UNDER ATTACK: 2022 LGBTQ+ SAFE SPACES
NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

AUTHORS

Audacia Ray, New York City Anti-Violence Project
Beverly Tillery, New York City Anti-Violence Project
Somjen Frazer, PhD, Strength in Numbers Consulting Group
Stephanie Hasford, Strength in Numbers Consulting Group
Orie Givens IV, New York City Anti-Violence Project

DATA COLLECTION and ANALYSIS
Strength in Numbers Consulting Group

Somjen Frazer, PhD
Stephanie Hasford
Laura Laderman

WRITING, OUTREACH, and ADVOCACY SUPPORT

New York City Anti-Violence Project	**The Raben Group**
Kwaku Farrar	Aladdin Fawal
Trimaine Ingram	Shawn Gaylord
Reem Fareed Ramadan	Diego Sanchez
Catherine Shugrue dos Santos	Erika West

Swarm Strategy Consulting

Bryce Celotto

REPORT DESIGNER

Nicholas Kong

Preferred citation

Ray, A., Tillery, B., Frazer, S., Hasford, S. and Givens, O. *Under Attack: 2022 LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces National Needs Assessment*. The New York City Anti-Violence Project. New York, NY. July 2023.

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

UNDER ATTACK: 2022 LGBTQ+ SAFE SPACES NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT. A REPORT BY THE NEW YORK CITY ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

About AVP: The New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP) began its work more than 40 years ago as a community-led safety initiative of LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected survivors that came together to support each other, advocate for justice and accountability, help educate others about the prevalence of anti-LGBTQ+ violence and the ways to address and prevent it. Today, AVP empowers LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing, public policy advocacy, education, and supports survivors through direct legal and social services. AVP is the largest LGBTQ+-specific anti-violence program in the country.

LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected survivors of violence and those who serve them can access AVP's 24/7 bilingual English/ Spanish hotline at 212-714-1141 via voice and text.

To report violence, request a training, support our work, or get more information about the LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces Protection Project, visit our website at avp.org.

LETTER FROM BEVERLY TILLERY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW YORK CITY ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

Dear reader,

On Saturday, November 19, 2022, a mass shooting occurred at Club Q, an LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Five people were killed, and 25 others were injured.

As news of the tragedy spread, in addition to the inevitable mourning that swept through the LGBTQ+ community, there was also a palpable sense of fear among other bar owners, organizational leaders and individuals alike. It was clear that this was not an isolated incident but, instead, part of a national trend of increasing and escalating bias-related violence aimed at many of our country's most marginalized communities, and a particular onslaught against trans and queer people.

The shooting happened during a time of unprecedented hate violence in the United States, targeting LGBTQ+ people, Black communities, Asian, Jewish, Muslim people, and immigrants. It happened alongside

efforts to ban books and gut school curricula in order to erase this country's history of racism and other forms of oppression. And it happened amidst the introduction of hundreds of anti-transgender bills nationwide aimed at criminalizing and denying trans people their basic right to self-determination.

The Club Q shooting reignited a national conversation about attacks on LGBTQ+ safe spaces that began after the Pulse nightclub mass shooting in Florida. At the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP), we began tracking this specific trend in 2019. Through this effort, we began to learn the ways white nationalist and far-right extremist ideologies have taken hold and are being used to promote violence against LGBTQ+ safe spaces and people and how that violence is connected to other forms of hate violence.

Our opponents are organized and utilizing extensive networks to spread misinformation to radicalize and activate groups and individuals. We are seeing how this system works to increase and intensify protests against Drag Story Hour (DSH). The Proud Boys were among the first groups to target DSH and instigate far-right activists to protest DSH events nationwide.

On Monday, November 21, two days after the Club Q shooting, AVP's staff began forming the idea of engaging LGBTQ+ safe spaces across the country in a conversation about what kinds of violence they are seeing and what they need to be safe.

This report is the result of that initial idea. A survey became an opportunity to collect data that could help our community at a very critical time. This is the first-ever survey of anti-LGBTQ+ hate violence threats and attacks targeting LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses, and it begins a larger effort to build a movement to keep our communities safer. This data provides invaluable insights into what is happening nationwide and what groups need to build safety. It includes recommendations for how government officials, community members, and organizations can help end this violence.

AVP would like to thank our partners who helped this project come together so quickly: Arcus Foundation and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund; key outreach partners CenterLink and Equality Federation; data partner Strength in Numbers Consulting Group; Bryce Celotto, Swarm Strategy; and the hundreds of organizations that took and promoted the survey.

We hope to continue engaging you in this effort because our community and our lives are truly at stake.

Until we are all safe and free,

Bev Tillery

INTRODUCTION

This is the first-ever national survey exploring hate violence directed at LGBTQ+ community-serving and -affirming organizations and businesses in the United States. In the LGBTQ+ community, much attention has been paid to the rising rates of interpersonal incidents of hate violence—acts of violence committed by individuals against other individuals because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. By all accounts, rates of anti-LGBTQ+ hate violence have been on the rise for many years. More recently, this hate violence has been exacerbated by the current polarized political and social climate in the United States. Though LGBTQ+ people represent around 7% of the population in the United States (Jones, 2023), they are nine times more likely to experience violent hate crimes (The Williams Institute, 2022).

It is no surprise that this hate and violence is also impacting LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses. Acts of hate violence committed against schools, faith-based organizations, and other institutions and public spaces in African American, Jewish, Muslim, and other racial and ethnic communities have long been documented and studied. Yet, the ways LGBTQ+ institutions and public spaces are impacted by anti-LGBTQ+ hate are just beginning to get attention.

The data and accounts from groups across the county collected in this report make it clear that information about the threats and violence aimed at LGBTQ+ organizations, as well as an organized response, are much needed and long overdue.

MEETING THE MOMENT

AVP has worked to document and report the experiences of LGBTQ+ survivors of violence locally and nationally for more than four decades. AVP's work supports survivors directly and includes leading the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), a network of organizations working to respond to and address violence in the LGBTQ+ community. AVP, in conjunction with NCAVP member organizations, produced reports between 1995-2018 on hate violence, intimate partner violence, and other topics relating to violence impacting LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected communities.

Since the 2016 election, AVP documented an increase in anti-LGBTQ+ violence, particularly targeting multiply marginalized groups within the LGBTQ+ community. Black transgender, gender non-conforming, and nonbinary people (TGNCNB) are victims of fatal attacks at disproportionately high rates, representing 2/3 of the 38 reported TNCNB people killed in 2022. And Black trans women, specifically, continue to be at the epicenter of this epidemic of violence.

The far right is building on the growing anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-trans sentiment to further dehumanize and criminalize TGNCNB people in the United States. Anti-transgender laws are denying trans youth access to lifesaving healthcare, banning them from participation in sports, and criminalizing TGNCNB people for simply being themselves, as well as parents who support their TGNCNB children's right to self-determination. As of the report date, more than 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced at the state level (Trans Legislation Tracker, n.d.).

In 2019, NCAVP published the report "Pride and Pain," which documented 22 anti-LGBTQ+ protests between May 15 and July 15, many of which were organized or instigated by known white supremacist organizations. In 2021, as the pandemic began to recede and large public gatherings returned, AVP observed an uptick in hate incidents directed toward LGBTQ+ events, with a particular focus on Drag Story Hour events.

In 2022 alone, there were more than 100 incidents of protests targeting drag events nationwide (GLAAD, 2023). Now, anti-drag bills are beginning to be used by right-wing legislators to attempt to deny LGBTQ+ people the right to self-expression, the right to assemble and the right to be visible in their local communities.

The November 2022 shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs, which took place on Transgender Day of Resilience and Remembrance, was the catalyst for the creation of this survey. At that moment, it was clear that the rise in harassment and violence against LGBTQ+ spaces and events must be analyzed as part of the larger context of growing anti-LGBTQ+ hate and violence because it requires more attention and coordinated response.

This first study shows the ways LGBTQ+ safe spaces are being targeted and harmed, that an overwhelming majority of groups surveyed experienced violence, and that violence has been relentless, widespread, and often organized. The data shows that LGBTQ+ spaces are under-protected and underfunded.

AVP designed this survey with the hope that the data be used as a tool to spark greater collective action and advocacy for hate violence prevention and safety planning strategies that center the needs of survivors of violence.

METHODS

How the Survey Was Conducted

From December 12, 2022, to March 31, 2023, the LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces National Needs Assessment survey was available online using the Qualtrics survey platform. The survey was completed by representatives from LGBTQ+-serving organizations and businesses located in the United States. The survey was promoted by the staff of AVP, Strength in Numbers Consulting Group (SINCG), and their networks. AVP staff, in collaboration with SINCG and Swarm Strategy, conducted outreach targeted to seven different types of organizations and businesses. The survey contained four sections: consent to take the survey; information about the organization's location, population focus, size and visibility; information about incidents that had occurred, whether the organization reported incident(s) to police and other entities, and follow up after reporting (if any) occurred; and questions about the security practices and needs of the organizations and businesses. Many of the questions included not only opportunities for participants to indicate whether they had experienced one or more events that were listed, but also allowed them to write in types of events experienced in "other, please specify" open-ended responses. Finally, there was an open-ended question at the end of the survey: "Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences or what you need?"

The survey was intended for organizations that are focused on the LGBTQ+ community or those that host events that are focused on this community. The organizational leader or a designated senior-level staff member was asked to fill out the survey only once. Organizations that are online-only or do not have a permanent physical location were invited to take the survey, as well as those that have a physical location.
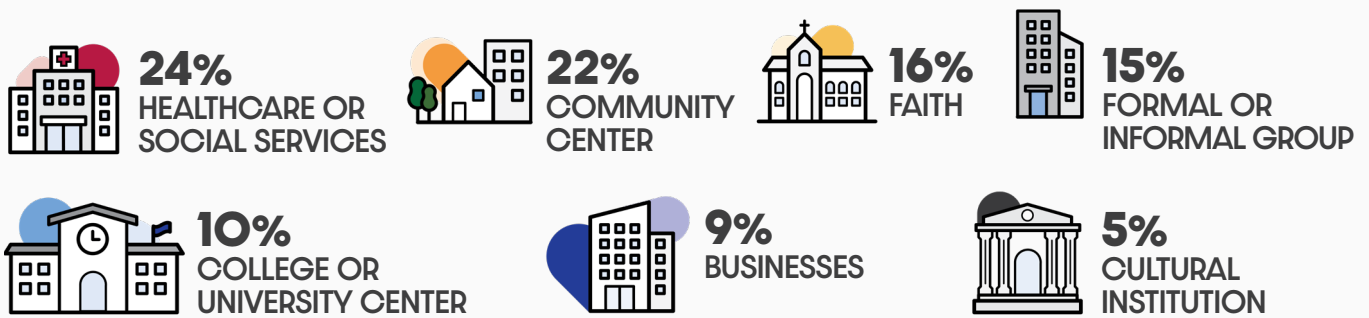
How Data Were Analyzed

Data were downloaded from Qualtrics and cleaned, recoded, and analyzed in R, a commonly used statistical package. All statistics were checked by a second analyst. No statistics are shown that contain fewer than 20 organizations in the denominator or five in the numerator in order to assure anonymity and improve the quality of the analysis shown. Open-ended responses to "other, please specify" questions were placed into the categories to which they belonged where appropriate (for example, if someone wrote "phone call" in the "other" category, it was placed into the category listed in the survey as "Threatening or harassing phone call") and were used to understand other types of violence not listed in the survey for the purposes of illustrating the varieties of violence and to inform future research. Selected, illustrative responses to the final qualitative questions are included verbatim (with minor edits for clarity and readabillity) throughout this report.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 380 LGBTQ+-serving organizations and businesses of all types completed the survey. The goal was to sample a variety of organizations from across the country that serve as "safe spaces" for members of the LGBTQ+ community. These include nonprofit organizations that provide services or engage in advocacy or organizing efforts on behalf of or with the community; businesses and organizations that serve as community meeting or building spaces such as community centers and bookstores; spaces that are social gathering places such as bars or event venues; or houses of worship and faith-based organizations or cultural institutions such as museums and libraries. These "safe spaces" make up the fabric of LGBTQ+ communities everywhere and are located across small towns and large cities nationwide.

LGBTQ+ safe spaces often serve more than one purpose as they can be one of the few places where those who are LGBTQ+ can seek refuge and build community, making their very presence life-affirming and lifesaving.

24% HEALTHCARE OR SOCIAL SERVICES

22% COMMUNITY CENTER

16% FAITH

15% FORMAL OR INFORMAL GROUP

10% COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CENTER

9% BUSINESSES

5% CULTURAL INSTITUTION

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES SURVEYED

Healthcare and social service organizations (23.5%) were the largest category of groups that completed the survey, followed by community centers (22.4%). LGBTQ+-affirming houses of worship (15.9%), formal or informal LGBTQ+ groups (14.9%), LGBTQ+ centers at colleges and universities (9.7%), LGBTQ+ businesses (8.9%), and cultural institutions with LGBTQ+ programming were also represented (4.6%).

81 | **25%** MIDWEST

72 | **22%** WEST

91 | **28%** NORTHEAST

79 | **25%** SOUTH
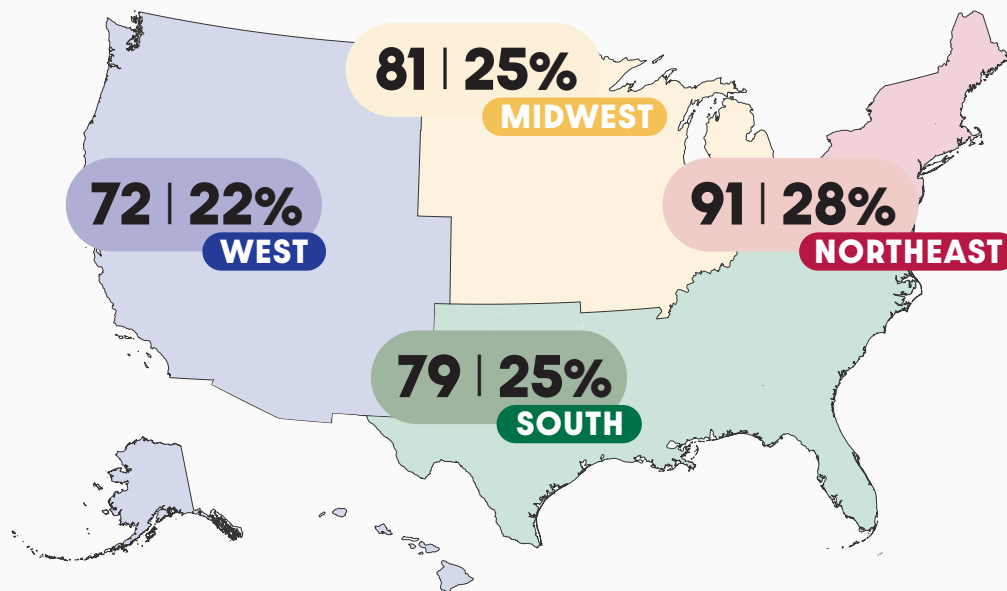
GROUPS SURVEYED BY CENSUS REGIONS

Surveys were completed by groups based in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with the largest number of responses from New York (15.8%), followed by California (6.5%) and Michigan (6.2%). All four census regions in the United States were well represented in this survey, with the largest percentage of responses in the Northeast (28.2%).

