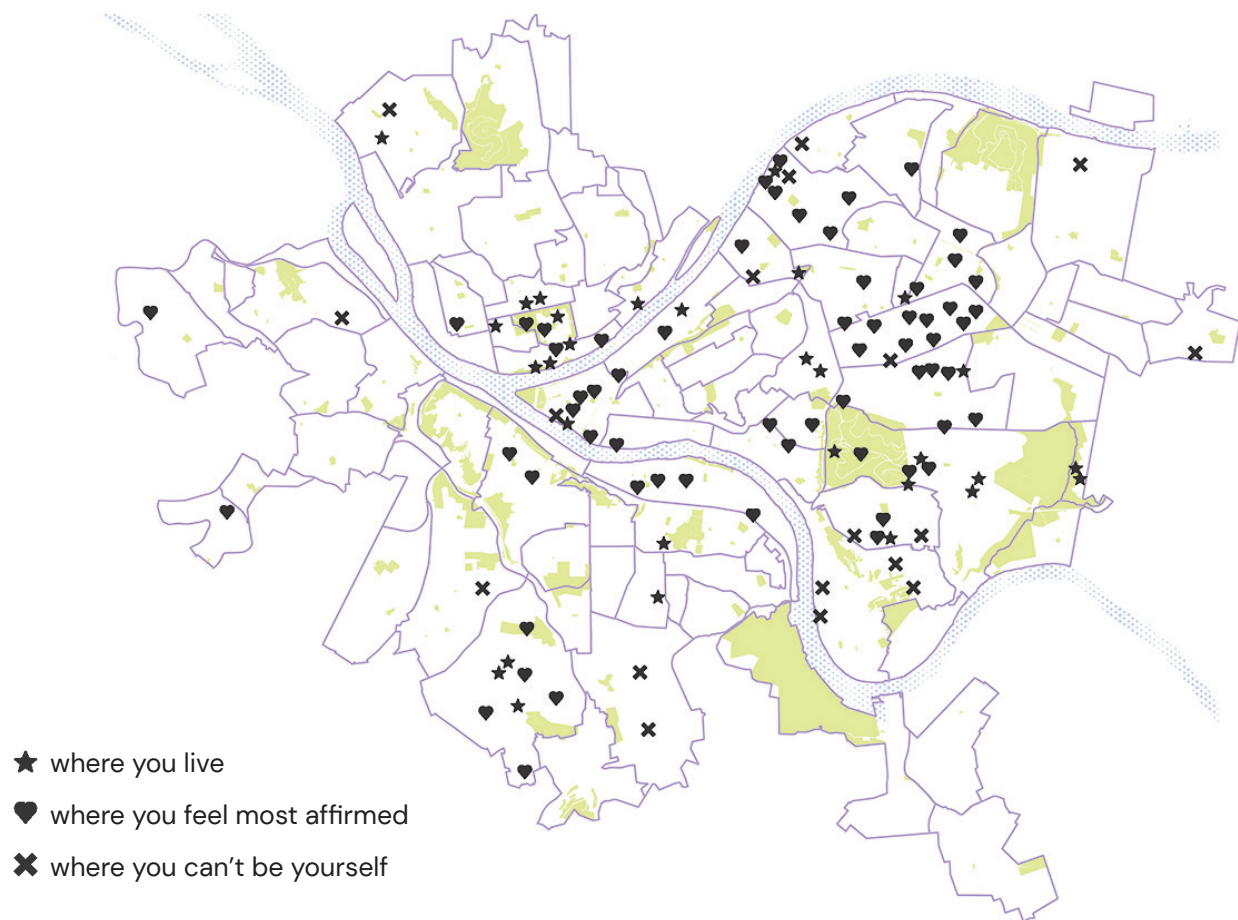
The role of economics and class in shaping housing experiences was a primary factor in many respondents' experiences. Many individuals noted that financial means was often the primary barrier to securing housing, and that places with reputations for being queer-friendly could be prohibitively expensive. There was also an idea or perception among respondents that it is harder to make money as a queer person, due to experiences of discrimination in employment that negatively impact their ability to work. This highlights a dynamic counter to a common mainstream narrative that LGBTQIA+ people tend to be wealthy, based on high educational attainment and delay or lack of child-rearing. Certainly some LGBTQIA+ people are wealthy, particularly those with other identity markers correlated with high wealth, but wealth is not universal. Within the realm of housing discrimination, there is a divide between those who are/can become wealthy and those who are not and face structural barriers to wealthbuilding.

An important sub-dynamic related to economics and class is assimilation. LGBTQIA+ people who can "assimilate" to normative upper-middle-class lifestyle traits (e.g., higher education, professional/managerial jobs, traditional gender roles and gender expressions, and rearing children) are insulated from discrimination as a function of income/wealth and cultural markers. Cultural markers enabling assimilation are also tied into narratives of whiteness and masculinity.

## Neighborhoods

Experiences of housing discrimination among LGBTQIA+ people also varied across the city. Some respondents (particularly white gay men) reported being steered away from more affordable areas in favor of higher-income neighborhoods, based on perceived assumptions by real estate agents, landlords, and brokers. Pittsburgh, unlike many other larger cities across the country, has no explicitly designated "gayborhood," or a single area where LGBTQIA+ are historically more likely to reside in higher concentrations. Instead, there are some neighborhoods that are broadly thought of as more friendly to the LGBTQIA+ community than others (e.g., Shadyside, Bloomfield, Lawrenceville, and Allegheny). This "friendliness," however, shifts over time based on gentrification and other factors relating to affordability and demographic changes, and is always limited by race and class.

Figure 04: Where is Home to LGBTQIA+ People in Pittsburgh (crowdsourced at pride 2024)



## Seeking Support or Remedy

Respondents largely expressed that pursuing remedy for the discrimination that they experienced was not seen as a top priority. The material needs of finding safe and stable housing often took precedence. This was further exacerbated by the fear of retaliation, which often discourages residents from seeking remedy that could threaten their current housing, even if said housing is precarious, unsafe, or otherwise inadequate. LGBTQIA+ individuals also described the normalization of discrimination as a deterrent for reporting or seeking remedy, as they experienced harassment, misgendering, or other forms of discrimination as routine. Even when residents did attempt to seek support or remedy, they sometimes faced barriers with nonprofit legal service providers not taking cases, or being dismissive of their particular circumstances. These barriers can produce an additional chilling effect, further demotivating or discouraging individuals who have experienced them from attempting to seek remedy again in the future.

# Survey Results

From August to December 2024, the project team conducted an online survey about housing discrimination in the LGBTQIA+ community. The survey was promoted through official CHR channels, in Facebook groups for housing in the LGBTQIA+ community, through other social media platforms, and in local news sources. The survey was completed by 68 participants. An additional 1600 people viewed the survey, with 88 participants beginning but not finishing the survey. Though these responses were not recorded, this indicates additional reach of the survey and information relevant to LGBTQIA+ people in Pittsburgh.

## Respondent Demographics

### Pittsburgh Residency

84% of respondents lived in Pittsburgh when they took the survey, and 16% did not.

There was a range of lengths of time current residents had lived in Pittsburgh. The breakdown in years as a city resident for respondents is as follows:

- Less than 1 year: 9%
- 1–2 years: 13%
- 3–5 years: 22%
- 6–10 years: 27%
- 10+ years: 11%
- All my life: 18%

45% of respondents had at a previous time in their life lived in Pittsburgh (and either lived outside the city when responding, or had lived outside Pittsburgh previously but moved back). Reasons for leaving the city included the typical churn of household formation, concerns about affordability, and desires for more diversity or green space. One respondent left due to poor housing conditions in the house where they had lived.

See *Residence and Discrimination by Neighborhood* for more information on participants' past and present residency in the city.

## Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression

Sexual orientation is a way of describing identity as it relates to who you are attracted to. The terms in Table O1 were provided to respondents without definition, and respondents could choose as many as they wished. Roughly one half of respondents described themselves as lesbian or gay, and 42% described themselves as queer. The majority (64%) of respondents used only one term to describe themselves (in descending order of single-answer popularity: gay, lesbian, queer, straight, bisexual, pansexual, asexual). Bisexual was the mostly commonly grouped term (typically with queer and/or pansexual).

