



Committee on Human Services  
Budget Hearing: February 8, 2017

Testimony of  
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center  
*New York, NY*

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &  
TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER**  
208 W 13 ST NEW YORK, NY 10011

T. 212.620.7310

F. 212.924.2657

[gaycenter.org](http://gaycenter.org)

# THE CENTER

New York City's LGBT community formed The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center (The Center) in 1983, in response to the AIDS epidemic, ensuring a place for LGBT people to access information, care and support they were not receiving elsewhere. Now the largest LGBT multiservice organization on the East Coast, The Center sees more than 6,000 weekly visitors and hosts over 400 community group meetings each month. The Center has a solid track record of working for and with the community to increase access to a diverse range of high-quality services and resources, including our substance use recovery programming for adults and youth; HIV/AIDS programming; youth programs; and our families and opportunities work. Government support from the New York State Legislature is essential to our ongoing provisions of services.

We know that poverty disproportionately impacts our community members, to the detriment of their physical, mental and economic well-being. For example, lesbian couples increasingly live below the poverty line, with 14% of them receiving food stamps, compared to 6% of different-sex couples. Transgender individuals are up to four times more likely to live in poverty, with one-third of transgender people of color earning less than \$10,000 a year. From our work with LGBT youth in the child welfare system, we know that youth who are rejected by their families or forced to flee non-affirming placements are at a higher risk for homelessness and HIV infection; suffer academically; and are more likely to live in poverty and to abuse substances. Providing fiscal support for employment programs such as ours comports with the State's triple aim to improve individual health outcomes, improve population health outcomes, and decrease the cost of healthcare by ensuring that those most marginalized and vulnerable individuals, who are most likely to engage in the publicly-funded healthcare services, will be financially independent.

In recognition of these economic hardships faced by the most vulnerable members of our community, The Center designed and implemented LGBTWorks, an economic opportunities initiative that directly addresses the economic disparities highlighted above through personal and professional development programming. This initiative offers programming specifically tailored to address the needs of the lesbian and bisexual women, transgender individuals and youth in our community. **For FY18, The Center respectfully requests \$200,000 of funding to support the expansion of LGBTWorks.**

With a focus on connection, leadership and support, components of the initiative include:

- Workforce readiness activities including resume review, mock interviews, job training resources and career coaching.
- A peer navigation component, ensuring community members have the tools to access a range of resources devoted to their professional success.
- An evidence-based mentoring program.
- Academic enrichment programs, including GED and HSE courses.
- Seminars devoted to a broad range of topics designed for and led by community members such as how to start your own business, personal finance and basic computer literacy.

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &  
TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER**  
208 W 13 ST NEW YORK, NY 10011

T. 212.620.7310

F. 212.924.2657

gaycenter.org

# THE CENTER

- Offerings that respond directly to input from youth, women and transgender individuals, as well as evidenced-based research to enhance program effectiveness.

**Investing in efforts to support the LGBT community in accessing these crucial economic empowerment services only serves to benefit the State.** We believe that this model is sustainable, will improve the livelihoods of transgender people and will reduce negative health consequences such as HIV and other STDs, suicide, homelessness and more. In addition, this funding will allow The Center to create replicable models of this programming which can be exported around the State, a gain for all LGBT New Yorkers.

For over three decades, The Center has worked to ensure that the LGBT community of New York City has access to the highest quality and most diverse range of services and resources. Though we are living in a time of unprecedented social, legal and political acceptance of the LGBT community, there is still much work to be done on a local and state level to ensure that our community members can successfully combat the economic injustice they face daily. With the support of tailored human services programming from experience, culturally competent and trusted providers, LGBT New Yorkers can access vital health and human services and achieve improved health and socioeconomic outcomes.

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &  
TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER  
208 W 13 ST NEW YORK, NY 10011**

T. 212.620.7310  
F. 212.924.2657  
gaycenter.org