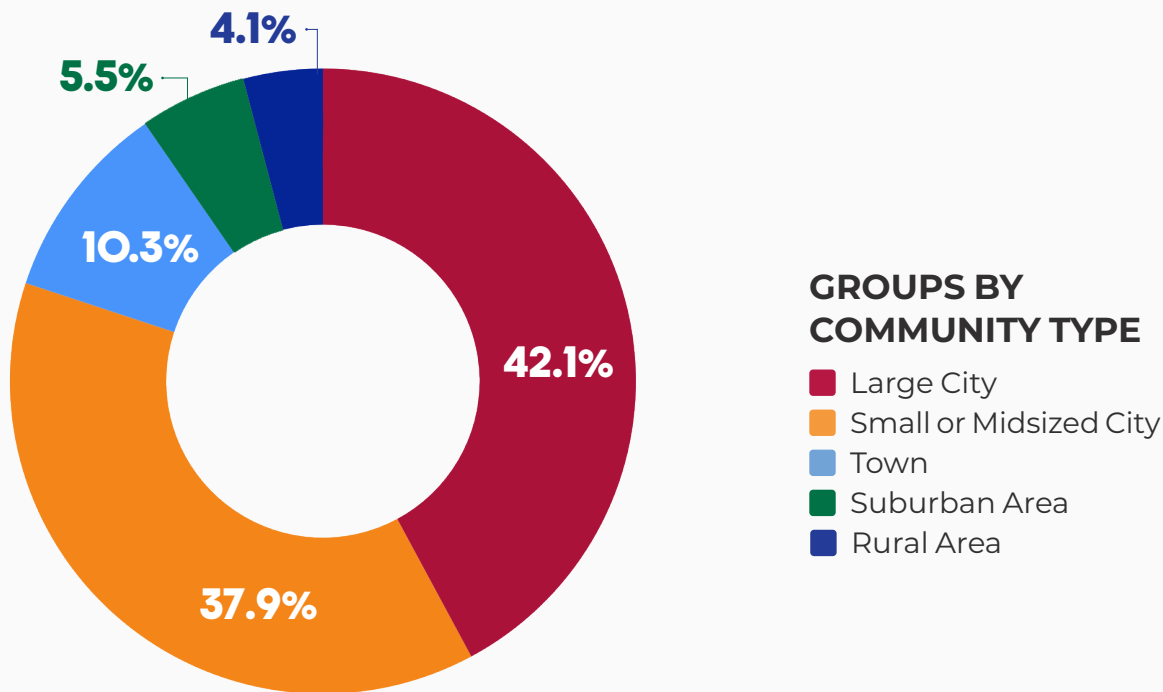**UNDER ATTACK:** 2022 LGBTQ+ SAFE SPACES NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Types of Organizations and Businesses Surveyed

We asked survey participants to answer the following question so that we could understand what type of organization or business most closely resembled their structure. These were also the descriptions used in outreach to let businesses and organizations know who was eligible to take the survey.

For what type of organization or business are you taking the survey? Please select the one that most closely resembles the type of organization or business.

- **LGBTQ+ Health Care or Social Service Agency:** Nonprofit, social service or health care center that is exclusively or predominantly intended to serve the LGBTQ+ community

- **LGBTQ+ Group:** Formal or informal social, political or support group for LGBTQ+ people or issues, including groups focused on specific parts of the community such as LGBTQ+ youth or older adults, trans people, LGBTQ+ people of color or Black trans people

- **LGBTQ+ Community Centers**, including centers focused on specific parts of the community such as LGBTQ+ youth or older adults, trans people, LGBTQ+ people of color or Black trans people

- **LGBTQ+ Bar, Nightlife Venue, Business** that is exclusively or predominantly intended to serve the LGBTQ+ community, including performance venues, bookstores, and retail spaces

- **LGBTQ+ Center or Office at a College or University**, including diversity centers where LGBTQ+ people are one of many groups of marginalized students

- **LGBTQ+-affirming House of Worship:** LGBTQ+ church, synagogue, temple, mosque, religious group, spiritual meeting place, LGBTQ+ affinity group, or other faith group with a focus on LGBTQ+ people

- **Cultural Institution with LGBTQ+ Programming:** museum, library, or other space that has hosted or produced at least one LGBTQ+ specific event in the past twelve months

GROUPS BY COMMUNITY TYPE

- Large City — 42.1%
- Small or Midsized City — 37.9%
- Town — 10.3%
- Suburban Area — 5.5%
- Rural Area — 4.1%

In addition to their state, participants were also asked if their organization is located in a city, town, suburban, or rural area. Less than half (42.1%) are in a large city, while nearly half of all respondents are located in either a midsized city (37.9%) or a town (10.3%). With 57.9% of all organizations located outside of large cities, it is important to note that resources may be scarce while needs may be high in these areas.

STANDING ALONE IN A RURAL STATE

"As one of the only LGBTQ+ organizations serving our area, we are a highly visible target. We have received our share of harassing phone calls, a Zoom bombing, and occasional letters suggesting we embrace Jesus. Generally, these haven't seemed like any immediate threat. We were worried, though, at our last Pride event (which had about 7,500-10,000 attendees) that there could be violence but felt protected by local police and a group of peacekeepers. Recently we received a hate email from a lone actor (despite claims of being the founder and president of the New England White Network), which got my attention. Our staff of three was also doxed over Gab.com. We are aware of the threat, and have found the FBI very helpful, but we also realize there is a limit to any type of protection. I keep my baseball bat next to my bed and now worry a lot more."
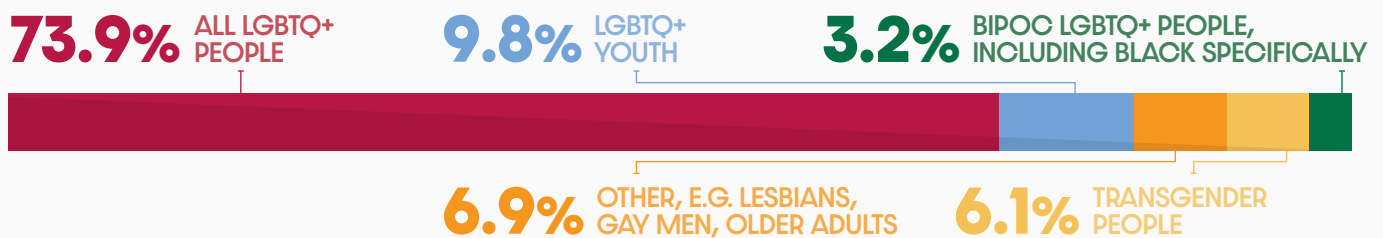– Northeast LGBTQ+ Organization
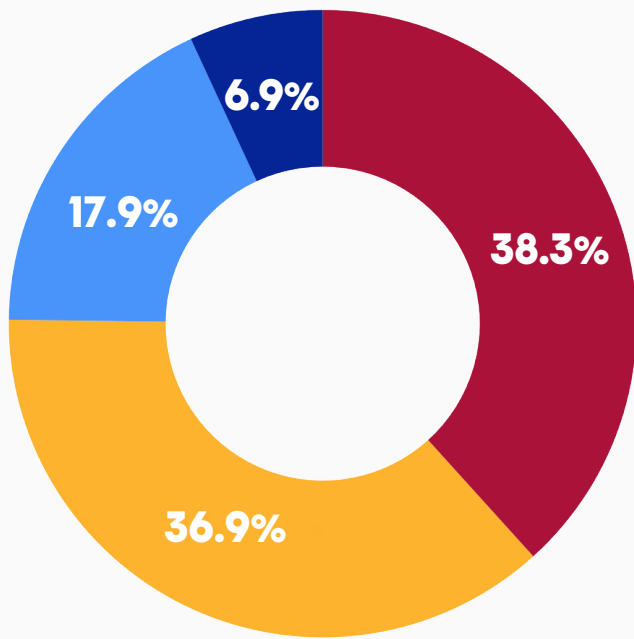
PHYSICAL SPACE IDENTIFIABLE AS LGBTQ+

- Very Easy
- Somewhat Easy
- Somewhat Difficult
- Very Difficult

38.3% — Very Easy
36.9% — Somewhat Easy
17.9% — Somewhat Difficult
6.9% — Very Difficult

Participants of the survey also reported on the visibility of their organization to the community. Three-quarters of participants reported that it was either very easy (38.3%) or somewhat easy (36.9%) for members of the public and members of the LGBTQ+ community to identify their building or office as an LGBTQ+ location. Organizations in rural areas were the most likely to report that it is very easy to identify them as LGBTQ+ (50% of organizations in rural areas), which may be related to the fact that rural areas tend to have less of an infrastructure of LGBTQ+ organizations, and therefore there is a greater need for the groups that exist, to be easily accessible.

73.9% ALL LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

9.8% LGBTQ+ YOUTH

3.2% BIPOC LGBTQ+ PEOPLE, INCLUDING BLACK SPECIFICALLY

6.9% OTHER, E.G. LESBIANS, GAY MEN, OLDER ADULTS
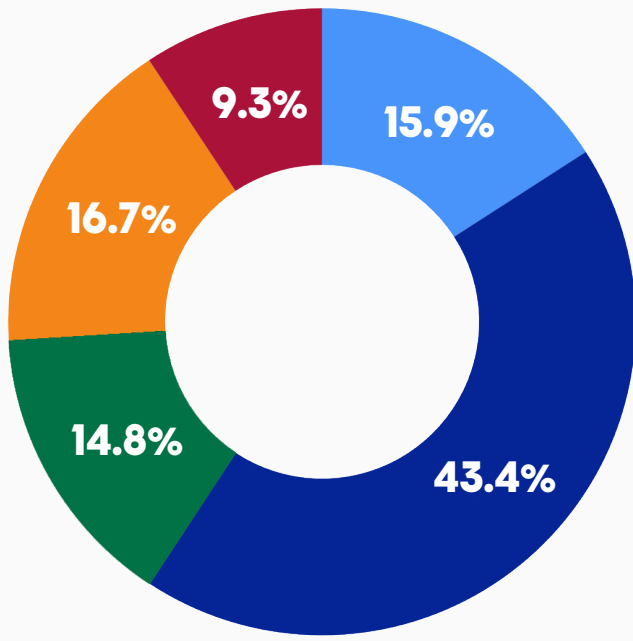
**6.1%** TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

GROUPS BY POPULATION SERVED

Organizations were also asked to specify if they serve a particular part of the LGBTQ+ community. Almost three-quarters of organizations (73.9%) serve the LGBTQ+ population in general. 9.8% of groups work primarily with youth, 6.1% serve a predominately transgender population, and 3.2% serve BIPOC LGBTQ+ people.

GROUPS BY NUMBER OF PAID STAFF

- No Paid Staff — 15.9%
- 1-5 — 43.4%
- 6-10 — 14.8%
- 11-25 — 16.7%
- More than 25 — 9.3%
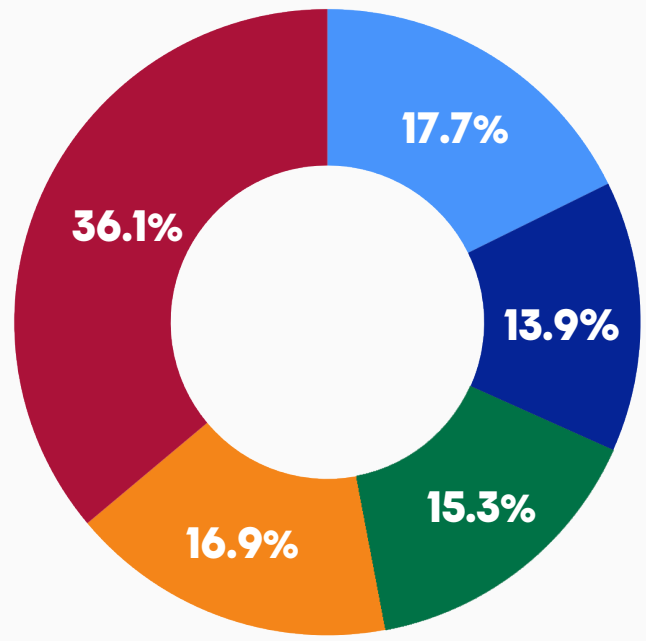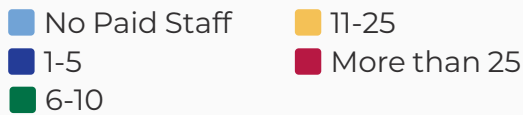
GROUPS BY NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

- No Volunteers — 17.7%
- 1-5 — 13.9%
- 6-10 — 15.3%
- 11-25 — 16.9%
- More than 25 — 36.1%
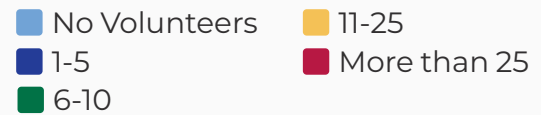
Groups were asked about staff size and number of volunteers, to get an indication of the level of people they have involved in operating the organization. The institutions represented in the survey ranged from completely volunteer-based to over 25 paid staff. The number of paid staff and volunteers that an organization has can give an indication of the level of resources available and the capacity to respond to threats and enact safety measures. Almost three-fifths of the responding organizations and businesses (58.2%) had between one and ten paid staff members, and 15.9% had no paid staff, which means an overwhelming majority of groups had relatively small or no staff and may need additional support when dealing with threats and violence. Only 9.3% have more than 25 paid staff.