*Table O1: Respondents by sexuality or sexual orientation*

Which phrase or phrases best describe your sexuality or sexual orientation?	Respondent %
Lesbian	25%
Gay	24%
Bisexual	22%
Queer	42%
Pansexual	19%
Fluid	1%
Straight	6%
Asexual	6%
Prefer not to answer	3%
Other	1%

Gender identity and sex descriptors are a set of words/phrases that speak to one's identity and experience of their body.<sup>27</sup> Woman and man are the most traditional

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27 Contemporary discourse has often centered a distinction between sex (dimorphic physiological characteristics) and gender (the ways in which people experience, behave, and identify in relation to others in ways that are influenced by sex). That distinction has been contested from a variety of political and identitarian positions, including by some intersex people, trans and gender nonconforming people, trans-exclusionary radical feminists, and those outside the LGBTQIA+ community. This survey did not attempt to weigh in on that discourse, and instead allowed respondents to choose the descriptors that best describe their identity. Where this collapsing of categories would cause confusion, the project team opted to give language that was the most inclusive and precise.

and most widely used gender/sex categories, but throughout history there have been other individual and group descriptors that either diverge from the woman/man binary or provide nuance in ways that are more precise about gender nonconformity. The project team prompted respondents with a number of gender/sex descriptors common in the LGBTQIA+ community and asked respondents to check all those that applied and/or provide their own. Responses are given in Table O2.

*Table O2: Respondents by gender identity and/or sex*

<b>Which phrase or phrases best describe your gender identity and/or sex?</b>	
	<b>Respondent %</b>
Cis woman	28%
Cis man	25%
Trans woman (or other transfeminine identity)	9%
Trans man (or other transmasculine identity)	7%
Trans	19%
Nonbinary	31%
Genderfluid	6%
Intersex	1%
Prefer not to answer	1%
Other	9%

Respondents who chose “Other” gave the following self-descriptors.

- Genderqueer (2)
- Genderflux
- Agender
- Adult Human Female
- Other

## Race and Ethnicity

Respondents were presented with a set of racial and ethnic identifiers and could self-identify with as many as they wished, including a write-in “Other” selection. A large majority of respondents (83%, 54 respondents), chose “white” alone. Much smaller groups chose “Black or African American” alone (5%, three respondents), and “East Asian” (2%, one respondent). Seven respondents (10%) selected “white” in combination with another selection. Compared to the City of Pittsburgh’s population, White respondents are overrepresented. That overrepresentation is notable for interpretation of the survey results since (a) white people in the US have historically received preferential treatment in the housing market, and (b) prior research has indicated LGBTQIA+ people of color, especially LGBTQIA+ Black people, experience higher rates of discrimination than LGBTQIA+ white people.

*Table O3: Respondents by race and ethnicity*

Self ID (alone or in combination with other selections)	Respondent %
white	91%
Black or African American	7%
Latin (Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic)	3%
East Asian	3%
South Asian	0%
Southeast Asian	1%
Southwest Asian, Middle Eastern, or North African	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%
Indigenous American or Native American	0%
Other	1%



## **Housing History**

Respondents were asked about their current housing situation and responded as follows; 34% own, 57% rent, 8% live with family/friends, and 2% currently live in a shelter. Respondents were also asked if they have ever experienced certain housing circumstances, and those responses are as follows:

A minority (45%) of respondents own, have tried to buy, or have looked for a home to buy. (This is notably larger than the 34% who currently own, suggesting that not all Pittsburgh residents who want to and have tried to buy a house are able to.)

The majority (82%) of survey respondents have formally rented or sublet a home at some point.

Notably, 16% have needed emergency housing, 4% have been evicted, 13% have been kicked out by family, and 9% have been kicked out by non-family, making clear that housing insecurity is a significant challenge and common experience for LGBTQIA+ people.

Depending on how respondents answered these questions about their housing history, they were shown sections on Ownership, Rental, and Emergency/Transitional Housing discrimination that were relevant to them.

## **Ownership Market Discrimination**

Survey respondents described the most common experience of explicit discrimination in the home ownership market is typically either in the listing/search process or is overt harassment. Harassment by neighbors was the most common source, leaving little means for remedy for many homeowners. Respondents also described widespread and varied instances of suspected discrimination that was challenging to prove. 53% of those facing ownership discrimination thought their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression was the main reason for the discrimination. Race, sex, color, protective and cultural hair textures/styles and head coverings, domestic violence survivor status, marital status, age, source of income, and homelessness were also given as reasons.



Table 04: Ownership Market Discrimination

Type of discrimination	Yes, explicitly	Yes, suspected
Seller refused to sell	0%	8%
Seller refused to negotiate	0%	15%
Seller set special terms	0%	8%
Denied viewing	8%	17%
Encountered discriminatory listing	8%	8%
Discouraged by a broker/agent	15%	23%
Steering by a broker/agent	0%	31%
Refused homeowners insurance	0%	0%
Given different homeowners insurance terms	0%	23%
Homeowners insurance claim denied	0%	8%
Mortgage denied	0%	31%
Given different mortgage terms	0%	23%
Refused info/opportunity to apply for a mortgage	0%	15%
Discriminatory property appraisal	0%	8%
Discriminatory property tax assessment	0%	8%
Harassment by HOA/Condo official or employee	8%	8%
Harassment by neighbor subject to same HOA/Condo	8%	23%
Harassment by neighbor *not* subject to same HOA/Condo	23%	23%
Unequal maintenance, terms, or treatment by HOA/Condo	8%	15%
Blockbusted	0%	23%
Retaliation	0%	8%

## Rental Market Discrimination

Survey respondents described varied forms of discrimination, with harassment the most common type of explicit discrimination. This included harassment by neighbors, landlords, property management, and maintenance staff. Respondents also described widespread suspected discrimination in the form of refused/delayed maintenance and in the search/lease-up process. 73% of those facing renter discrimination thought their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression was the main reason for the discrimination. Race, sex, disability, DV survivor status, religion, family structure, age, source of income, criminal history, and history of homelessness were also given as reasons.

Table 05: Rental Market Discrimination

Type of discrimination	Yes, explicitly	Yes, suspected
Landlord, manager, or sublessor refused to rent	7%	26%
Landlord, manager, or sublessor refused to negotiate	11%	15%
Landlord, manager, or sublessor set special terms	4%	26%
Denied viewing	0%	19%
Encountered discriminatory listing	4%	22%
Discouraged by a landlord, broker/agent, or current tenant	15%	26%
Steering	0%	11%
Refused, delayed, or failed to complete maintenance	4%	33%
Denied access or privileges	11%	4%
Discriminatory eviction	15%	4%
Refused entry	11%	7%
Harassment by landlord/manager/staff	22%	11%
Harassment by tenant in same building/development	19%	15%
Harassment by neighbor *not* in same building/development	22%	30%
Retaliation	11%	15%

## Housing Insecurity and Emergency Housing

The survey data on housing insecurity in LGBTQIA+ communities is illuminating, demonstrating significant barriers to safe and stable housing.

At some point, 18% of all survey respondents had dealt with housing insecurity through informal means. For those respondents addressing their acute housing insecurity through informal means:

- 92% of that group had crashed with friends, family, or acquaintances,
- 33% have slept in a car,
- 25% have slept outside,
- 42% have traded sexual favors for a place to stay, and
- 33% have traded other goods or services for a place to stay.

Another portion of survey respondents facing acute housing insecurity (6% of all respondents) sought space in an emergency shelter. At least half of these respondents faced further discrimination within the emergency shelter system. 75% of the respondents who sought space in an emergency shelter had their SOGIE discussed negatively by staff. Half were refused space in the shelter, and half were made to stay in facilities that didn't align with their gender identity. Half were harassed by other residents. Shelter staff intervened for half of those who were harassed by other residents.

The survey also asked participants about their experiences with transitional and supportive housing. Not enough respondents answered these questions to share insights responsibly.

## Addressing Discrimination

The survey data on how respondents addressed discrimination highlighted that a majority of respondents facing discrimination could not address it in all cases. Some were able to address discrimination in some but not all cases and some left discriminatory living situations altogether. For around 8% of respondents who experienced any form of discrimination, the discrimination did not stop but they could not leave the discriminatory living situation.

