Equality and Equity
Advancing the LGBT Community in Massachusetts

Boston Indicators
Measuring What We Value

The Fenway Institute
The Equality Fund
At The Boston Foundation
Today’s exploration

Demographic overview
Our state’s LGBT community is...
  • Large
  • Growing
  • Diverse

Progress to date & areas for action
  • Youth & youth of color
  • Transgender people
  • Older adults
  • Data
Massachusetts has the second highest share of population that identifies as LGB.T.
Share of total state population identifying as LGB.T. Massachusetts. Tracking poll, July 2017.

Source: Gallup Daily Tracking Survey, The Williams Institute, UCLA.
Younger people in Massachusetts are more likely to identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or something else.

Share of population identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual or something else. By age. Massachusetts. 2016.

Source: 2016 Massachusetts BRFSS.
Massachusetts’ LGBT population is rural, suburban and urban.


LGBT adults ages 18+ as a percentage of the adult population

Note: Insufficient data for Dukes and Nantucket counties.

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2014-2016, Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Data from Maria McKenna, PhD. Massachusetts DPH. Map designed by Dana King.
The racial and ethnic makeup of the LGBT population mirrors that of the state population.


Please note this is Gallup Daily Tracking Survey data, which may provide different numbers than other sources.
Sexual minority youth are particularly racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse.

Race, ethnicity and language spoken at home. Sexual minority youth and non-sexual minority youth. Massachusetts. 1995-2009

- Of color: 31% Sexual minority youth, 26% Non-sexual minority youth
- Recent immigrants: 10% Sexual minority youth, 5% Non-sexual minority youth
- Speak a non-English language at home: 21% Sexual minority youth, 11% Non-sexual minority youth

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1960s:
Boston chapter of the Mattachine Society was active.

1969 & 1970:
Chapters of the Daughters of Bilitis, the Homophile Union of Boston and the Student Homophile League were formed.

1971:
Boston was one of the first cities in the U.S. to organize a gay and lesbian liberation march. This eventually became LGBT Pride.

1971:
Fenway Community Health Center formed.

1973:
Gay Community News formed.

1978:
Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders formed.

1980:
Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth formed.

1983:
AIDS Action Committee formed.

1989:
Multicultural AIDS Coalition was formed.
Massachusetts progress to date

1989: Massachusetts is second state to pass sexual orientation nondiscrimination law

1991: Gov. Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth (first in nation)

1993: Gay and lesbian student rights law, Safe Schools Program

1995: Institute of Medicine Lesbian Health report

1997: U.S. Supreme Court strikes down Colorado law prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination (Romer v. Evans)

1999: First state to legalize marriage equality

2001: Ryan White CARE Act

2003: Supreme Court strikes down state sodomy laws (Lawrence v. Texas)

2005: Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell repealed

2007: Federal hate crimes inclusive of SOGI passed

2009: First statewide LGBT Aging Commission

2011: Prison Rape Elimination Act implementation

2013: Gender identity nondiscrimination law (16th state)

2015: LGBT elders designated pop. of greatest social need under OAA (first state)

2017: Supreme Court ends fed. nonrecognition of same-sex marriage

Transgender people allowed to serve in military

GI nondiscrim. in public accommods.

First statewide LGBT Aging Commission

LGBT elders designated pop. of greatest social need under OAA (first state)

Supreme Court ends state nonrecognition of same-sex marriage
LGB youth are at increased risk of depressive symptoms.

Share of population experiencing depressive symptoms. LGB and heterosexual youth. Massachusetts. 2015.

- Felt sad or helpless daily for two-plus weeks: 61% LGB youth, 24% heterosexual youth
- Considered attempting suicide: 48% LGB youth, 11% heterosexual youth
- Made a suicide plan: 35% LGB youth, 10% heterosexual youth
- Attempted suicide: 25% LGB youth, 5% heterosexual youth

Source: Massachusetts YRBS, 2015.
A large share of LGBTQ youth of color live with economic, housing and food insecurity.

Unemployment, housing stability, and receipt of public assistance. LGBTQ youth of color.
Greater Boston. 2014. n=294.

More than half of LGBTQ youth of color struggle with maternal acceptance or are not out.


22% Child not out
17% Parent not at all/a little accepting
16% Parent somewhat accepting
41% Parent quite a bit/completely accepting
5% Not applicable

Sexual orientation and gender expression discrimination are among the most common forms of discrimination faced by LGBTQ youth of color. Share of LGBTQ youth of color population experiencing discrimination yearly. By number of types of everyday discrimination. Greater Boston. 2014.

Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) by city or town.

Number of GSAs per city or town, 2017

Source: Boston Alliance of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth, 2017. Map designed by Dana King.
The House and Ball Community

Photos by Luna Ortiz, Gay Men’s Health Crisis and myballroomlife.tumblr.com
The transgender community experiences pervasive discrimination.

Share of Mass. transgender population experiencing discrimination in past year. By public space. 2014

- Overall: 65%
- Public transportation: 36%
- Retail establishments: 28%
- Restaurants: 26%
- Public gatherings: 25%
- Healthcare settings: 24%

“From education to employment, from housing to health care from physical safety to mental health, discrimination can touch every facet of a transgender person’s life. Many of these effects are further compounded by the economic hardship experienced by transgender people.

“In Massachusetts, a greater share of transgender people are unemployed (7 percent) than cisgender people (4.8 percent). A greater share of transgender people are also living in poverty (17 percent) than cisgender people (11.5 percent).”
Middle aged and older LGBT people are more likely to be diagnosed with depression.

Percentage of 50- to 75-year-olds reporting a depression diagnosis, Mass. BRFSS, 2014-2016.

32.9%

LGBT 50-75 year olds diagnosed with depression

20.3%

Non-LGBT 50-75 year olds diagnosed with depression

Source: Analysis of 2014-2016 Massachusetts BRFSS data by Maria McKenna, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, November 2017.
Older adult congregate meal programs
Improving data collection & reporting

• Report on and make available existing SOGI data that state, local agencies are collecting

• Add SOGI questions to existing surveys

• Oversample small populations
  • E.g. transgender people, Asian Pacific Islander LGBT people

• Pool several years of data to examine racial/ethnic differences, other differences
The LGBT community is **large, growing and diverse**

Some key areas for action are supporting:

- Programming that provides mental, emotional and social support for LGBT communities
- Programming that responds to the housing and employment needs of LGBT people
- Trainings that develop mainstream service providers’ capacity to effectively serve LGBT people
- Policies that protect against discrimination and create a more welcoming environment for all LGBT people
- Organizations and leaders that advocate for and serve the LGBT community
- Expanding data collection and reporting on the LGBT population