In terms of volunteers, 17.7% of responding groups had no volunteers, and 29.2% had between one and ten volunteers. Over a third of organizations (36.1%) had more than 25 volunteers.
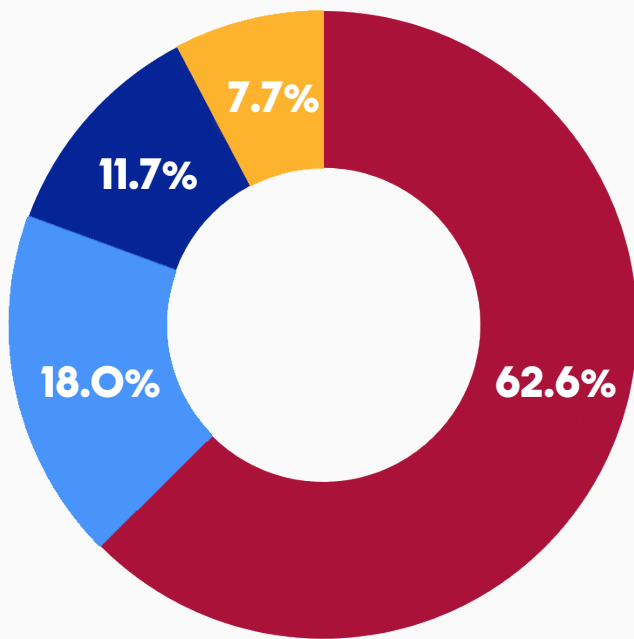
GROUPS BY TYPE OF LOCATION

- Permanent Physical Location of Our Own — 62.6%
- Office Within Another Organization or Sublease from Another Organization — 18.0%
- Visit or Borrow Spaces that are not LGBTQ+ Specific — 11.7%
- Online Only — 7.7%

Over three-fifths (62.6%) of the LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses that participated in the survey had a permanent physical location of their own, and a little under one-fifth (18.0%) use an office or sublease from another organization. Online-only organizations made up 7.7% of groups surveyed, and 11.7% borrowed spaces that were not LGBTQ+ specific.

> **While we currently feel safe much of the time, given the recent uptick in anti-LGBTQ+ violence and the continued rise of extremism, it is hard not to imagine worst-case scenarios.**
>
> **We are the largest, most-visible LGBTQ+ affirming faith community in our city (which could make us a target should someone be looking for a place to target.) I am also the first out, queer-ordained mainline protestant pastor in the city (that I am aware of). I do notice new faces in worship and rarely have my guard fully lowered when at the pulpit. This visibility matters, and it is also hard not to carry some measure of fear.**

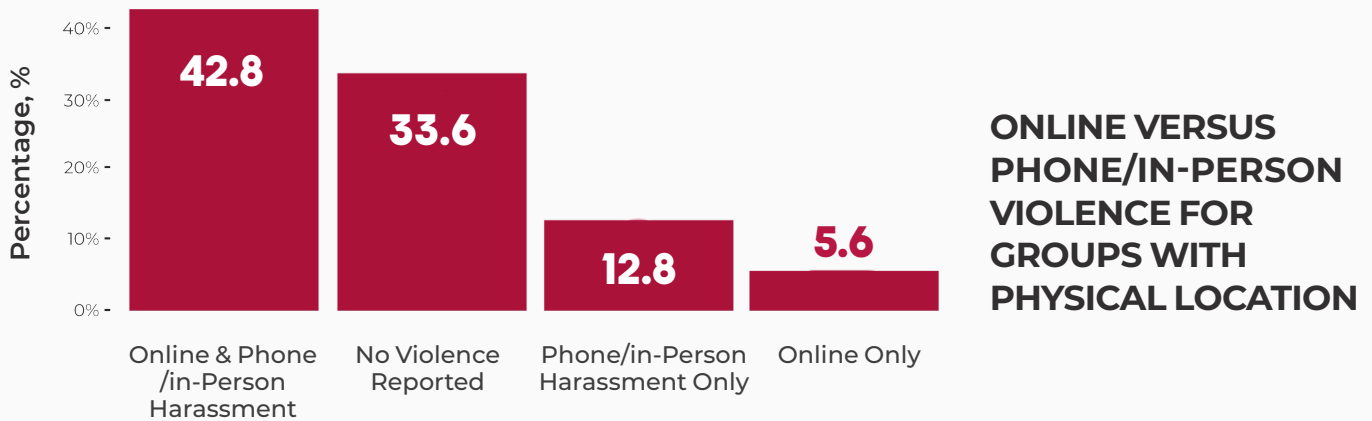**▬ LGBTQ+ affirming house of worship in West.**

LGBTQ+ GROUPS' EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022

The LGBTQ+ businesses and organizations that took the survey were asked if they experienced any anti-LGBTQ+ threats or harassment in 2022. Groups were asked about phone or in-person threats and violence as well as online threats or violence.

Over three-fifths (62.1%) of organizations surveyed experienced some type of harassment or violence. Over one-third (37.1%) of organizations surveyed experienced both online and phone or in-person incidents.

ONLINE VERSUS PHONE/IN-PERSON VIOLENCE FOR GROUPS WITH PHYSICAL LOCATION

Chart data:
- Online & Phone/in-Person Harassment: 42.8
- No Violence Reported: 33.6
- Phone/in-Person Harassment Only: 12.8
- Online Only: 5.6

Y-axis: Percentage, %

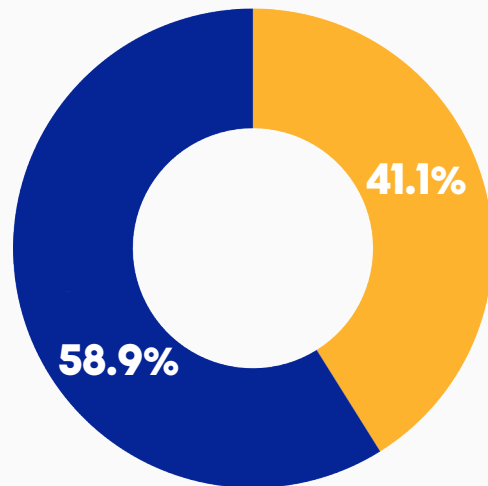## HATE CRIMES VERSUS HATE VIOLENCE – WHY MAKE THIS DISTINCTION?

The Hate Crime Statistics Act (28 U.S.C. § 534) defines hate crimes as "crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, gender or gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity." Many states and larger cities have hate crimes task forces that are responsible for deciding whether an incident should be investigated and prosecuted as a hate crime. The standard of evidence is often difficult to prove, and there are many forms of hate violence that are not crimes at all. One survey participant, who represented an LGBTQ+ health care or social service agency, commented on this challenge:

"Based on current laws, the folks sending us anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-abortion propaganda and/or protesting outside our facility are not technically breaking any laws, so there is no way to call on an official response from law enforcement."

Though AVP does not support the expansion of criminalization to categorize all acts of bias as crimes, it is important to acknowledge, prevent, and respond to all forms of anti-LGBTQ+ harassment and violence that create harm in our communities. For these reasons, AVP uses the phrase "hate violence" to include all incidents that survivors name as hate or bias-motivated, whether or not they meet the legal definition of a hate crime.

COMMON AND RELENTLESS: PHONE AND IN-PERSON HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Over half (58.9%) of the LGBTQ+ businesses and organizations that took the survey experienced at least one phone or in-person threat, harassment, or act of violence. These incidents of violence are impacting all types of groups in every region of the country and in every type of community.

41.1%

58.9%

RATES OF PHONE OR IN-PERSON INCIDENTS

■ Yes ■ No

23.9 Hate Mail or Suspicious Package

22.3 Protest

20.7 Threat or Harassment by Phone Call

18.1 Threat or Harassment Outside Space

17.5 Vandalism or Property Damage

7.4 Threat or Harassment Inside Space

4.5 Physical Violence Against Individual

Percentage, %
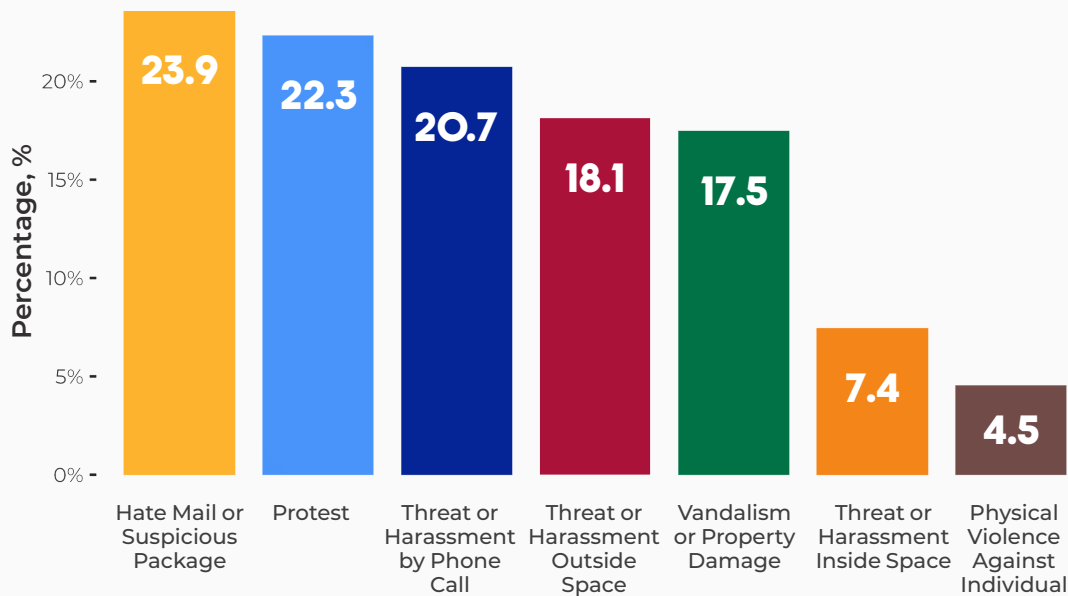
RATES OF PHONE AND IN-PERSON INCIDENTS

The most common types of phone or in-person incidents were receiving hate mail or a suspicious package (23.9%), protests against the business or organization or protests against LGBTQ+ people or issues near their location (22.3%) and receiving a threatening or harassing phone call (20.7%).

Types of Phone or In-Person Violence

Organizations and businesses that were not online-only (had a physical presence of some kind) were asked to answer the following question:

"Which, if any, of the following types of threats or violence has your business or organization experienced at least once in the past 12 months (January 2022-December 2022)? Please select all that apply."
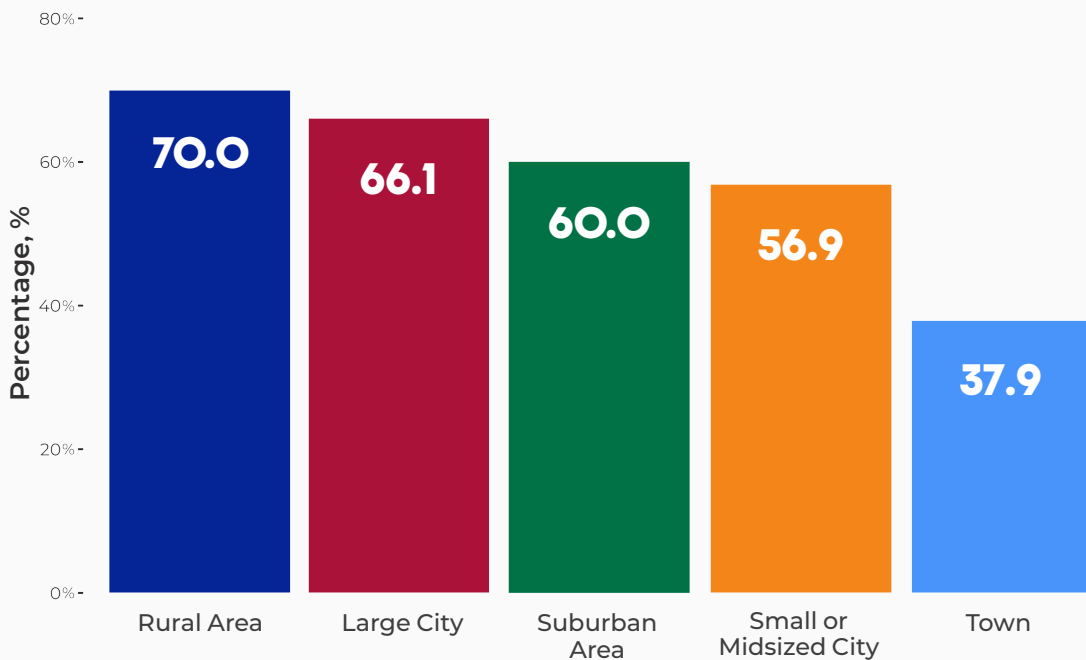
- Threatening or harassing phone call(s)
- Threats or harassment outside of our building or space
- Threats or harassment inside of our space
- Protests against our business or organization or protests against LGBTQ+ people or issues near our location
- Hate mail or a suspicious or messy package
- Vandalism, hateful graffiti, arson, or property damage (including removal and damage to Pride flags)
- Physical violence against staff or others in our space (e.g. patrons, clients, audience members)
- Someone prank called emergency services, police or fire, who arrived at our location or at the home of someone who works or volunteers here ("swatting")
- Other types of threats or violence (please describe): _____
- None of these

Community Centers and Youth-Serving Groups Most Impacted

The groups most likely to experience phone or in-person incidents were LGBTQ+ community centers (86.8%) and organizations and businesses that serve youth (69.7%). Youth-serving organizations were also more likely to experience in-person protests at their space or events: 30.3% of youth-serving organizations experienced protests, while 22.7% of those that served other LGBTQ+ populations experienced protest.

Chart data:
- Rural Area: 70.0
- Large City: 66.1
- Suburban Area: 60.0
- Small or Midsized City: 56.9
- Town: 37.9

Y-axis: Percentage, %

RATES OF PHONE OR IN-PERSON INCIDENTS BY TOWN/CITY SIZE

Western, Rural, and Urban Groups Experienced More Violence

In terms of region, organizations in the West were the most likely to experience every type of incident. Over two-thirds (69.1%) of organizations in the West experienced a phone or in-person incident, compared to 53% to 58% of organizations in other regions.