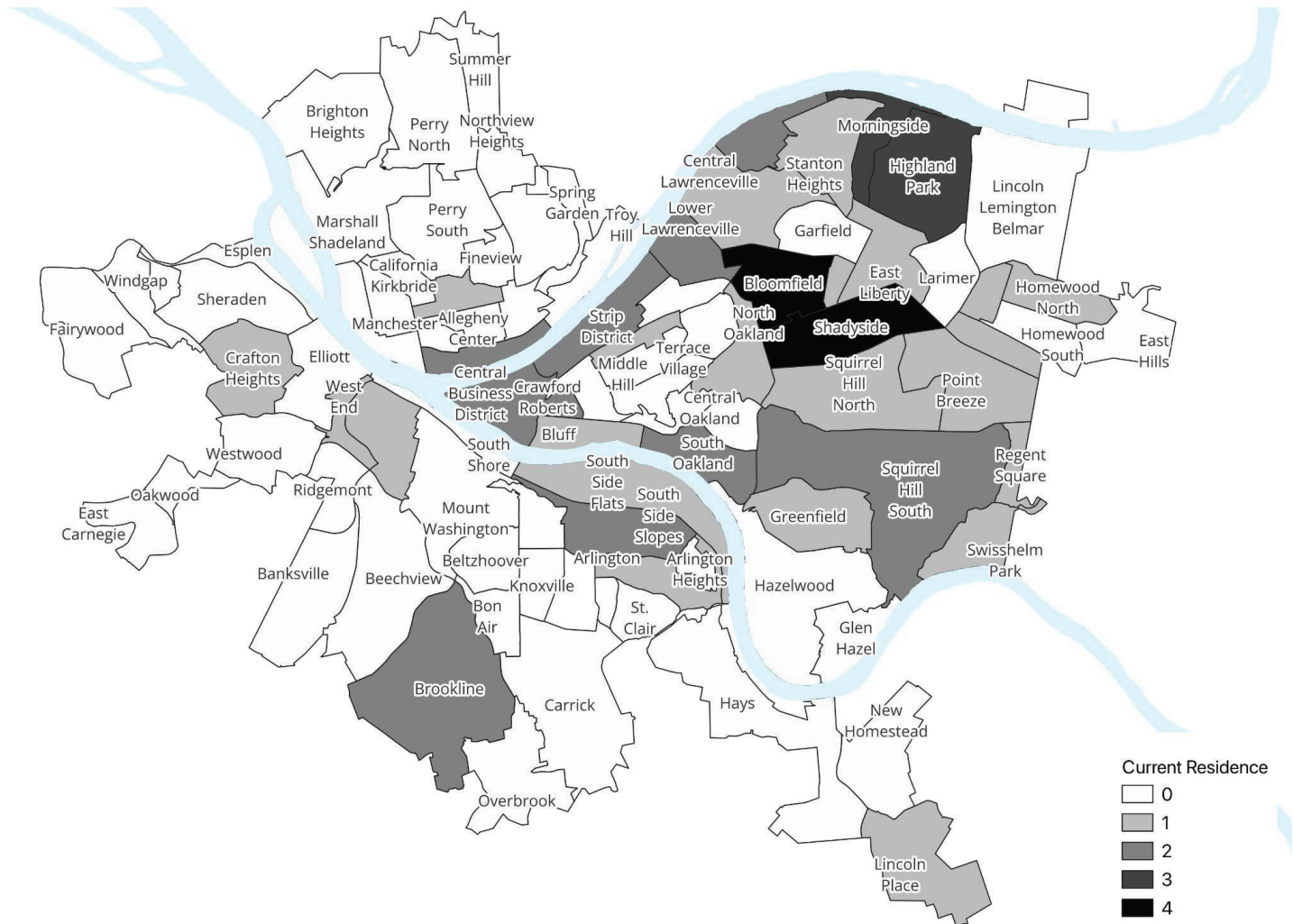
Of the Fair Housing organizations listed in the survey, only HUD and Neighborhood Legal Services were known by a majority of respondents. 23%–38% of respondents had every heard of other organizations that could help address discrimination including public civil rights agencies or nonprofits. These agencies with lower respondent recognition rates included Pittsburgh CHR, Allegheny County CHR, the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, and Community Justice Project. Of those, Pittsburgh CHR had the highest (38%) rate of familiarity. Only 5% of respondents had ever contacted any of the agencies and nonprofits to address housing-related discrimination, and 3% had ever contacted any of the agencies and nonprofits to address employment-related discrimination.

*Table 06: How discrimination was addressed*

How was discrimination addressed?	Respondent %
Addressed discrimination and stayed in my home	47%
Discrimination sometimes but not always addressed	36%
Left living situation	19%
Discrimination didn't stop but couldn't leave	8%

## Residence and Discrimination by Neighborhood

Figure 05: Respondent Current Home Neighborhood within PGH



Consistent with the understanding that Pittsburgh has no single centralized “gayborhood,” respondents reported living presently across a wide swath of the city, with a slightly higher concentration in the east side neighborhoods of Shadyside and Bloomfield. A subsequent secondary concentration of residence appears to exist presently in Highland Park, Squirrel Hill, Lawrenceville, the Strip District, Downtown/ Central Business District, Allegheny Center, and Brookline. The survey responses in this section are relatively small numbers and should not be viewed as entirely representative of LGBTQIA+ Pittsburgh residents as a whole.

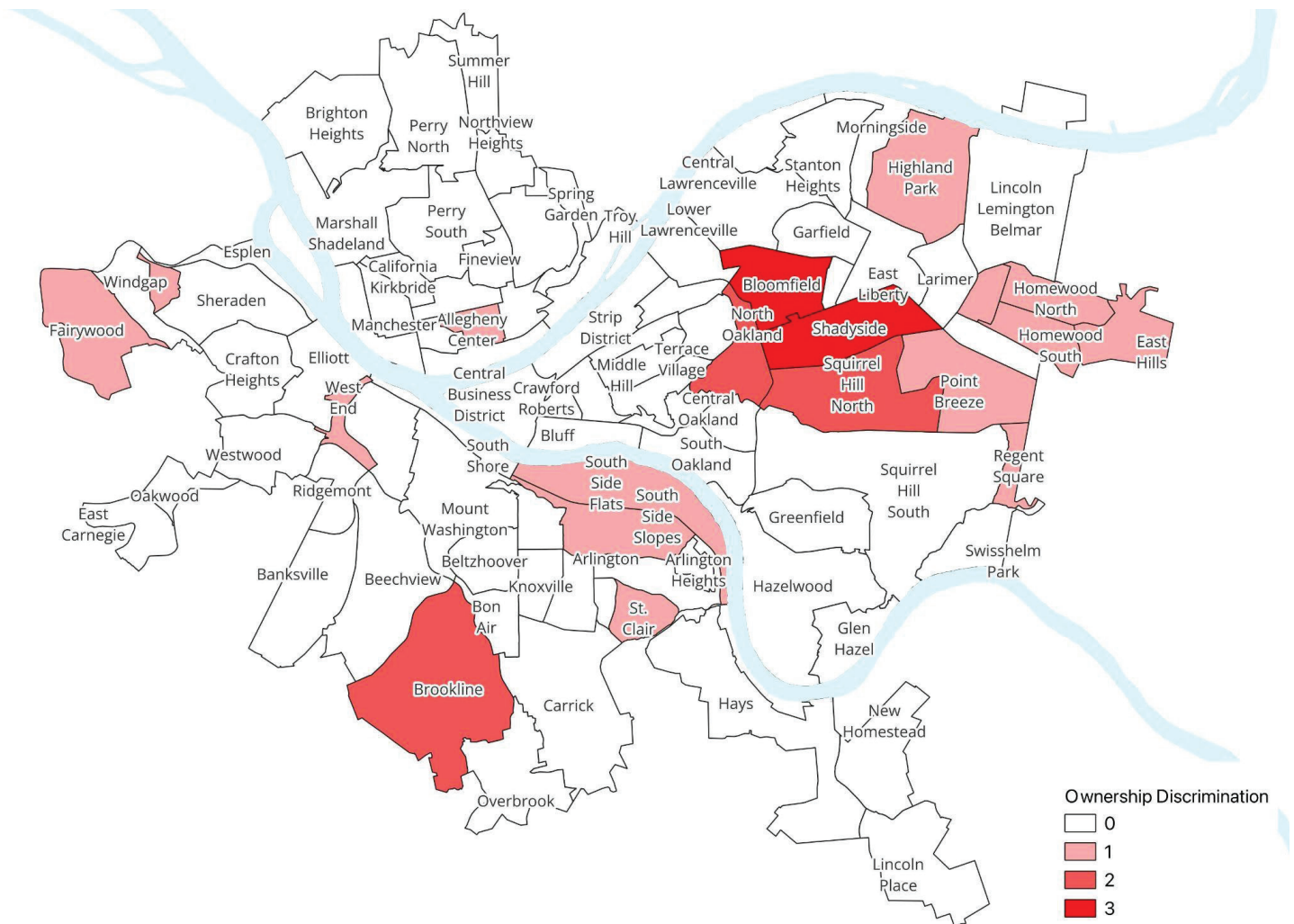
Figure 06: Respondent Past Home Neighborhood within PGH



Respondents reported living previously across a similar range of neighborhoods and parts of the city, with a noticeable past concentration around Bloomfield/Shadyside and its surrounding neighborhoods (Oakland, Squirrel Hill, and East Liberty). Smaller pockets of residence on the north and south sides of the city are evident with a longer-range perspective that includes previous residences.