Although organizations in rural areas made up only 4.1% of the total organizations, 70% of these organizations experienced a phone or in-person incident. Organizations in large cities were the next most likely to experience phone or in-person incidents (66.1%).

Groups with larger staff more likely to experience violence

Groups with larger staff were also more likely to experience targeted violence. Organizations with 11 or more staff were more likely to experience phone or in-person incidents than those with 10 or fewer staff (73.8% vs. 53.5%).

Groups Experience Multiple incidents of Phone and In-Person Hate Violence

Percentage, %

	Protest	Vandalism or Property Damage	Hate Mail or Suspicious Package	Threat or Harassment Outside Space	Threat or Harassment by Phone Call
More than One	68.7	71.2	73.0	75.5	88.9
One	31.3	28.8	27.0	24.5	11.1

SINGLE VERSUS MULTIPLE PHONE AND IN-PERSON INCIDENTS
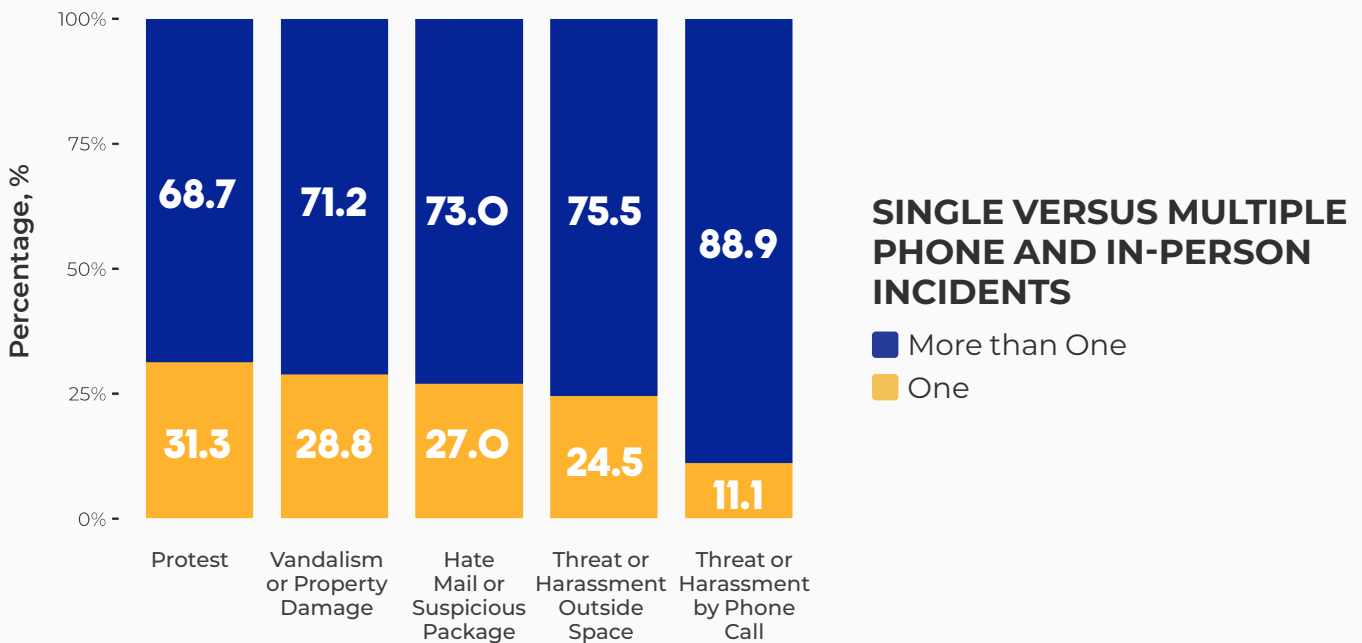
■ More than One
■ One

> **Over four-fifths (88.9%) of organizations that experienced threatening or harassing phone calls received more than one call.**

The survey showed not only how many groups are experiencing threats and acts of violence, but also how frequently groups are targeted. In-person or phone incidents were not one-off occurrences for many organizations. In fact, for most forms of phone and in-person violence, groups were more likely to experience multiple incidents of violence than to have just one incident. Over three-fifths of organizations experienced one of the most common incidents (protests, vandalism or property damage, hate mail or a suspicious package, threats or harassment outside the space, or a harassing phone call) more than once. An overwhelming majority (88.9%) of organizations that experienced threatening or harassing phone calls received more than one call.

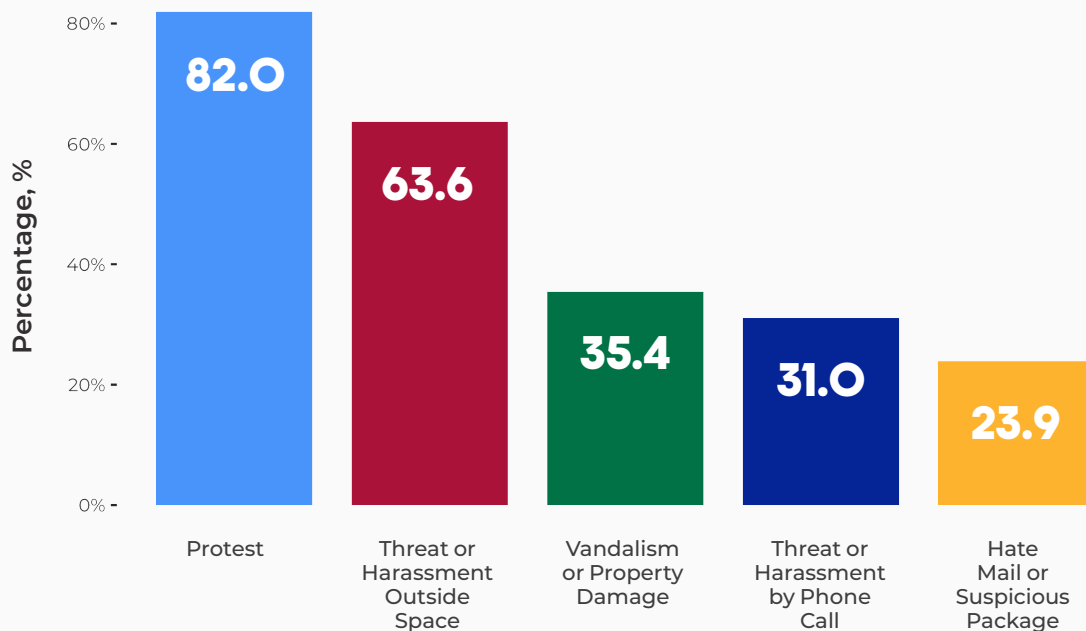## Bad Actors: White Nationalist Groups Behind Many In-Person Threats and Protests

The LGBTQ+ businesses and organizations that took the survey were asked whether they knew who was responsible for the most recent instance of a phone call or in-person incident, and if so, whether it was an individual, an organized anti-LGBTQ+ or white nationalist group, or a group that is unaffiliated with an organized anti-LGBTQ+ or white nationalist group.

In the case of protests (82.0%) and threats outside the space (63.6%), over half of the participants who experienced the incident reported they knew who was responsible for the most recent instance. This was less common for vandalism, harassing phone calls or property damage.

Percentage, %

82.0	Protest
63.6	Threat or Harassment Outside Space
35.4	Vandalism or Property Damage
31.0	Threat or Harassment by Phone Call
23.9	Hate Mail or Suspicious Package

RATES OF INCIDENTS WITH KNOWN ACTORS

Of the 165 incidents (of 360 total) where participants indicated they knew who was responsible for incidents, 18 incidents (or 10.9%) were reportedly carried out by the Proud Boys and 12 by a church group (7.3%).

THE PREVALENCE OF ONLINE HATE

Research finds that the internet is a growing site of hate violence globally, and this violence overwhelmingly affects marginalized communities. (Varennes, 2021) **Half of all organizations AVP surveyed (50.9%) experienced at least one online incident in 2022.**
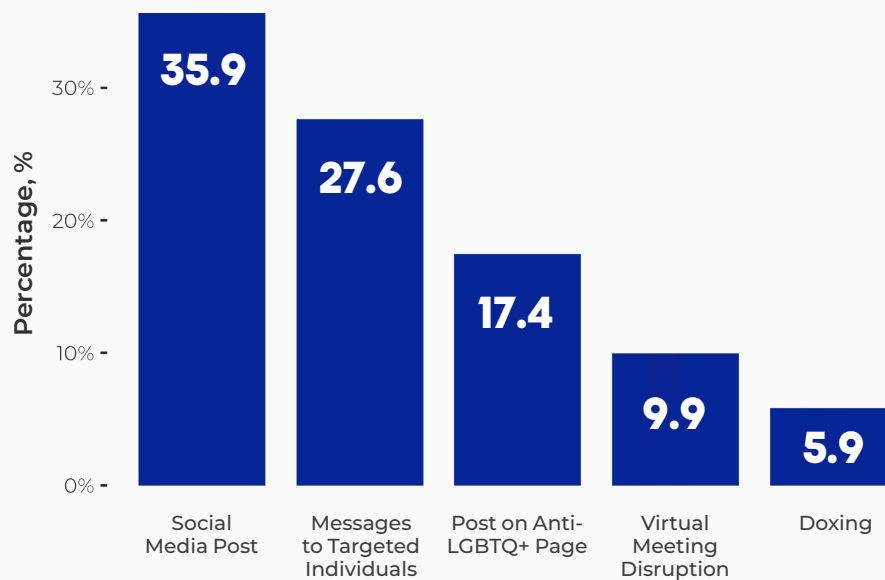
Types of Online Violence

If survey participants reported that in the past 12 months (January 2022-December 2022) their business, organization, or group experienced anti-LGBTQ+ threats or harassment online or digitally, they were asked to answer the following question:

"What types of anti-LGBTQ+ threats or harassment have occurred in the past 12 months online or digitally (January 2022-December 2022)? Please select all that have occurred."

- "Zoom-bombing" or anti-LGBTQ+ disruptors in virtual meeting spaces
- Harassment was posted publicly on our social media
- Harassment was posted on anti-LGBTQ+ channels, groups, or pages
- Protests against our business or organization or protests against LGBTQ+ people or issues near our location
- Harassment was privately targeted to one or more individuals within the group by email or direct message
- We experienced doxing (public posts with a targeted person's identifying details, dead name, home address, etc)
- Another type of online harassment, please describe:

GROUP VISIBILITY AND EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

Organizations that indicated their space was "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult" to identify as LGBTQ+ were more likely to experience online harassment compared to those that were "somewhat" or "very" easy to identify as such (59.1% vs. 48.1%). This is a pattern echoed by phone and in-person incidents, where the gap was smaller but present: nearly two-thirds of those that were somewhat or very difficult to identify had experienced at least one of these incidents vs. just over half who were easy or very easy to identify (63.6% vs. 58.1%).

Percentage, %

35.9	Social Media Post
27.6	Messages to Targeted Individuals
17.4	Post on Anti-LGBTQ+ Page
9.9	Virtual Meeting Disruption
5.9	Doxing

RATES OF ONLINE INCIDENTS

Over one-third (35.9 %) of all groups experienced harassment posted publicly on social media, making this the most common type of online violence. Informal or formal groups experienced this form of harassment at much higher rates than organizations that did not fall in this category (52.9% vs. 33.9%).

Community Centers and Organizations Serving Youth and Trans People Were Most Likely to Experience Online Hate

The second most common form of online harassment was an email or a direct message to one or more individuals within the group (27.6%). This type of violence was even more likely to be experienced by organizations that serve transgender people (34.8%). Organizations that serve transgender people (34.8%) were much more likely to receive a harassing email or a direct message to one or more individuals within the group (34.8% compared to 27.6% overall).

LGBTQ+ community centers and organizations or businesses that serve youth were especially likely to experience online harassment. Over three-quarters (78.3%) of LGBTQ+ community centers reported experiencing at least some type of online incident, and over three-fifths (65.7%) of organizations or businesses that serve youth experienced online harassment.

In addition, organizations that serve LGBTQ+ youth were more likely to experience harassment on anti-LGBTQ+ channels, groups, or pages (31.4% of youth-serving organizations compared to 17.4% of all groups). While 58.6% of groups and organizations that did not have a specific focus on youth experienced any instance of phone or in-person harassment, 77.8% of those that serve youth had this kind of experience.

REPORTING OF AND RESPONSE TO ANTI-LGBTQ+ VIOLENCE

AVP conceptualizes "reporting" as inclusive of actions such as calling a hotline, sharing incident information with potentially impacted community members, notifying public officials, and reporting to the police. The questions included in the LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces National Needs Assessment survey were designed to collect nuanced information about practices around reporting connected to different types of incidents of violence. Specifically, the survey asked organizations and businesses that indicated they had experienced harassment or violence to select whether they reported the most recent instance of that type of incident to no one, the police (during or after the incident), the FBI, another nonprofit or community-based organization, staff and volunteers, the board of directors, funders or donors, or community members and potential event participants.

REPORTING IN COMMUNITY

For a majority of incidents, groups reported to someone. Rates were low for groups indicating they did not report incidents to anyone: 20.0% of groups experiencing threats and harassment inside their space, 19.2% of groups experiencing outside threats, and 16.9% of groups experiencing protests. Reporting was less common for harassing phone calls or hate mail, with nearly half of the organizations that experienced those threats stating they did not report the most recent incident to anyone.

Percentage, %

| 72.3 | 50.8 | 55.4 | 29.2 | 15.4 |

TO WHOM GROUPS REPORTED THE MOST RECENT INSTANCE OF PROTEST

Percentage, %

| 40.0 | 28.3 | 6.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 |

TO WHOM GROUPS REPORTED THE MOST RECENT INSTANCE OF THREATS AND HARASSMENT BY PHONE

Percentage, %

| 48.0 | 40.0 | 28.0 | 24.0 | 16.0 |

| Staff and Volunteers | Our Board of Directors | Community Members and Potential Event Participants | Another Community Based or Nonprofit Organization | Our Funders and Donors |

TO WHOM GROUPS REPORTED THE MOST RECENT INSTANCE OF VANDALISM

Options for Reporting

We asked survey participants to answer the following question for each incident they reported that they experienced in the past 12 months (January 2022-December 2022):

"Thinking about the most recent time you experienced this incident, did you contact the local police or report the incident to any of the groups below? Please select all that apply."