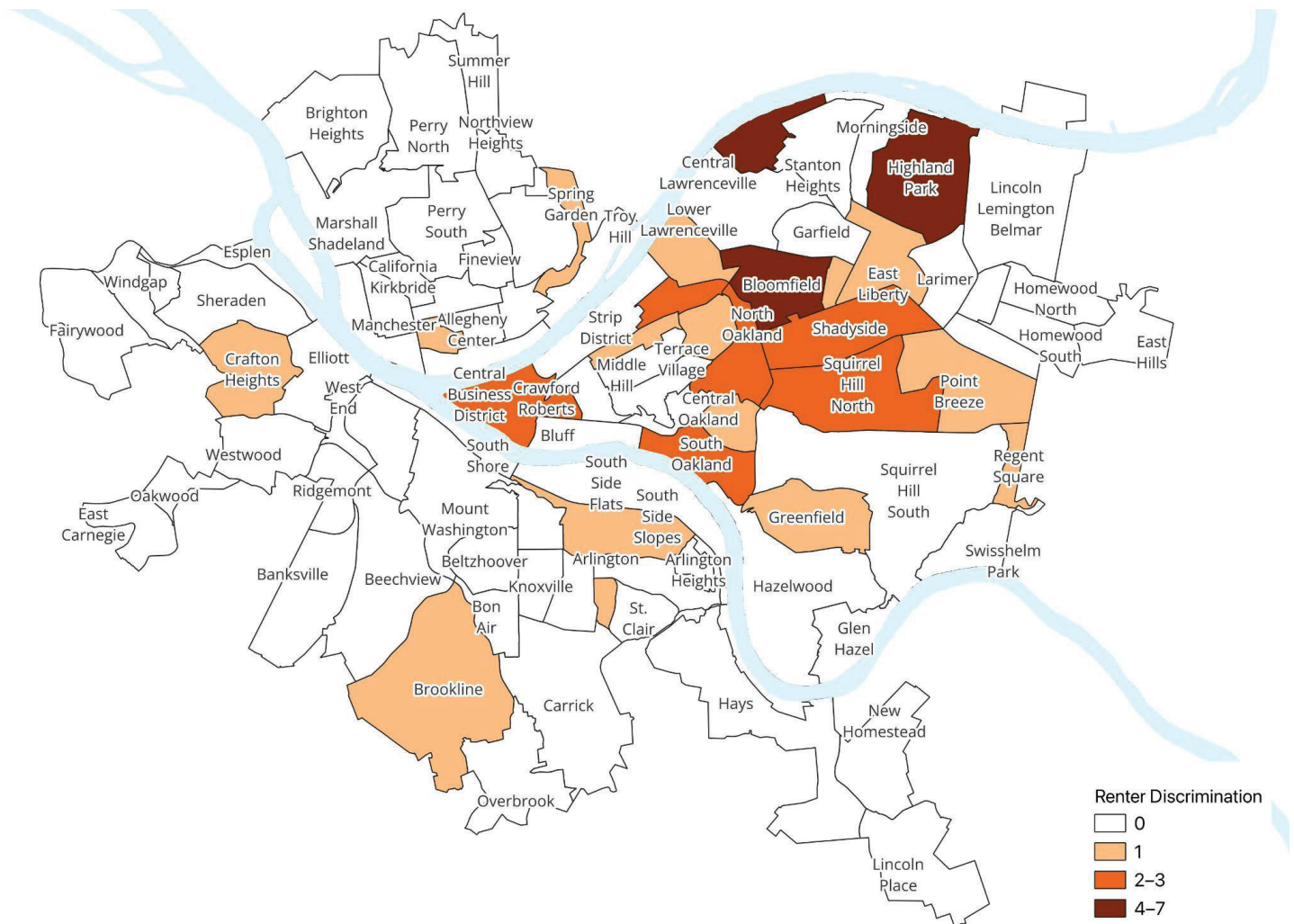


Figure 07: Reported Ownership Discrimination within PGH



Discrimination hotspots roughly track with where LGBTQIA+ people report living. The Shadyside/Bloomfield/Squirrel Hill area and Brookline have notable concentrations of home ownership discrimination. The number of respondents who answered this question is small, so readers should be wary of making strong insights, especially at the margins.

Figure 08: Renter Discrimination within PGH



Discrimination hotspots roughly track with where LGBTQIA+ people report living. Compared to home ownership discrimination, renter discrimination is more dispersed across the city. This may be due to the greater number of renters and past renters among respondents or the selection bias of those LGBTQIA+ people in a position to buy a home having a preference for a smaller subset of neighborhoods. The number of respondents who answered this question is small, so readers should be wary of making strong insights, especially at the margins.



# Potential Actions

Addressing housing discrimination is an ongoing and shared effort that implicates local, state, and federal government, as well as the civic sector, the business community (especially the real estate community), and private individuals. While the LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Research project was primarily focused on fact-finding and not recommendations, several potential actions emerged through conversations with the community and service providers. The focus of all of these recommendations is to increase proactive enforcement of Fair Housing, creating greater opportunities for LGBTQIA+ residents of Pittsburgh to find and stay in safe, stable housing.

Potential actions include:

- Strengthening relationships between existing organizations (including Pittsburgh CHR) and members of LGBTQIA+ communities;
- Iterating on and improving communication pathways from local government to LGBTQIA+ communities;
- Maintaining and distributing a list of housing providers who have demonstrated commitment to inclusive and anti-discriminatory services;
- Creating a method to report and track suspected discrimination without initiating investigations;
- Continuing to educate landlords (including public and affordable housing landlords), agents/brokers, housing finance professionals;
- Supporting informal care/housing networks (with funding and resources), especially housing providers that are “by and for” the community;
- Increasing pairs-testing capacity.

All of these potential actions would involve the dedication of additional resources and support, either by local government, by independent nonprofit organizations, or through collaborations. Pittsburgh CHR should explore what each of these could mean for the city and how (and by whom) they could be implemented.

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# APPENDICES



# **APPENDIX A:**

## **SURVEY LANGUAGE**

# Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Survey

Hello! This is the official survey for the Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Research initiative. The survey is being conducted on behalf of the City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (CHR). The Commission is trying to learn more about housing discrimination committed against LGBTQIA+ community in Pittsburgh, in order to better enforce Fair Housing laws in the community. The survey is being run by Outwith Studio, a queer- and trans-led urban planning and research firm. Ongoing updates to this effort will be posted at [lgbtqia-rights.house](http://lgbtqia-rights.house).

Answering the questions here should take about 20–35 minutes.

## What will we do with this information?

All data collected through this survey will be used to assess the extent and nature of housing discrimination in Pittsburgh for the Commission on Human Relations and other officials of the City of Pittsburgh. Outwith Studio and CHR will analyze the data as submitted by participants. Any official reports to the public will include only aggregated data and quotes from long-form questions to illustrate the issues. No identifying information will be included in reports, and any public data releases will remove identifying information of all survey participants. Within the survey, participants may request that Outwith Studio and CHR withhold their responses from any public data release.

## Thank You Raffle

Eligible survey participants will be entered into a raffle as a thank you for your participation. Raffle winners will receive one of ten \$50 prepaid debit cards.

## Content Warning

This survey asks about difficult and potentially painful experiences with discrimination and housing instability. For some participants, seeing and answering these questions may be emotionally difficult. Most questions are not mandatory, and the few mandatory questions have options not to answer. Feel free to skip questions or end the survey at any time.

# What is Housing Discrimination?

Discrimination in housing means unequal treatment on the basis of a person or household's identity by a housing provider, real estate professional, mortgage lender, or related person/business. Discrimination could include harassment, unequal pricing, unequal terms in a contract or lease, refusal to rent or sell, unequal maintenance practices, failure to provide reasonable accommodations, steering potential buyers or renters to certain neighborhoods or away from others, and other practices.

Housing discrimination is illegal in Pittsburgh under federal, state, county, and local law. The City of Pittsburgh specifically prohibits discrimination based on the following factors:

- Ancestry
- Citizenship Status
- Color
- Disability
- Familial Status (e.g, presence of children)
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Protective and Cultural Hair Textures/Styles and Head Coverings
- National Origin
- Place of Birth
- Preferred Language
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence

Housing discrimination can be based on several of these factors at the same time. LGBTQIA+ people are known to face housing discrimination at rates higher than the general population. This is especially true for LGBTQIA+ people of color.

## **Demographics, Identity, and Household**

Now we'll ask some questions about you, your living situation, and your identity. These questions will help the research team understand how your sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression relate to other parts of your identity and experiences of housing discrimination.

### **Do you currently live in the City of Pittsburgh?**

- Yes
- No

### **How long have you lived here?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 10+ years
- All my life

### **What neighborhood do you currently live in?**

These are the City's official neighborhood designations. See the official neighborhood map [here](#).

### **Did you previously live in the City of Pittsburgh?**

Before your current time living in Pittsburgh. If you've lived in Pittsburgh all your life, say no.

### **How long did you live in the City of Pittsburgh previously?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years

- 3–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 10+ years

**What neighborhoods have you ever lived in?**

**If you lived in Pittsburgh previously, but do not live here now, why did you leave?**

**Which phrase or phrases best describe your sexuality or sexual orientation?**

This list of options isn't meant to be definitive. It just helps us understand how experiences differ within the LGBTQIA+ community. Answer however you feel comfortable.

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Fluid
- Straight
- Asexual
- Prefer not to say
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Which phrase or phrases best describe your gender identity and/or sex?**

This list of options isn't meant to be definitive. It just helps us understand how experiences differ within the LGBTQIA+ community. Answer however you feel comfortable.

- Cis woman
- Cis man
- Trans woman (or other transfeminine identity)

- Trans man (or other transmasculine identity)
- Trans
- Nonbinary
- Genderfluid
- Intersex
- Prefer not to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you say your gender identity differs from your gender assigned at birth?**

**Would you say your gender expression differs from what is expected of cisgender people of your gender assigned at birth?**

**Which phrase or phrases best describes your racial and/or ethnic identity?**

- White
- Black or African American
- Latin (Latina, Latino, Latine, Latinx or Hispanic)
- East Asian
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Southwest Asian, Middle Eastern, or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Indigenous American or Native American
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have a disability?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



**Is your disability visible or apparent to others?**

**Does your disability impair any of the following?**

- Mobility
- Hearing
- Vision
- None of the above

**Does your disability primarily relate to your mental health?**

**Do you use an assistance animal?**

**Were you born in the US?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Where were you born?**

**Were your parents and grandparents born in the US?**

**Where were your parents/grandparents born, for those born outside the US?**

**Are you a native English speaker?**

**Do you speak languages other than English at home?**

**Which language(s) other than English do you speak at home?**

**Which best describes your citizenship or immigration status?**

This information will not be shared and all data will be anonymized.

- US citizen
- Permanent resident
- Refugee or asylee
- Temporary Protected Status
- Temporary visa, such as a student visa
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Undocumented
- Prefer not to say
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**How many people are in your current household?**

**Do you currently live with close relatives (partner, parents, siblings, grandparents, children)?**

**What best describes your current living situation?**

- I own my home.
- I rent my home from a landlord/property owner.
- I sublet (I rent from someone who rents from the landlord/property owner).
- I live with friends or family on an ongoing basis.
- I'm staying with friends or family temporarily.
- I'm staying in emergency or shelter housing.
- I have no place to stay.

**Describe your current living situation in your own words.**

## Housing History

I have **owned** a home, **tried to buy** a home, or looked at homes for sale with the intent to buy for myself or me and my partner.

I **tried to buy** a home **but could not** find suitable housing I could afford.

I have **rented** a home with my (legal or chosen) name on the lease.

I have **sublet** a home (rented it from the person whose name is on the lease).

I have **tried to rent** a home **but could not** find suitable housing that I could afford.

I have **needed emergency housing** (i.e., I didn't have a place to stay and needed a shelter, a friend's place to crash, etc.).

I have been threatened with **eviction or foreclosure** or received a formal eviction or foreclosure notice.

I have been **kicked out** of my home by a **family** member.

I have been **kicked out** of my home by someone who is **not a family** member.

# **Discrimination in Home Buying, Lending, and Ownership**

Now we'll ask you about your experiences with housing discrimination as a homebuyer and/or homeowner. If applicable, we'll ask about discrimination in rental and emergency/transitional housing later.

## **Homebuying**

Answer each question "yes, explicit" if the discriminatory reasoning was openly stated by the person discriminating, "yes, suspected" if you think you were discriminated against but do not have explicit evidence, or "no" if it didn't occur.

**Has a home seller ever refused to sell to you because of your identity or household characteristics?**

- Yes, explicit
- Yes, suspected
- No

**Has a home seller ever refused to negotiate with you because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Has a home seller ever set special terms or conditions on a sale to you because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been denied the opportunity to see available housing because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever encountered a housing advertisement or real estate listing that said you would not be an eligible buyer based on your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been discouraged from renting a home by a property owner or real estate broker/agent because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Has a real estate broker or agent ever shown you home listings in some neighborhoods or some buildings rather than others because of your identity or household characteristics?**

## **Homeowner's insurance**

**Have you ever been refused homeowners insurance because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been given different terms for insurance because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever had a homeowner's insurance claim denied or adjusted because of your identity or household characteristics?**

## **Mortgage Lending**

**Have you ever been denied a mortgage loan because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been given different mortgage loan terms or conditions because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been refused information about a mortgage loan or the opportunity to apply for a mortgage loan because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Has your home been appraised (valued in relation to a loan or sale) differently because of your identity or household characteristics?**

## **Other Homeownership Issues**

**Has your home been assessed (valued in relation to property taxes) differently because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been harassed by an employee or official of a condominium association, homeowners association (HOA), or similar organization that your home was subject to?**

**Have you ever been harassed by a neighbor whose property was subject to the same condominium association, HOA, or similar organization that your home was also subject to?**

**Have you ever been harassed by a neighbor (who was not in the same condominium association or HOA)?**

**Have you ever received unequal maintenance practices, unequal terms and conditions, or any other unequal treatment by a condominium association, HOA, or similar organization because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been encouraged to sell your home based on the characteristics of people moving in or out of the building or area?**

**Have you ever been retaliated against by any party because you complained about discrimination?**



## Basis of Discrimination

**When facing the discriminatory acts related to homebuying, homeownership, and lending, what factors were stated or do you suspect were the reasons for the discrimination?**

- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Sex
- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Ancestry
- Preferred Language
- Citizenship or Immigration Status
- Place of Birth
- Religion
- Familial Status (e.g, presence of children)
- Marital Status
- Disability
- HIV/AIDS status
- Age (40 and older)
- Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence
- Protective and Cultural Hair Textures/Styles and Head Coverings
- Source of Income
- Criminal History
- Homelessness
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you selected more than one basis of discrimination, do you think your sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression was the primary reason for the discrimination?**

## Location

**Did the discriminatory acts we asked about above occur in the City of Pittsburgh?**

- All the acts I answered “yes” to occurred in the City of Pittsburgh.
- Some of the acts I answered “yes” to occurred in the City of Pittsburgh.
- None of the acts I answered “yes” to occurred in the City of Pittsburgh.

**Which Pittsburgh neighborhood(s) did this discrimination occur in?**

- Not Applicable

**Where did these discriminatory acts occur?**

List addresses or any other location information that you’re comfortable sharing.

## In Your Own Words

If desired, describe the discrimination in your own words with as much or as little detail as you like.

## **Discrimination in Home Renting**

Now we'll ask you about your experiences with housing discrimination as a home renter and tenant. If applicable, we'll ask about discrimination in emergency/transitional housing later.

### **Rental Showing and Leasing**

**Has a landlord, property manager, or sublessor ever refused to rent to you because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Has a landlord, property manager, or sublessor ever refused to negotiate with you because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Has a landlord, property manager, or sublessor ever set special terms or conditions on a lease or rental agreement because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been denied the opportunity to see available rental housing because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever encountered a housing advertisement or real estate listing that said you would not be an eligible renter based on your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been discouraged from renting a home by a landlord, property manager, current tenant, or real estate broker/agent because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Has a real estate broker or agent ever shown you home rental listings in some neighborhoods, some buildings, or some areas within a building rather than others because of your identity or household characteristics?**

## **Maintenance and Management**

**Has a landlord or property manager ever refused to fix maintenance issues, failed to complete maintenance requests, or delayed completion of maintenance requests because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been denied access or privileges to certain property features (common areas, amenities) because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you or someone living with you ever been evicted from your home because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you, someone living with you, or a guest ever been denied entry to your home because of your identity or household characteristics?**

## **Other Rental Issues**

**Have you ever been harassed by a landlord, property manager, or other staff or contractor controlled by your landlord in any way because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been harassed by a neighbor in the same rental building or with the same landlord because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you ever been harassed by a neighbor NOT in the same building or with the same landlord because of your identity or household characteristics?**

**Have you been retaliated against by a landlord, property manager, or other staff or contractor controlled by your landlord in any way because of your identity or household characteristics?**

## **Housing Instability and Discrimination in Emergency or Transitional Housing**

Now we'll ask about your experiences of housing instability and discrimination in emergency or transitional housing settings. This includes your experiences of losing housing and experiences with shelters, residential recovery centers, and other group living settings.