- We did not report to any of the groups listed below
- We contacted the police while this incident was occurring
- We contacted the police after this incident occurred
- We reported this incident to the FBI
- We reported this incident to the Anti-Violence Project
- We reported this incident to another community based or nonprofit organization
- We notified staff and volunteers about this incident
- We notified our board of directors about this incident
- We notified our funders or donors about this incident
- We notified community members and potential event participants about this incident

WHY REPORTING MATTERS

Reporting helps to document the experiences of violence LGBTQ+ people are facing, and it makes it more possible to create prevention and response protocols when there is more information about types and frequency of violent incidents. Reported incidents of violence also may assist advocacy efforts to increase resources for LGBTQ+ communities all around the United States.

Reporting occurred very infrequently for events that were considered to be less of an immediate physical threat. For example, 40.0% of participants who experienced threatening or harassing phone calls reported them to their staff and volunteers and 28.3% to their board of directors. In contrast, organizations reported more frequently when they experienced protests, which are more likely to directly affect community members than harassing phone calls. Participants reported protests to staff and volunteers (72.3%), board of directors (50.8%), community members and participants (55.4%) and even funders and donors (15.4%).

Less than half of all incidents were reported to boards, except for protests, which 50.8% of the time resulted in board notification. Groups were unlikely to report hate mail and phone calls to their boards.

Percentage, %

- Threat or Harassment by Phone Call: **45.0**
- Hate Mail or Suspicious Package: **44.6**
- Vandalism or Property Damage: **26.0**
- Threat or Harassment Inside Space: **20.0**
- Threat or Harassment Outside Space: **19.2**
- Protest: **16.9**
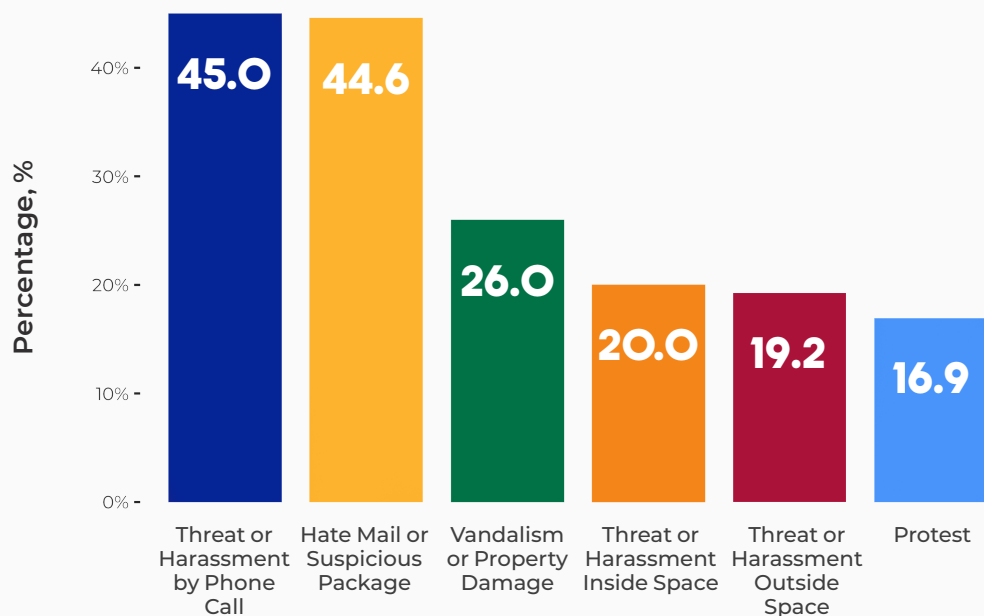
TYPES OF INCIDENTS GROUPS CHOSE NOT TO REPORT TO ANYONE

REPORTING TO THE POLICE: DECISIONS ABOUT SEVERITY OF INCIDENT AND PRESUMED EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICE

Reporting to the police is often controversial in the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ people have been and continue to be criminalized in the United States and subsequently profiled, harassed, unjustly incarcerated, and often mistreated by police and other arms of the criminal legal system. LGBTQ+ people are still targeted for harassment and brutality by the police simply for being themselves. They are often met with indifference and violence when they try to contact the police for assistance. The birth of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement was inextricably tied to resistance against police brutality and oppressive laws governing sexuality and gender. Research from a 2021 survey shows that LGBTQ+ people are six times more likely to be stopped by police in public spaces and twice as likely to be stopped while driving (The Williams Institute, 2021), while Black LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to report discrimination from law enforcement and are more likely to avoid law enforcement to avert discrimination than white LGBTQ+ people (Rodriguez, 2022).

Results from another study showed that nearly half of LGBTQ+ survey participants experienced face-to-face police misconduct against them (Frazer, et al., 2023), and nearly half of the transgender people surveyed reported being uncomfortable seeking police interaction (James, et al., 2016). LGBTQ+ people are also incarcerated more than non-LGBTQ+ people, and 85% of incarcerated LGBTQ+ youth are people of color (Movement Advancement Project & Center for American Progress, 2016).

At the same time, many advocates in the LGBTQ+ community have worked for decades to reform police departments and demand that they be accountable to LGBTQ+ people and treat the community with dignity and respect. Over the years, many in the LGBTQ+ community have fought for –and often won– for LGBTQ+ sensitivity training for police, LGBTQ+ police liaisons, LGBTQ+ police and more affirming practices by police departments, wanting to ensure that LGBTQ+ people can rely on police to protect their safety.
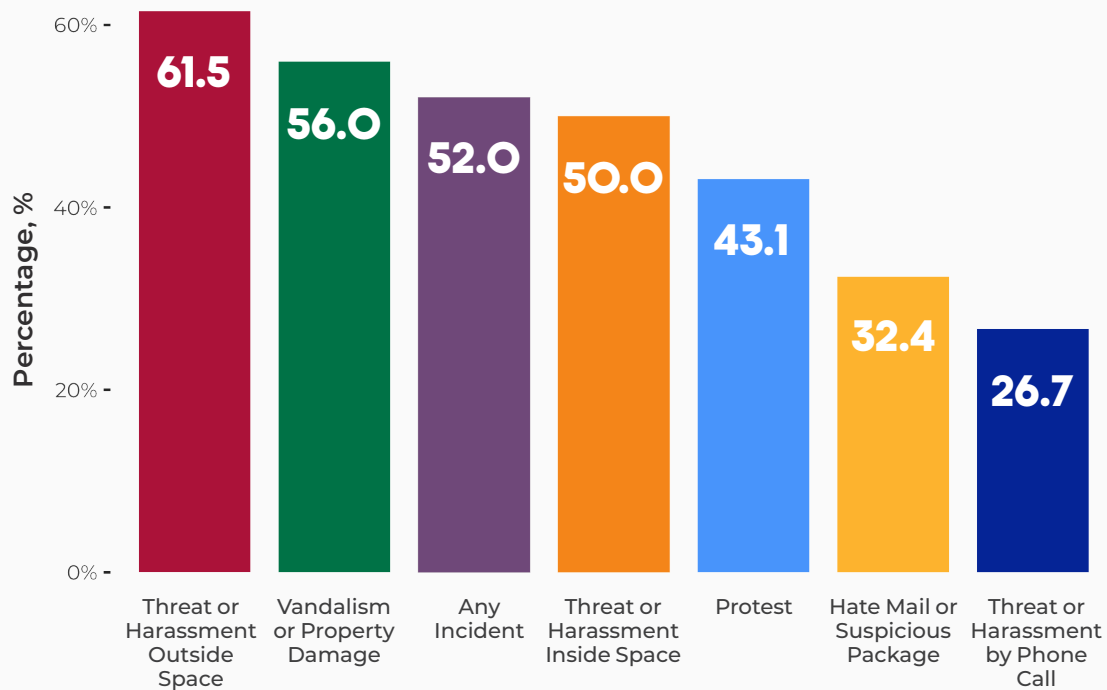
RATES OF REPORTING INCIDENTS TO POLICE

In the LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces National Needs Assessment, reporting to the police was common but by no means universal. Just over half (52.0%) of organizations that experienced a phone or in-person incident reported to the police. The incident types that organizations and businesses were most likely to report to the police were threats or harassment outside of the space (61.5%), vandalism (56.0%) and threats or harassment inside of the space (50.0%). Only about one-quarter (26.7%) of organizations that experienced harassing phone calls reported the most recent instance to the police.

REASONS GROUPS DID NOT REPORT TO THE POLICE

Threat or Harassment by Phone Call	Threats Outside of Spaces	Threats Inside of Spaces	Protests	Hate Mail	Vandalism
30.2% NOT ENOUGH PROOF	**32.4%** NOT ENOUGH PROOF	**40.0%** POLICE WOULDN'T FIND IMPORTANT	**29.2%** UNCLEAR IF CRIME	**45.3%** UNCLEAR IF CRIME	**36.7%** NOT ENOUGH PROOF
24.5% UNCLEAR IF CRIME	**29.7%** POLICE WOULDN'T FIND IMPORTANT	**33.3%** POLICE WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE	**27.1%** GROUP HAS AGREEMENT NOT TO CALL POLICE	**26.4%** NOT ENOUGH PROOF	**30.0%** POLICE WOULDN'T FIND IMPORTANT
22.6% NOT A BIG DEAL	**29.7%** POLICE WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE	**26.7%** GROUP HAS AGREEMENT NOT TO CALL POLICE	**25.0%** POLICE WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE	**26.4%** POLICE WOULDN'T FIND IMPORTANT	**20.0%** POLICE WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE

Groups that indicated they did not report to police were asked to select from several reasons why they decided not to report to the police, including: not wanting to get the person causing harm in trouble with the law; lack of clarity about whether the incident was a crime; not having enough proof; fear of retaliation; having an established internal agreement not to contact the police; or their belief that the incident was not a crime. Many of these reasons cited were related to the groups' perceptions of and/or relationships with the police, including that the police: wouldn't think it was important; would be inefficient or ineffective; would be biased, harassing or insulting; or are known to be allied with anti-LGBTQ+ groups. The chart on page 33 shows the top three reasons groups decided not to report to police for the most commonly reported types of violence.

> **[At] the protest at our All Ages Drag Show, the police were present, and there was a much larger counter-protest to keep the venue and attendees safe. Other than no protests, I am not sure there was a better way to have handled the situation.**
>
> **Proud Boys are known for using intimidation and the threat of violence to get what they want. The counter-protestors did more to keep the Proud Boys across the street than the police did.**
>
> **━━ LGBTQ+ community center in the Midwest.**

> **We are a radical space, and we want to ensure the safety of the LGBTQIA+ community at all costs, so we attempt to provide community-based security and first aid for other events in our area as a service. We would like more support and training for this. We would like a non-police response model for non-violent emergencies.**
>
> **━━ Cultural institution in the Midwest.**

> **We experienced vandalism at our property during Pride month when we had the Pride flags displayed. The police officer who arrived when the damage was reported was truly respectful and supportive, a pleasant surprise; this should not be an exception to the norm.**

�--- **LGBTQ+ affirming house of worship.**

> **...A reporting and response structure rooted in community care rather than carceral logics/criminality would be preferred. Each instance and entity should have different approaches. Some of the individuals need healthcare support and treatment - they may be facing substance use issues or suffering from auditory hallucinations/delusions–things that police are not equipped to de-escalate well. In some cases, the groups are known as white supremacists and white nationalist organizations.**
>
> **However, because our space is part of a public state institution, a university campus, the general public is allowed to express/protest/gather and is 'protected' by freedom of speech and academic freedom—even if they're sharing anti-LGBTQ+ ideologies.**

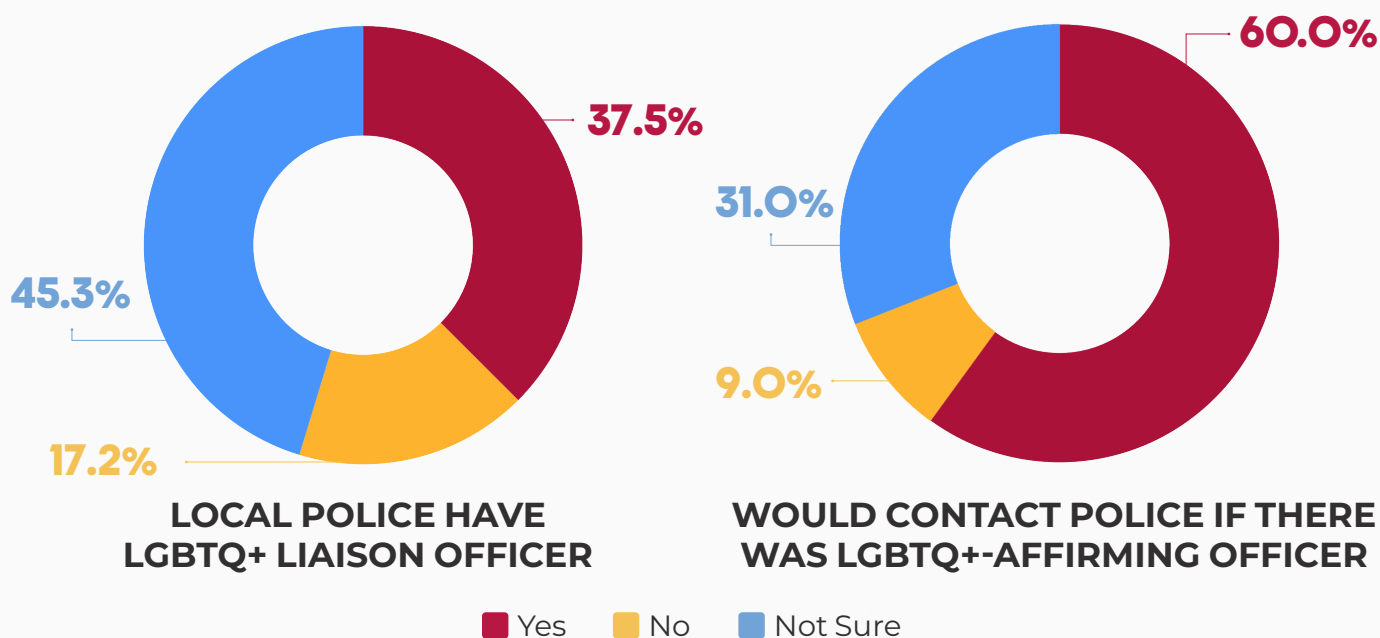🔴--- **LGBTQ+ center or office at a college or university in the West.**

> **We got the perfect response. Our community rallied, and our supporters came out in large forces to ensure that our youth would not see the protestors or hear any hateful words from them. Our community sent tons of people to cheer, shout and welcome our youth to their event. If the folks who promised to protest even showed up, we never saw them. They likely left with their tails between their legs.**
>
> **A community response is the best response.**

🔵--- **LGBTQ+ youth-serving Center in the Northeast.**

LGBTQ+ Liaisons

LGBTQ+ liaison offices, community affairs departments, or solo LGBTQ+ liaison roles are created by police departments as a way to smooth the bumpy relationships between LGBTQ+ community members and police departments, which have historically been tenuous at best. These offices, which are often staffed by LGBTQ+ officers, are assigned to connect directly with the community on public safety issues. Many police departments report having liaisons but also lack policies that prevent bias or discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender people with whom they interact (James, et al., 2016).

37.5%

45.3%

17.2%

60.0%

31.0%

9.0%

**LOCAL POLICE HAVE
LGBTQ+ LIAISON OFFICER**

**WOULD CONTACT POLICE IF THERE
WAS LGBTQ+-AFFIRMING OFFICER**

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Not Sure

Just over half of survey participants reported that they did not know whether or not their local police department had an LGBTQ+ liaison: one-third (37.5%) said they did, while 17.2% said no. Almost half (45.3%) did not know.
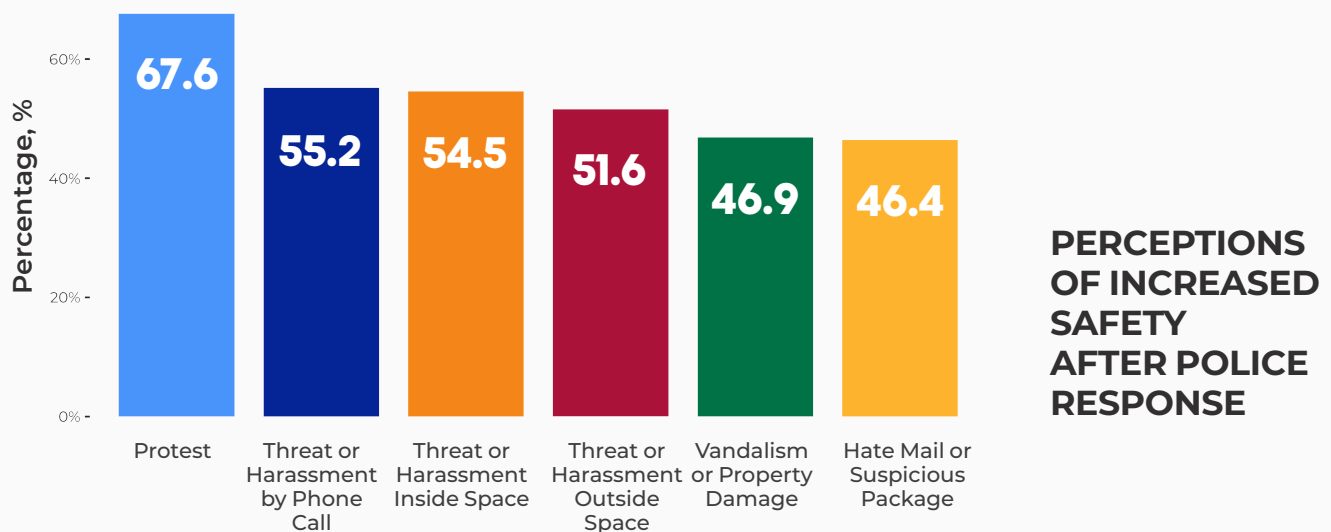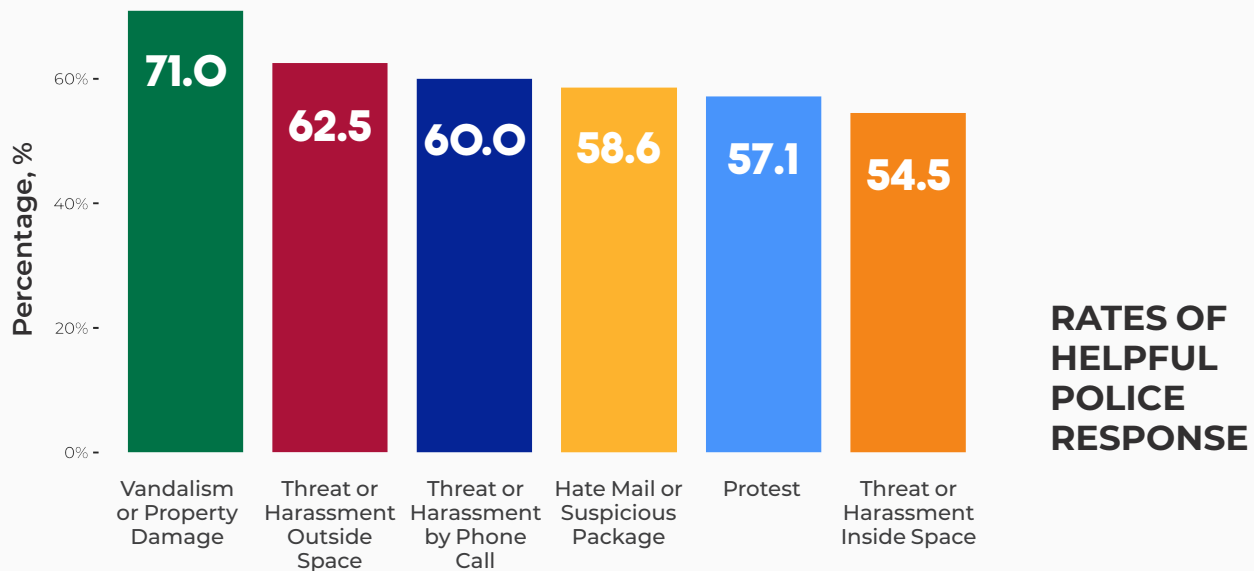
Most (60.0%) participants said they would be more likely to contact the police after a future incident if they knew they could reach an LGBTQ+ affirming officer than if they did not know they would reach an LGBTQ+ affirming officer.

Even when there is an LGBTQ+ Liaison, it may not ensure hate violence survivors get what they need. An LGBTQ+ health care or social service provider from the Midwest noted, "Our LGBTQ+ police liaison thus far has done nothing for our community nor reached out to our organization even though we are the only LGBTQ+ center in the city and surrounding cities. We had to reach out directly to her to schedule a meeting with her, and we have had clients have similar experiences of the liaison not helping them."
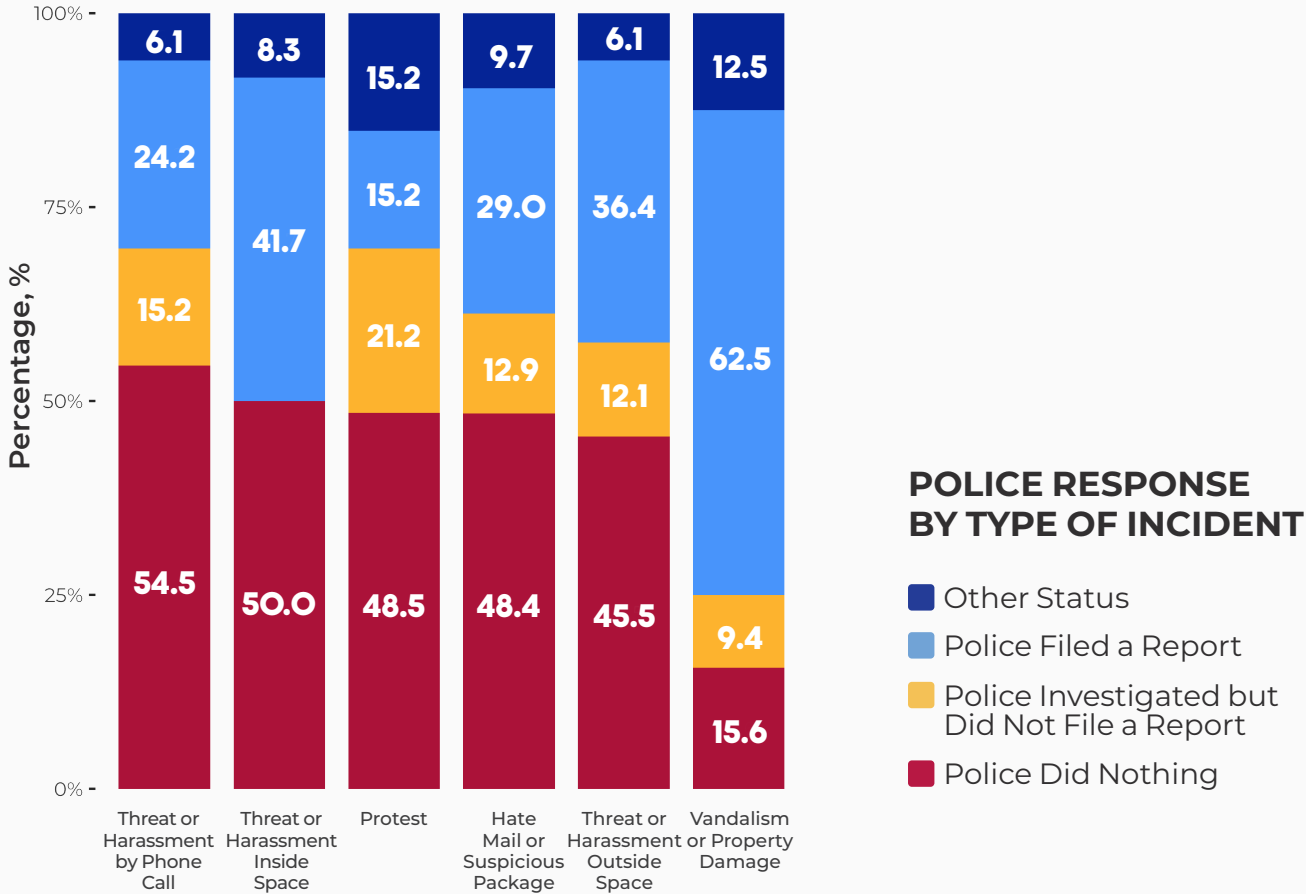
Police Response: The Gaps among Professional Behavior, Experiences of Survivors, and Concrete Resolution

Organizations and businesses indicated that after they reported an incident to the police, they frequently felt safer, felt the police were helpful, felt the police were respectful and considered their attendance at the scene to be timely. For example, **over two-thirds of those who reported the most recent protest they experienced to the police felt the police made them feel safer (67.6%), over half felt the police were helpful (57.1%) and nearly three-quarters said the police were respectful and timely (73.5% and 72.7%, respectively)**. In general, the prevalence of positive experiences related to profession-alism (being respectful and timely) were slightly higher than the prevalence of those related to subjective well being (feeling safer and feeling the police were helpful).

RATES OF HELPFUL POLICE RESPONSE

Bar chart — Percentage, %

- Vandalism or Property Damage: 71.0
- Threat or Harassment Outside Space: 62.5
- Threat or Harassment by Phone Call: 60.0
- Hate Mail or Suspicious Package: 58.6
- Protest: 57.1
- Threat or Harassment Inside Space: 54.5

PERCEPTIONS OF INCREASED SAFETY AFTER POLICE RESPONSE

Bar chart — Percentage, %

- Protest: 67.6
- Threat or Harassment by Phone Call: 55.2
- Threat or Harassment Inside Space: 54.5
- Threat or Harassment Outside Space: 51.6
- Vandalism or Property Damage: 46.9
- Hate Mail or Suspicious Package: 46.4

While feelings about the behaviors of police were favorable, survey responses indicated that the outcomes of the police interactions were not often concrete. Groups were also asked whether the police investigated the incident, if they had knowledge that police filed an official report, if there was an actual case with charges, and if so, the outcome of that case. For almost every type of violence reported to the police (not including vandalism), less than one-third of groups also reported that there was an investigation, and less than 45% of groups knew about police reports being filed.

POLICE RESPONSE BY TYPE OF INCIDENT

- ■ Other Status
- ■ Police Filed a Report
- ■ Police Investigated but Did Not File a Report
- ■ Police Did Nothing

For example, when threats and harassment by phone call were reported to the police, investigations occurred 30.3% of the time, and groups had knowledge that police reports were filed 27.3% of the time. When police were contacted because of threats outside of spaces, the result was an investigation 30.3% of the time and groups had knowledge that a police report was filed 36.4% of the time. And for protests, police involvement resulted in investigations for 27.27% of incidents, and 15.15% of organizations say they knew a police report was filed. Vandalism was the only type of violence in which groups knew that police reports were filed a majority of the time (62.5%). Acts of vandalism were investigated 37.5% of the time.
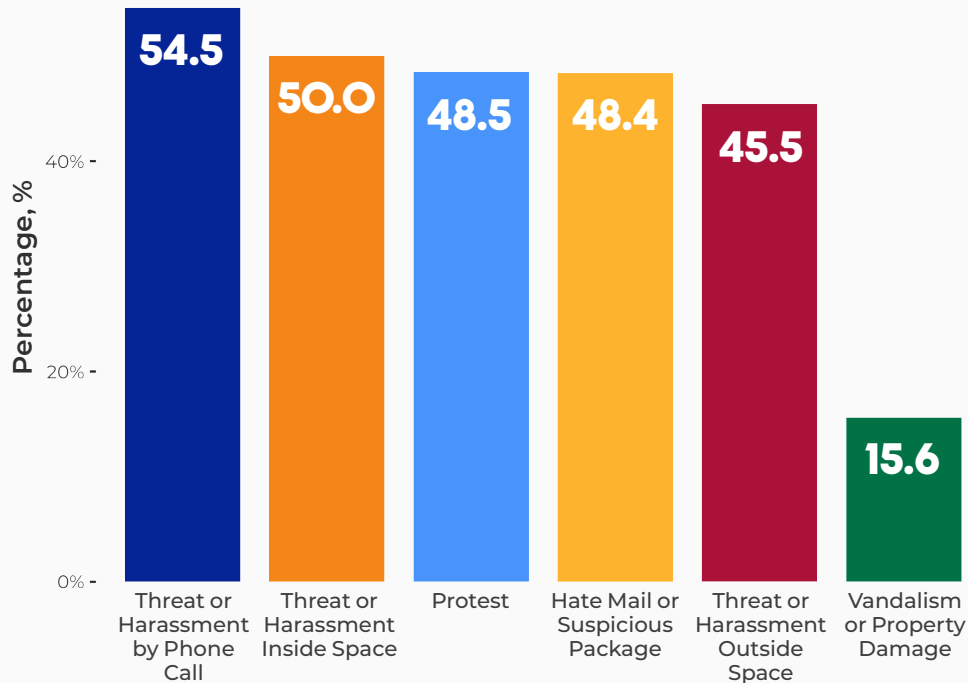
TYPES OF INCIDENTS WITH NO INVESTIGATATION OR REPORT FILED

For most types of violence, close to 50% of groups that reported to police stated that police neither filed a report nor investigated the incident: threatening calls (54.5%), threats outside the space (45.5%), threats inside the space (50.0%), protests (48.5%), hate mail (48.4%). The survey data does not point to the reason for the limited resolution of instances of hate violence.