### **Housing Insecurity**

**Have you ever had to “crash” at a friend’s, family’s, or acquaintance’s home because you didn’t have a place to stay?**

**Have you ever had to sleep in a car because you didn’t have a place to stay?**

**Have you ever had to sleep outside or “sleep rough” because you didn’t have a place to stay?**

**Have you ever traded sexual favors with someone in order to stay with them?**

**Have you ever traded good or services (other than sexual favors) with someone in order to stay with them?**

### **Emergency Shelters**

**Have you sought or stayed in an emergency shelter because you didn’t have a place to stay?**

**When staying at or trying to stay at an emergency shelter, has your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression ever been discussed negatively by staff?**

**When at an emergency shelter, were you harassed by other residents because of your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression?**

**If you experienced harassment by other emergency shelter residents, did the staff try to address and stop the harassment?**

**When staying at or trying to stay at an emergency shelter, were you made to access facilities that did not align with your gender identity?**

**For instance, if you're a trans person, were you made to stay in the facilities for your assigned gender at birth.**

**Have you ever been refused space in an emergency shelter because of your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression?**

## **Transitional Housing and Group Living**

**Have you ever sought or stayed in transitional housing or supportive housing?**

Transitional housing means a non-emergency but temporary housing situation, typically with supportive services, like a halfway house, sober living home, or group living setting after incarceration. Supportive housing means a permanent home with services attached to it, like a group living setting for people with developmental disabilities, mental-health-related disabilities, a history of homelessness, or a history of addiction.

**When staying in or trying to stay in transitional or supportive housing, has your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression ever been discussed negatively by staff?**

**When in transitional or supportive housing, were you harassed by other residents because of your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression?**

**If you experienced harassment by other transitional or supportive housing residents, did the staff try to address and stop the harassment?**

**When staying at or trying to stay in transitional or supportive housing, were you made to access facilities that did not align with your gender identity?**

For instance, if you're a trans person, were you made to stay in the facilities for your assigned gender at birth.

**Have you ever been refused space in transitional or supportive housing because of your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression?**

## **Location**

**Did these experiences with housing instability, emergency shelter, and transitional/supportive housing occur in the City of Pittsburgh?**

**Which Pittsburgh neighborhood(s) did these experiences occur in?**

**Where did these experiences occur?**

List addresses, facility names, or any other location information that you're comfortable sharing.

## **In Your Own Words**

If desired, describe the discrimination in your own words with as much or as little detail as you like.

## **Dealing with Discrimination**

Now we'll ask about your experiences addressing discrimination and working with organizations that fight discrimination.

## **In Your Own Words**

Describe how you responded to any housing discrimination you have faced in your own words with as much or as little detail as you like.

**When you faced discrimination, were you able to address the discrimination without leaving your living situation?**

- Yes, I addressed discrimination and stayed in my home
- Sometimes, but not always
- No, I had to leave my living situation
- No, the discrimination didn't stop and I couldn't leave

**Who would you contact if you were facing housing discrimination?**

## **Organizations that can help**

Now we'll ask if you've heard of or worked with anti-discrimination organizations.

**Have you heard of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations?**

**Have you heard of the Allegheny County Commission on Human Relations?**

**Have you heard of the Pennsylvania Commission on Human Relations?**

**Have you heard of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity?**

**Have you heard of the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh?**

**Have you heard of Neighborhood Legal Services?**

**Have you heard of the Community Justice Project?**

**Have you ever contacted any of the organizations we asked about because of housing discrimination?**

**Have you ever contacted any of the organizations we asked about because of discrimination in employment or public accommodations?**



**If applicable, what happened when you contacted those organizations?**

**If you had heard of these organizations but did not contact any of them to address discrimination against you, why not?**

## **Raffle and Follow-Up Contact**

Now you can optionally provide your contact info if you'd like to stay in touch. All answers to this survey are anonymous, and your contact information will not be shared with other parties.

As a thank you for your participation, Outwith Studio is raffling off a set of prizes to all survey participants. If you want to talk more about your experiences with housing discrimination and/or enter the raffle, use this section to enter your contact info.

### **Raffle Prizes**

Outwith Studio will randomly select ten eligible participants who will each win a \$50 prepaid debit card. Winners are encouraged to spend the prepaid cards at LGBTQIA+ owned businesses in the City of Pittsburgh. The websites QBurgh.com and queerpittsburgh.org each maintain directories of Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ owned businesses.

### **Raffle Terms**

Outwith Studio will randomly select the winners of the raffle prizes from eligible participants. Survey participants will be considered eligible if they are current or former residents of the City of Pittsburgh, answer at least one of the survey's sections on housing discrimination (regardless of the answers), and appear to have answered the survey in good faith. Outwith Studio reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to disqualify any participant it finds to be tampering with the entry process or the operation of the survey or raffle. Outwith Studio reserves the right to to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the raffle or any part of it. Participation in the survey or the raffle does guarantee a raffle prize. Any attempt by any person to deliberately undermine the legitimate operation of the raffle may be a violation of criminal and/or civil law, and should such an attempt be made, Outwith Studio reserves the right to seek damages from any such person as allowed by applicable law. Outwith Studio's failure to enforce any of these terms shall not constitute a

waiver of that provision. All issues and questions concerning the construction, validity, interpretation and enforceability of these terms, or the rights and obligations of you and Outwith Studio in connection with the raffle, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, without giving effect to any choice of law provisions. All applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply. By participating in the raffle, you agree to waive the right to trial by jury of any action, suit, proceeding, dispute, claim or controversy arising out of or relating to the raffle. In the event of a dispute arising out of this raffle, you and Outwith Studio will attempt in good faith to resolve the dispute by mediation before a mutually agreed upon mediator, or, failing mutual agreement as to a mediator and/or alternatively, appointed by and through the American Arbitration Association ("AAA"), and to share equally in the cost of mediation. If the dispute is not resolved through mediation, then arbitration will apply. Arbitration must be conducted on an individual basis. The arbitration shall be conducted in Pittsburgh, PA or Philadelphia, PA, by one neutral arbitrator chosen by AAA according to its Commercial Arbitration Rules. Except where prohibited by law, by participating, you agree that any and all claims, judgments and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including costs associated with entering this raffle.

**Would you like to stay updated about the LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Research initiative through periodic emails?**

**Would you be willing to talk with the City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations or Outwith Studio staff to discuss your experience with discrimination in more detail?**

**Would you like to be entered into the raffle?**

**Enter your contact info if you want to stay in touch and/or enter the raffle.**

Contact info is not required to submit your answers.

Thank you for your participation! If you have provided contact details, we will follow up with you via email.

# **APPENDIX B:**

## **PRIDE TABLING COLLATERAL**



**HOME IS**

**IS HOME**

MAKES A HOME  
**QUEER**

**FIGHT  
HOUSING  
DISCRIMINATION**

**KNOW YOUR  
RIGHTS**

**SHARE YOUR  
STORY**

**LGBTQIA-RIGHTS.HOUSE**

# **APPENDIX C:**

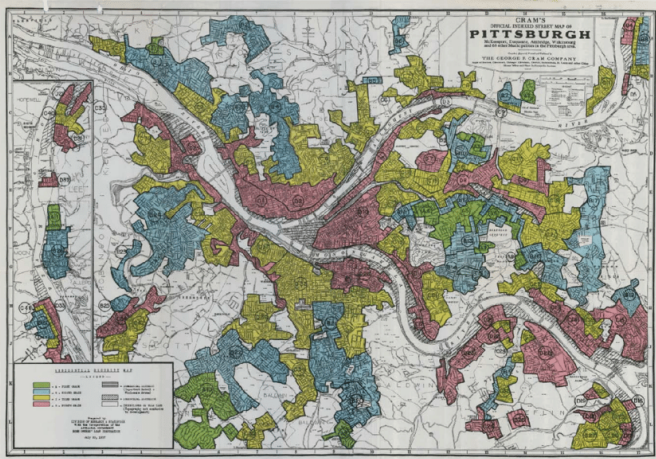
## **EXHIBIT BOARDS AND MAP OVERLAYS**



# LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Research Initiative



The City of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations is undertaking the LGBTQIA+ Housing Rights Research Initiative to better understand how LGBTQIA+ people have experienced housing discrimination in Pittsburgh, and what issues the city should focus on as it enforces anti-discrimination law. Discrimination on other bases is well documented and understood. This project will help us document and understand discrimination in the LGBTQIA+ community, as well.