POLICE BEHAVIOR AND ACTIONS TAKEN

	Groups Reported to Police	Police Filed a Report	Police Investigated	Police Did Not File Report or Investigate
Threat or Harassment by Phone Call	26.7%	27.3%	30.3%	54.5%
Threats Outside	61.5%	36.4%	30.3%	45.5%
Threats Inside	50.0%	41.7%	16.7%	50.0%
Protests	50.8%**	15.2%	27.3%	48.5%
Hate Mail	35.1%**	29.0%	22.6%	48.4%
Vandalism	56.0%	62.5%	37.5%	15.6%

**indicates some incidents were reported both during or after occuring

This data underscores some of the complexities in the relationship of the LGBTQ+ community with police and policing. For some organizations, there is a strong sense that LGBTQ+ people deserve to be respected and treated fairly by police, and they are seeking a concrete resolution to violence that they believe can be afforded by the police. An LGBTQ+ group from the West noted, "We should be able to report to the police to document with the hopes that the police would take the documentation and concerns we express are real and deserve their time."

Many groups are making decisions about police involvement on a case-by-case basis while weighing many factors. A smaller group of organizations have clear protocols about police engagement before incidents happen. These are not easy decisions to make because safety can be elusive in all of these situations, and the risks of harm from police can be high.

Many groups are uncertain about what outcomes they hope to see from reporting to the police and other entities. When asked what an ideal response to reporting and incident would be from the police, community, or other groups, one youth-serving LGBTQ+ health or social services agency in the Northeast wrote, "I really don't know." Though succinct, this sentiment was threaded through many responses. LGBTQ+ groups are deciding whether to report violent incidents and what entities to report to, yet, for many group representatives, the ideal response remains unclear.

WHAT MAKES SAFETY? CURRENT AND NEEDED HATE VIOLENCE PREVENTION MEASURES

The LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses that participated in the survey reported on their concerns about future violence, security measures they currently have in place, and what they would implement if they had the resources or funding required. Organizations reported on security infrastructure, training, and staff or community security measures.

THE FEAR FACTOR: HATE BREEDS FEAR

The LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses that participated in the survey were asked if they were concerned or afraid that any of the different forms of threats, harassment, and violence in the survey would happen in the next year. The greatest number of organizations and businesses are concerned about future online harassment (67.5%). The second most feared form of violence was threats or harassment outside of their space (54.2%), followed by protests (40.9%).
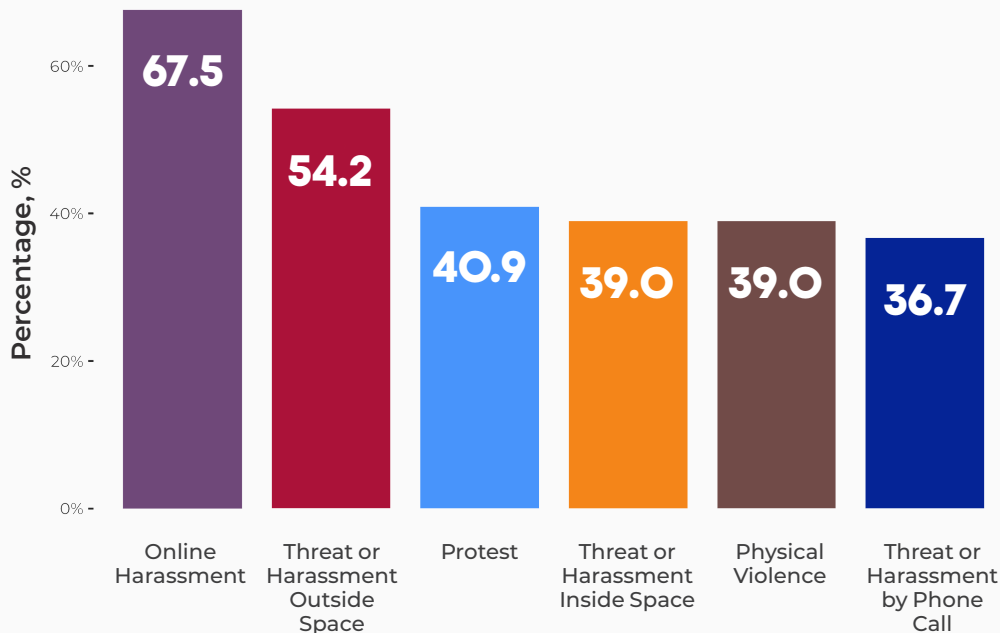
WHAT FUTURE INCIDENTS WERE GROUPS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT?

Many of the fears held were reinforced by the number of organizations that experienced those incidents. Online harassment, threats or harassment outside the space, and protests were the top three fears, and all were among the top five incidents that organizations experienced.

TOP FIVE FEARS AND TOP FIVE INCIDENTS

TOP 5 FEARS	Any Online Harassment	Threat or Harassment Outside Space	Protests	Threat or Harassment Inside Space	Physical Violence
Percentage (%)	67.5	54.2	40.9	39.0	39.0
TOP 5 INCIDENTS	Any Online Harassment	Hate Mail or Suspicious or Messy Package	Protests	Threat or Harassment by Phone Call	Threat or Harassment Outside Space
Percentage (%)	50.9	23.9	22.3	20.7	18.1

However, fears about physical violence were disproportionately high compared to reported incidents. About two in five (39.0%) groups are afraid of future incidents of physical violence. However, only 14 of the 380 survey participants (4.5%) reported incidents of physical violence in 2022. Like most anxiety about violent crime, the likelihood of an act of physical violence is much lower than the rate of anxiety about it (Warr, 2000). That is not to say that the fear of future physical violence is unfounded. In fact, as the escalating anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and legislative rollbacks of rights increase, and hate groups continue to be ever more emboldened, we will likely see increases in all forms of violence aimed at LGBTQ+ safe spaces across the country (Margolin & Grant, 2023).

Organizations overwhelmingly need more safety training and resources

Nearly nine in ten organizations and businesses want at least one security measure (89.6%) that they do not have. The security infrastructure that organizations and businesses most commonly have are security cameras, either outdoors (55.6%) or indoors (48.3%). Only 6% of organizations have bulletproof glass, but over half (53.2%) want it. Almost a third (29.7%) have alert buzzers at staffed front desks, and two-fifths (39.7%) want buzzers.

The training and staff security measures organizations most commonly have are safety planning and safety protocols (53.2%) or an agreement among staff about under what circumstances they will involve the police (53.0%). Nearly a quarter (23.6%) of organizations have active shooter training for staff and volunteers, and over half (53.1%) want active shooter training.
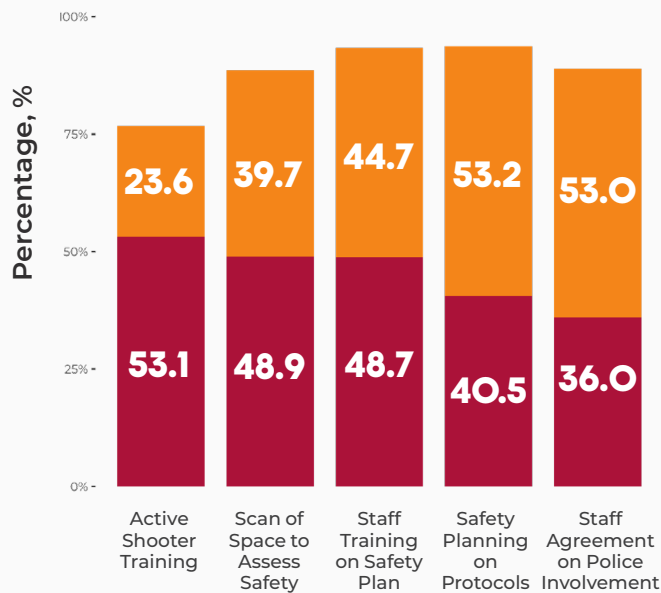
WHAT DO ORGANIZATIONS NEED?

> **We are a small business and are struggling to find funding opportunities for safety.**

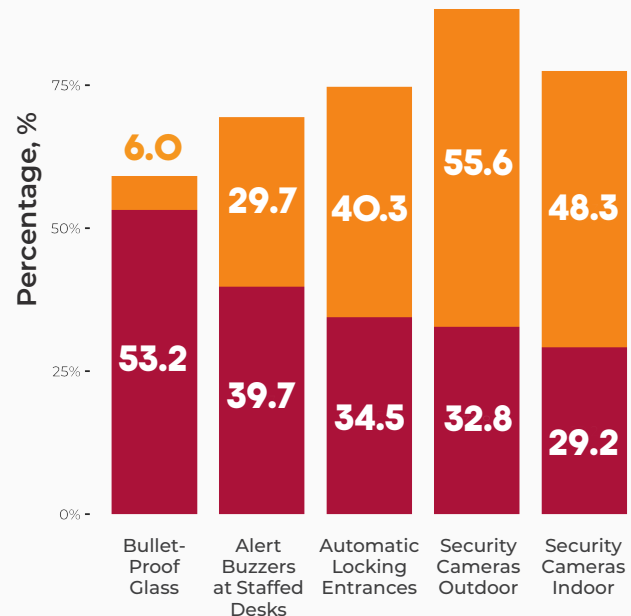━━ **LGBTQ+ group in Western US**

> **Our members have received increasing threats because of their identities and the care they provide. I would love to be able to provide training to all of my members**

━━ **LGBTQ+ health care or social services agency**

Training and Staff Security Measures Groups Have and Want (Percentage, %)

	Active Shooter Training	Scan of Space to Assess Safety	Staff Training on Safety Plan	Safety Planning on Protocols	Staff Agreement on Police Involvement
Have	23.6	39.7	44.7	53.2	53.0
Want	53.1	48.9	48.7	40.5	36.0

TRAINING AND STAFF SECURITY MEASURES GROUPS HAVE AND WANT

Security Infrastructure Groups Have and Want (Percentage, %)

	Bullet-Proof Glass	Alert Buzzers at Staffed Desks	Automatic Locking Entrances	Security Cameras Outdoor	Security Cameras Indoor
Have	6.0	29.7	40.3	55.6	48.3
Want	53.2	39.7	34.5	32.8	29.2

SECURITY INTRASTRUCTURE GROUPS HAVE AND WANT

■ Have   ■ Want

The size of an organization's staff determines what security steps have already been taken and will likely impact a group's ability to implement additional measures. Organizations with more paid staff are more likely to have staff security measures in place. For example, 83.9% of organizations with more than 25 staff already have safety plans, and 71.0% have trained staff in these plans, yet these large groups represent only 9.3% of the groups surveyed. In comparison, 26.9% of organizations with only one staff person have safety plans. Planning, implementing, and updating security measures requires financial and human resources, both of which can be in short supply for many organizations serving as LGBTQ+ safe spaces. Because most of the groups surveyed have a relatively small staff (58.2% have 1-10 paid staff), their needs may be great.

MOST COMMON	Percentage (%)
Outdoor Security Cameras	55.6
Safety Planning on Protocols	53.2
Staff Agreement on Police Involvement	53.0
LEAST COMMON	Percentage (%)
Active Shooter Training	23.6
Paid Private Security	16.2
Bulletproof Glass	6.0

MOST AND LEAST COMMON SECURITY MEASURES GROUPS HAVE

SAFETY PLANNING IN DEFENSE OF DRAG:
BUILDING COMMUNITY SAFETY WITH DRAG STORY HOUR

Although Drag Story Hour (DSH) events have seen some protests since they were founded in 2015 in San Francisco, over the last two years, anti-LGBTQ actions and harassment targeting drag events have become significantly escalated throughout the country. In 2022, threats against and protests of the events became a regular feature for DSH. During Pride 2022, AVP created a community safety planning training for DSH national headquarters. Since then, AVP and DSH have been working closely to develop safety plans, train safety marshals, and support performers throughout the country, as well as in New York City. Safety planning, including pre-event meetings of DSH staff, venue staff, and volunteer defenders, is now being built into the logistics planning of many DSH events.

Additional research supports the claim that LGBTQ nonprofit organizations are often under-resourced. Support for LGBTQ+ organizations has decreased since a peak in 2018, and for every $100 raised for a U.S. foundation, only 23 cents go to organizations specifically supporting LGBTQ+ issues (Funders for LGBT Issues, 2022). LGBTQ+ groups, especially those in midsized cities and towns or in rural areas, are small but resilient organizations that exist because of the sheer will and determination of members of that local community. In smaller communities, these groups are also often the only LGBTQ+ safe space in town or one of just a few local LGBTQ+ groups. When the safety of these groups is threatened, it can have a significant impact on the entire local LGBTQ+ community.

WHAT DOES COMMUNITY SAFETY LOOK LIKE?

...at Drag Story Hour hosted by an urban church at their coffee shop location, they have developed a response of de-escalation through music. Community members gather and sing outside the venue while families are arriving so that protestors are ineffectual at disrupting the event. Thus far, they have had no escalations.

━━ LGBTQ+ group in Northeast.

Threats against the LGBTQ+ community [are] impacting the mental health of staff. We are having conversations about how to support staff while working in a "targeted" space. I think this is an important consideration, as it may help organizations secure funding from foundations. Staff healthcare costs are often considered an overhead expense that funders won't cover. This report could make the case that the mental health of staff is directly related to our ability to provide services.

━━ LGBTQ+ center or office at a college or university in the South.

We host LGBTQIA+ services within a domestic violence organization, so many of our safety measures also are a result of that.

━━ LGBTQ+ health care or social services agency in the Midwest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2022 LGBTQ+ Safe Spaces National Needs Assessment reveals an alarmingly high number of threats and violent incidents targeting the LGBTQ+ community nationwide. Combating hate will require a comprehensive set of actions at all levels of government combined with action from the LGBTQ+ community and allies.

Policymaker Recommendations

AVP urges policymakers to:

1. **Recognize that hate violence is on the rise and directly connected to the anti-LGBTQ+ hateful rhetoric, misinformation, and anti-LGBTQ bills and laws sweeping the country.** As white nationalist sentiment is becoming more mainstream in our country, individuals and groups have been given more of a platform to spread hate and encourage others to do the same. Elected officials must use their platforms to condemn targeted attacks against the LGBTQ+ community and all forms of hate, including proposed anti-LGBTQ laws. While hate crimes receive much of the focus at the federal level, there are even more bias-motivated incidents that do not meet the legal definition of a hate crime, but deserve the same level of attention. The President, Congress, and state and local representatives must respond to this dangerous rhetoric and hate violence meaningfully and directly.

2. **Protect LGBTQ+ community spaces.** Federal, state, and local policymakers must allocate resources to physically protect LGBTQ+ community spaces by fully funding programs like the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. These programs establish new grants to prepare and equip community-based organizations to create safety plans and respond to hate violence, including providing support and care for LGBTQ+ people impacted directly or indirectly by incidents. Many LGBTQ+ organizations and groups are run by very few staff or are volunteer-led, and resources must be made accessible to these groups. Community safety planning training and technical assistance support for groups of all sizes that focuses on the strengths, relationships, and specific context of local organizations, is key for establishing safety protocols, rapid response, and community care. Government officials should also facilitate and ensure community-based organizations are aware of and can access available resources.

3. **Improve data collection.** Federal policymakers must strengthen data reporting between state and local law enforcement and the FBI under the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act. However, law enforcement shouldn't be the only data source. Congress and the Executive Branch, in coordination with state and local officials, must explore and fund community-led and public health-centered approaches to collect data on hate violence, including community-run hotlines, community-based research, and online incident documentation.

4. **Develop closer ties to LGBTQ+ safe spaces and community.** Elected officials at all levels of government should visit spaces in the communities they represent, understand their challenges, and factor in the perspectives of LGBTQ+ safe space owners, managers, and event hosts in the policymaking process. Attend and host gatherings with LGBTQ+ community members and intentionally support those spaces that hate groups have targeted.

5. **Center LGBTQ+ people who are multiply marginalized.** Policymakers must recognize that many communities experience compounded forms of hatred, including people of color, transgender individuals, immigrants, and people with disabilities. Groups who are multiply marginalized are often uniquely able to envision innovative solutions that make everyone safer. Policymakers should make a concerted effort to make sure these voices are at the table when developing and implementing approaches to address hate violence. Policymakers must also understand that those who hold multiple marginalized identities are disproportionately criminalized and harmed by the criminal legal system; therefore, resources and reporting mechanisms must be created that are not linked to or mandate participation in the criminal legal system. In addition, programs must also be developed across and including various communities and identities, building strong alliances of communities that will stand up for and with each other.

Community Recommendations

AVP urges community organizations, businesses and community members to:

1. **Document and report violence in a way that works for your organization and your community.** There is very little qualitative or quantitative data about how LGBTQ+- serving and affirming spaces are currently experiencing violence and threats. Organizations need to document and share what is happening to all kinds of organizations and in all parts of the country. The LGBTQ+ community has used data over the years to sound the alarm about the violence we experience, to change minds and to shape laws and strategies that protect rights, build safety, support survivors of violence and build a stronger community. Whether or not your group chooses to report to the police, it is vital to document the incidents of violence and, wherever possible, find ways to collect more information about what is happening in your community, city, and state. Share information as widely as you feel makes sense within your community among staff, board, funders, donors, and volunteers. An informed community is prepared; in times of crisis or need, isolation weakens us, yet community can be powerful. If it feels safe, share your experiences with other organizations, politicians and decision-makers, media, and the community. The more you and others know and understand the extent to which LGBTQ+ communities are being attacked and how these attacks are taking place, the more you and others can develop appropriate strategies to address and prevent this violence.

2. **Prioritize safety planning and training and lean on your community for support.** Whether or not your organization or local community has experienced the kind of attacks outlined in this report, it is essential for all LGBTQ+ safe spaces to begin assessing the ways your organization and community might be vulnerable to potential threats, how you can plan to prevent and mitigate the impact of violence, and how you might want to respond if you should face hate-based violence in the future. This kind of safety planning has kept individuals in the LGBTQ+ community safer for decades, and now it must be applied to our institutions. Make safety planning a part of work plans and business plans and develop regular training for staff and volunteers. Research grant programs and funding sources for which your group may qualify that could help you strengthen your security and reach out to other groups that may be able to offer technical assistance and support in accessing those funds. Don't hesitate to approach your current funders and donors to support these critical efforts that can help keep your doors open and your organization strong if threatened. Consider involving a wide and supportive community to help defend your space and your community's right to exist.

3. **Connect with other LGBTQ+ groups and other marginalized groups in your area.** The attacks on the LGBTQ+ community are a part of and connected to attempts by white nationalists and extremists to regain the power they believe they have lost. They believe that the way to regain that power is to isolate, criminalize, and dehumanize many marginalized communities, including communities of color, Jewish people, Muslims, immigrants, women, and others. The rights and freedoms of all of these groups are under attack, and we resist their attacks by standing together. Work to build communities of solidarity across identities in your local community and state. Stand up when others are attacked and build intentional collaborations around preventing and addressing hate violence, and ask government officials and funders to support these efforts.

4. **Demand policies and programs that support community-based solutions and organizations.** Because LGBTQ+ organizations need to prioritize community safety planning and models, meet with local, state and federal legislators and policymakers you think may support the community and share information about the needs in your community. When opportunities arise, propose and support programs that allow local groups to make decisions about what safety looks like to them. These efforts should include providing funding for education, community safety teams, local data collection and other community-based violence response and prevention strategies that are rooted in community and take into account the ways multiply marginalized members of our communities are impacted by violence and may not feel safe when engaging with police.

5. **Speak out against hateful rhetoric and organize against anti-LGBTQ+ violence and laws, as well as violence targeting other communities.** Whenever possible, and to the extent you feel safe in doing so, use your position and platform to speak out against anti-LGBTQ and other forms of hate-based violence, recognizing that misinformation, hate-fueled rhetoric, and even hateful laws are all forms of violence. Encourage other members in your community to join you in speaking out and taking action, such as defending drag events, stopping malicious anti-immigrant speech, calling out book banning, and correcting misinformation about trans and non-binary people wherever and whenever these and other acts of violence are committed in your community, such as Parent Teacher Organizations, community board meetings, workplaces, and social settings.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that LGBTQ+ safe spaces in the United States are under attack in a way that we have not seen since the early part of the twentieth century. At that time, laws criminalizing our ability to gather in LGBTQ+ safe spaces such as bars and clubs were common. There were also laws that criminalized same-sex intimacy and denied LGBTQ+ people the ability to dress freely or hold certain jobs. Over time, these laws were struck down as LGBTQ+ people organized, demanded rights, and became more visible and prominently integrated into and influential in all aspects of society and culture. The bigotry and hate that fueled those old laws and attitudes never disappeared, but it became less acceptable to openly express anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment.

The advancements of the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized communities have led to a revival of white nationalist ideology and hate. This hate is not random or chaotic, but it is part of an organized extremist conservative movement that is strategic and growing. This movement is behind efforts to take away individual autonomy around reproductive rights, deny transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming people access to necessary health care and self-determination to be who they truly are. White nationalism is now further trying to destroy the advancement of the LGBTQ+ community by attacking the very organizations, businesses, and events that hold our community together and provide lifesaving support to community members.

We can no longer wait and watch this hate prevail. We must take action to defend our communities and our safe spaces. It will take all of us standing up against all forms of violence to push this hate back into the shadows. A hateful phone call or unchallenged social media message can make way for an incident of physical violence. We must stop this violence now and need resources of all types to do so.

LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses must be allowed the freedom to determine how they can most effectively make their spaces safer and, by extension, keep LGBTQ+ community members safer. Because LGBTQ+ safe spaces are being attacked like never before, we must ensure the conversation about hate violence includes the unique ways these organizations are being targeted, and we must quickly mobilize resources to support these spaces in planning for, preventing, and responding in the aftermath of violence. As we develop strategies to address hate violence, we must acknowledge that even under the best circumstances, policing and punishment do not stop future attacks

and that significant visioning and resources must be devoted to equipping organizations and local communities with the tools they need to further test community-based prevention strategies and devise new ways communities can build accountability, support survivors, track incidents of violence, and create a local and national culture in which hate and violence are no longer tolerated or supported.

Despite the risks and circumstances, the LGBTQ+ community and its allies have become even more united and determined to create a world without violence and harm. Again and again, we see LGBTQ+ community members and supporters turning out and standing together to defend spaces under attack and care for each other. Our communities have answered the call to unite, protect, and defend our safe spaces and to call out the hateful agendas that threaten our lives. Out of its collective challenges and pain, the LGBTQ+ community is endlessly creative, resourceful and visionary. Despite the current reality, LGBTQ+ organizations are forging a path with new solutions and will not be silenced or erased.

AVP can also assist with the following:
- **Connecting Survivors with Resources** – AVP operates a 24/7 English & Spanish hotline and offers free counseling, advocacy, and legal services for LGBTQ+ & HIV-affected survivors. Call or text 212-714-1141 if you have experienced, feel at risk for, or have witnessed violence.
- **Professional Development & Community Education** – AVP provides various training sessions, including the options listed above, and clinical & legal training sessions for professionals working with LGBTQ+ & HIV-affected survivors of violence.

Request training by scanning the QR code or visiting our website at avp.org/request-a-training.

For questions, reach out to community@avp.org.

LIMITATIONS

This survey is not a population-based sample of LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses. That means that the results cannot be generalized. Organizations and businesses that have experienced negative events may be more likely to take this type of survey than those that have not had such experiences, meaning that the percentages estimated in this report may overstate the prevalence of these events among the larger population of LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses. At the same time, because of the limitations on outreach, many organizations that have experienced negative events did not take the survey; as a result, the total number of negative events may be understated.

Because the survey is cross-sectional (a snapshot in time), it is not possible to make claims. For instance, we cannot tell whether (for example) attitudes towards police follow from experiences with police or the reverse is true, or whether organizations and businesses call the police for help because they know who the perpetrator is, or they know who the perpetrator is because they called the police, who investigated and told them who it was. A longitudinal survey, which follows the same set of organizations and businesses over time, can help us understand whether (for example) entities that have more favorable views towards police are more likely to reach out to them if an incident occurs

or whether entities that reach out to police are more likely to, as a result, develop favorable attitudes towards them.

The survey was also limited in that information about reporting and the aftermath of incidents was only requested for the most recent incident of any given type. For example, follow-up questions about hate mail were only asked about the most recent experience of receiving hate mail. This technique was chosen to minimize the number of times organizations and businesses were asked to discuss the outcome of any given incident; however, there is less information available about previous incidents and their outcomes.

While survey participants were asked where they reported incidents, if all, they were not asked how entities other than the police responded to the organization or business reporting the event. If the board of directors had been supportive and helpful, this might have contributed to how the organization or business might recover after an incident.

Similarly, while there have been some reports of organizations, businesses and hosts of organizations (such as libraries) no longer holding LGBTQ+ events after incidents occur, this was not a question we included in the survey.

REFERENCES

Frazer, S., Saenz, R., Aleman, A., & Laderman, L. (2023). Protected and Served?. Lambda Legal and Black and Pink National. http://protectedandserved.org/2022- report-executive-summary

Funders for LGBT Issues. (2022). 2019-2020 Tracking Report: *LGBTQ Grantmaking by U.S. Foundations.* https://lgbtfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2019-2020-Tracking-Report.pdf

GLAAD. (2023, April 25). Anti-Drag Attacks Nationwide. https://www.glaad.org/blog/anti-drag-report

Hate Crime Statistics Act. (n.d.). FBI. https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/resource-pages/hate-crime-statistics-act

James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality

Jones, B. J. M. (2023, February 17). U.S. LGBT Identification Steady at 7.2%. *Gallup.com.* https://news.gallup.com/poll/470708/lgbt-identification-steady.aspx

Margolin, J., & Grant, T. (2023, May 16). Threats against the LGBTQIA+ community intensifying: Department of Homeland Security. *ABC News.* https://abcnews.go.com/US/threats-lgbtqia-community-intensifying-department-homeland-security/story?id=99338137

Movement Advancement Project & Center for American Progress. (2016). *Unjust*: How the Broken Criminal Justice System Fails LGBT People of Color. https://www.lgbtmap.org/policy-and-issue-analysis/criminal-justice-poc

Movement Advancement Project. (n.d). *Equality Maps: Housing Nondiscrimination Laws.* https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_laws

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2019). Pride and Pain: A Snapshot of Anti-LGBTQ Hate and Violence During Pride Season 2019. http://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/AVP_Pride2019_HV_infographic.pdf

Rodriguez, C. (2022, August 22). Black LGBTQ Individuals Experience Heightened *Levels of Discrimination. Center for American Progress.* https://www.americanprogress.org/article/black-lgbtq-individuals-experience-height-ened-levels-discrimination/

2023 Anti-Trans Bills: Trans Legislation Tracker. (n.d.). https://translegislation.com/

Varennes, F. (2021, November 22). *Press Conference: UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes*. UN Web TV. https://media.un.org/en/asset/k15/k153ohxn0g

Warr, M. (2000) *Fear of Crime in the United States: Avenues for Research and Policy*. Criminal Justice, 4, 451-489.

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. (2021, May 21). *LGBQ people six times more likely than general public to be stopped by police - Williams Institute*. Williams Institute. https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/lgbq-people-six-times-more-like-ly-than-general-public-to-be-stopped-by-police/

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. (2022, December 21). *LGBT people nine times more likely than non-LGBT people to be victims of violent hate crimes - Williams Institute*. Williams Institute.