*Discriminatory practices on the basis of race and nationality were drawn into 'red-lining' maps in the 1930s. These maps guided mortgage lending and real estate practices for years, and their impacts can still be felt today.*

## Discrimination in the shelter system

LGBTQ individuals, especially youth, are more likely to experience homelessness and face discrimination in the shelter system. Transgender people in particular who have experienced homelessness are likely to have been denied shelter due to their gender identity or expression, as well as experienced mistreatment at shelters, including harassment, assault, or made to access facilities that don't align with their gender identity. LGBTQ individuals may also be harassed by staff or peers, which can make them feel unsafe and uncomfortable seeking help.

## What is housing discrimination?

Discrimination in housing means unequal treatment on the basis of a person's or household's identity by a housing provider, real estate professional, mortgage lender, or related person/business. Discrimination could include harassment, unequal pricing, unequal terms in a contract or lease, refusal to rent or sell, unequal maintenance practices, failure to provide reasonable accommodations, steering potential buyers or renters to certain neighborhoods or away from others, and other practices.

Like other factors related to personal identity, housing discrimination on the basis LGBTQIA+ identity is illegal. The City of Pittsburgh specifically prohibits discrimination based on the following factors:

- Ancestry
- Citizenship Status
- Color
- Disability
- Familial Status (e.g, presence of children)
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Protective and Cultural Hair Textures/Styles and Head Coverings
- National Origin
- Place of Birth
- Preferred Language
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Status as a Survivor of Domestic Violence

Housing discrimination can be based on several of these factors at the same time. LGBTQIA+ people are known to face housing discrimination at rates higher than the general population. This is especially true for LGBTQIA+ people of color.



# Our City, Our Stories

Individuals multiple identities and their **intersectionality** may affect how they experience housing discrimination. Experiences and perceptions of discrimination based on race or class are still common in many places that are viewed as welcoming by some LGBTQIA+ people who hold different privileges.

Responding to the condition that 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQIA+, **Proud Haven** provides short term emergency housing services for LGBTQIA+ young people in Pittsburgh.

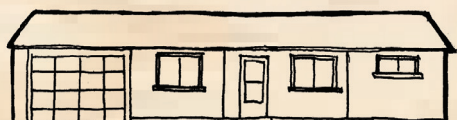
0 500 1,000 ft



**Brewer's Bar + Hotel** is a historic Pittsburgh bar catering to the LGBTQIA+ community. The hotel rooms above the bar served for many years as emergency shelter for LGBTQIA+ individuals who faced identity-based family rejection. During the early years of the AIDS epidemic, many gay men spent their final days living at Brewer's.



As the generation that pioneered early LGBT liberation ages, there is an increasingly recognized national need for **LGBTQIA+ friendly senior housing**. Pittsburgh's Mosaic Apartments will open in Fall 2025 to meet this need, allowing LGBTQIA+ seniors to access the housing and services they need free of discrimination from staff, or other residents.



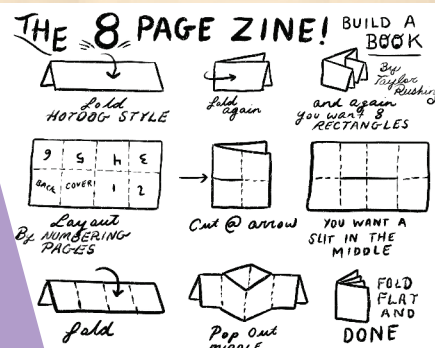


# Join the Conversation!

## Zine Making Activity

A zine is a self-published, non-commercial print-work that is typically produced in small, limited batches. Their content may be written, drawn, photographed, collaged, or any other medium. They may be text- or image-based, and are a form of creative self-expression.

- Please use one of the zine templates or blank paper provided, to share your own thoughts on the issues presented here.
- Once you have completed your zine(s), please add them to our community library, where visitors can peruse yours and other residents' stories.



## Some questions and prompts you may want to explore:

- Tell us about your journey through housing in your life.
- What does "home" mean for you as a queer person?
- How has the idea of chosen family changed your relationship to home?
- How has "home" affirmed or suppressed your LGBTQIA+ identity?
- What challenges have you faced in securing housing that is safe and affordable?

## What to do if you have faced housing discrimination?

### Document everything.

Use written communication like email or text, follow up verbal conversations with written summaries, take photos, save requests and confirmations made through online systems, etc.).

### Talk to an advocate.

Contact organizations like the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh (fhp.org) or Neighborhood Legal Services (nlsa.us) to connect with legal advocates who can give advice.

### File a complaint with CHR.

The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (CHR) can help if discrimination took place in the city within the last year. CHR can mediate conflict and get restitution. They may refer to other similar agencies that are best equipped to handle your case.

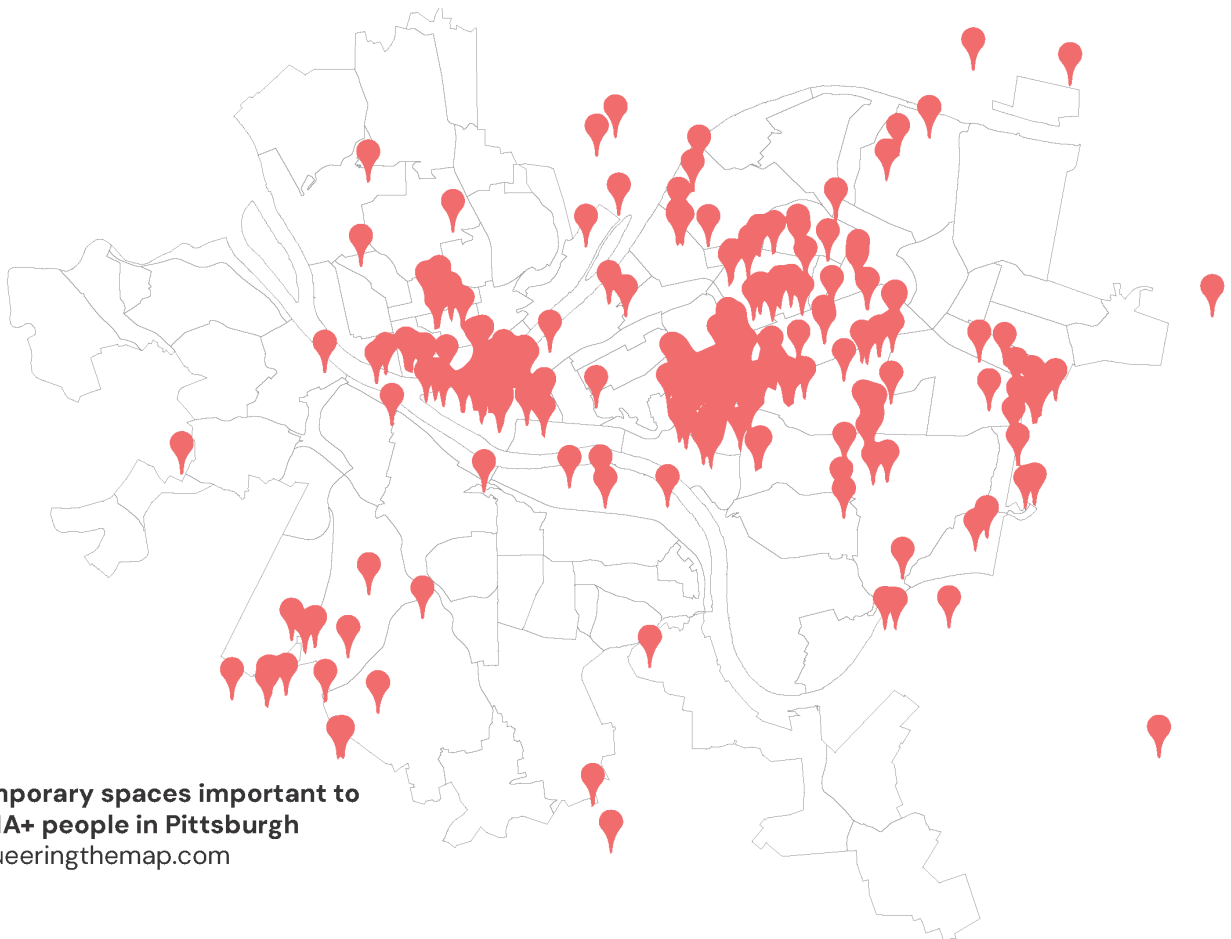
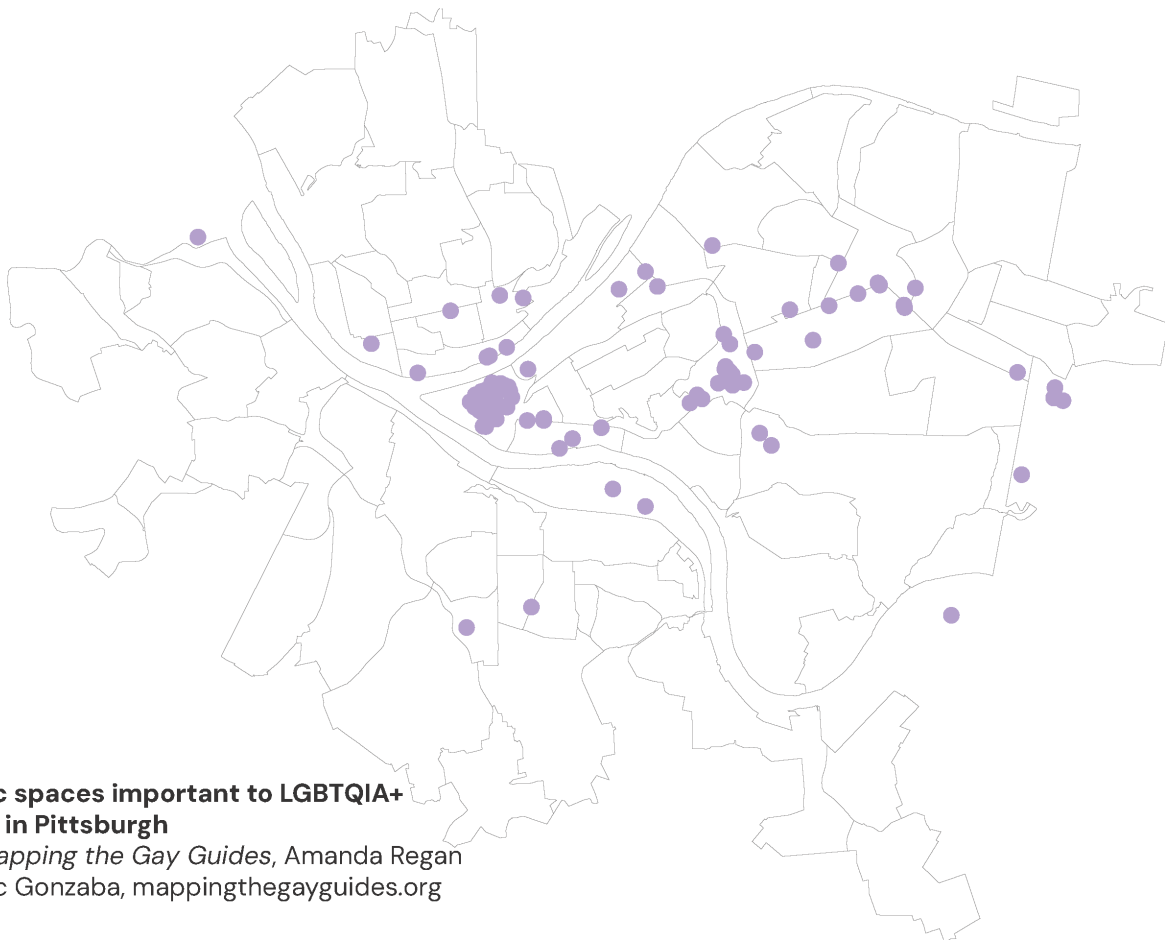
### Don't act before you're ready.

Talk to an advocate before you take matters into your own hands (by withholding rent, breaking terms of a contract, etc.).

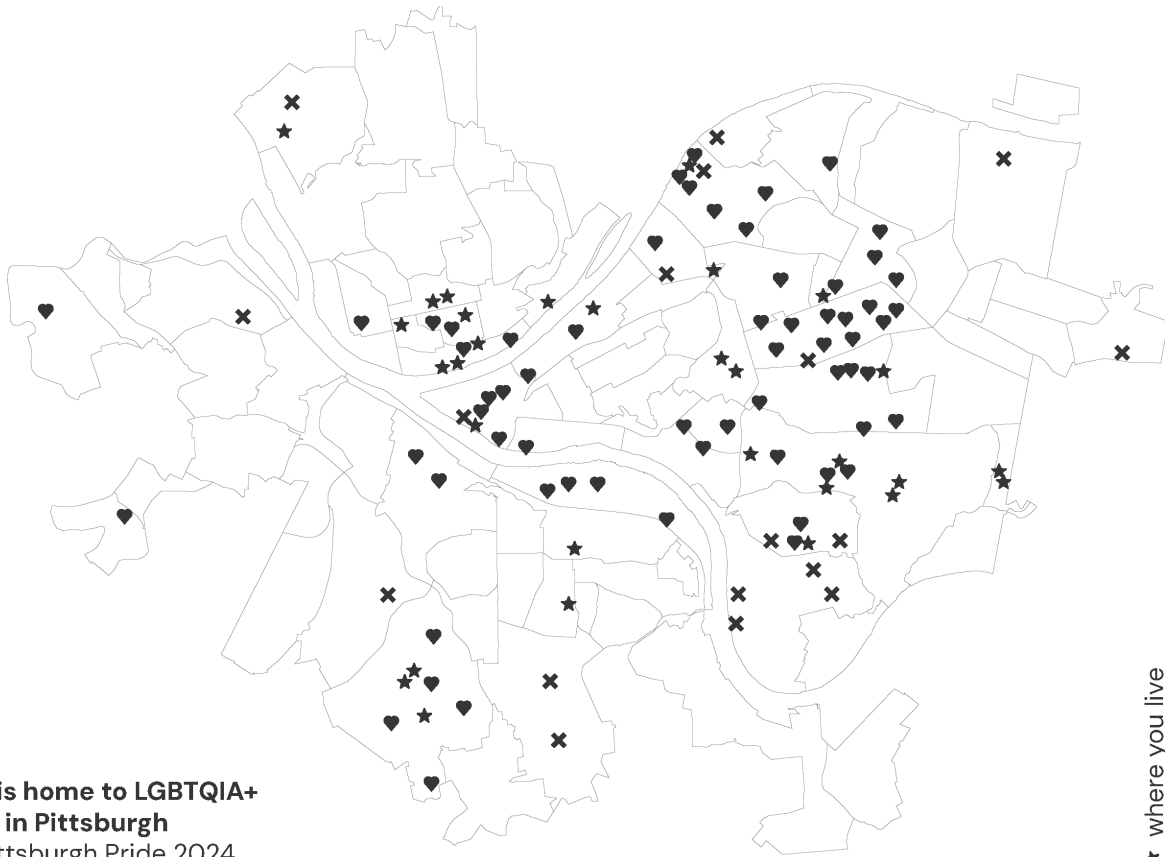


[lgbtqia-rights.house](http://lgbtqia-rights.house)





**where is home to LGBTQIA+  
people in Pittsburgh**  
from Pittsburgh Pride 2024



- ★ where you live
- ♥ where you feel most affirmed
- ✕ where you can't be yourself

# **APPENDIX D:**

## **ZINE TEMPLATE**

where i've lived

a challenge i've faced in housing...

housing justice would look like...

# FIGHT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION



unfold for more information  
on your housing rights and  
to take our survey

my  
**housing**  
journey

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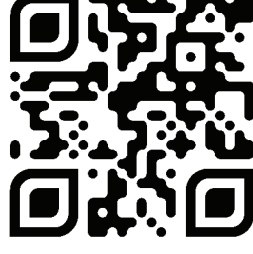
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Talk to an advocate before you take matters into your own hands (by withholding rent, breaking terms of a contract, etc.).



**Pittsburgh Commission  
On Human Relations**  
*Education · Collaboration · Enforcement*



[lgbtqia-rights.house](http://lgbtqia-rights.house)

# **APPENDIX E:**

## **ADVERTISEMENTS AND FLYERS**



# MOBILE **ZINE** ACTIVITY

## **LGBTQIA+ HOUSING RIGHTS RESEARCH**

Share your housing experience through art!

**8/12-8/18**

@ the Carnegie Library - East Liberty Branch

**8/15 @ 5pm**

Live Zine Making Workshop @ Carnegie Library -  
East Liberty Branch

**8/17 @ 1pm**

Live Zine Making Workshop @ City in the Streets -  
Knoxville

**8/19-mid-September**

@ QMNTY Center



**Pittsburgh Commission  
On Human Relations**

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# how do LGBTQIA+ people experience housing discrimination in Pittsburgh?



## LGBTQIA+ HOUSING RIGHTS RESEARCH

A project to learn about housing discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in Pittsburgh.

visit [lgbtqia-rights.house](https://lgbtqia-rights.house) to take the survey



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