



Washington LGBTQ+ Survey: Design and Methodology



Overview

- Recognize team and partners
- Discuss survey design and methodology
- Share outreach approach and outcomes
- Show participant feedback about survey experience



Research Team and Partners



Research team

- Leadership:
 - Traci Gillig
 - Crystallee Crain
- Research assistants:
 - CJ Janssen
 - Ron Price
 - Oaklen Warren
 - Axis Zarcone
 - Zak Moreno
 - Christina Nickerson



Partners

- **Prevention at the Intersections** (complete project)
- **WSU Social and Economic Sciences Research Center** (complete project)
- **Charles Watson II** (March – June 2025)
- **RCB Communications** (November 2024 – January 2025)
- **data2insight** (August 2024 - January 2025)
- **Delve** (March 2024 – January 2025)
- **Sankofa Consulting** (December 2023 - July 2024)

Advisory panel

- Nikki Brueggeman – Whitman College
- Erin Fordyce – NORC
- Robin Lang – Washington State Department of Veteran’s Affairs
- Gabe Neuman – GSBA
- Julia Przedworski – Pride in Numbers
- Tracy Simmons – FAVS News

Citation of research

Research commissioned by the Washington State LGBTQ Commission and led by Washington State University

APA Style citation:

Gillig, T. K., Crain, C., Janssen, C., Price, E., Warren, O. E., Zarccone, A., & Moreno, Z. (2025). *Washington LGBTQ+ Survey Report 2025*. Washington State University. <https://www.walgbtqsurvey.com/>

Survey Design and Methodology

Timeline

- **December 2023:** Research team began working with the LGBTQ Commission
- **January 2024:** Team led grounding session with the LGBTQ Commission
- **February – May 2024:** Team designed questionnaire and outreach approach, reviewed with LGBTQ Commission and advisory panel, submitted study plan to Washington State Institutional Review Board (WSIRB), pilot tested survey materials, established social media and website, produced branded items, conducted media relations
- **June 1, 2024:** Launched data collection, tracked/reported preliminary outcomes
- **January 31, 2025:** Closed data collection, started full data analysis
- **May 17, 2025:** Presented preliminary findings
- **June 25, 2025:** Delivered final report and presentation

Project goals

- Research team aimed to meet the LGBTQ Commission’s goals stated in the RFQQ and expressed through the grounding session and subsequent conversations, including:
 - Capture LGBTQ+ Washingtonian’s demographics; geographic locations; health, safety, and economic/financial experiences; primary needs
 - Reach LGBTQ+ Washingtonians across the lifespan
 - Engage hard-to-reach communities such as Two-Spirit, rural, and older LGBTQ+ people
 - Provide data to help the LGBTQ Commission make informed policy recommendations

Research team aims

- Team also desired to:
 - Co-create survey with a diverse group of LGBTQ+ people across the state
 - Empower LGBTQ+ Washingtonians to share their unique experiences
 - Ensure accessibility
 - Engage with the community in various ways
 - Examine survey data as a whole and intersectionally
 - Provide results that lend themselves readily to policymakers, community members, and others

Survey design

- Drew from the diversity of our team members to create an inclusive survey
- Team members have experience in:
 - Leading survey-based, mixed method research with LGBTQ+ adolescents through adults
 - Engaging with BIPOC communities
 - Understanding experiences of transgender, nonbinary, and rural Washingtonians
- Incorporated established survey scales/items when available, and designed new ones when needed



Survey items and scales

- Demographics
- Policy experiences
- Health, medical experiences, and social support
- Economic and financial experiences
- Safety experiences
- Incarceration experiences
- Source of hearing about survey

How safe do you feel as an LGBTQ+ person in the state of Washington?

- Extremely safe
- Very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Very unsafe
- Extremely unsafe

Open-ended survey questions

- For all participants:
 - *“What would you like to see the Washington state government do to help LGBTQ+ people who live in Washington?”*
 - *“Is there anything else you’d like to share with us about being LGBTQ+ in Washington?”*
 - *“Is there anything you’d like to share with us about your experience with this survey?”*

Open-ended survey questions

- For participants who experienced barriers to obtaining gender-affirming care:
 - *“Please explain the barriers you encountered when trying to obtain insurance coverage for gender-affirming care.”*
- For previously incarcerated participants:
 - *“Did your LGBTQ+ identity negatively affect your treatment by other inmates or personnel while incarcerated?”*
 - *“Did you have difficulty receiving healthcare that affirmed your LGBTQ+ identity while incarcerated?”*

Protecting participants

- Anonymous survey
- Parental permission for adolescents ages 11 to 17 (WSIRB-required)
- Separate questionnaire for entering \$50 raffle drawing
- Data stored in secure, password-protected spaces, with limited access

Review and pilot testing

- Internal team review
 - Survey team represents queer individuals of a range of ages, identities, backgrounds
- Review by LGBTQ Commission leadership and commissioners
 - Options to provide feedback via a Qualtrics questionnaire and in a Zoom meeting
- Pilot testing with LGBTQ+ people of various ages, abilities, identities, and life experiences
 - Interview/survey completion sessions conducted

Inclusive materials

- Translated English questionnaire and informational materials into Spanish and Chinese
- Created online and paper-and-pencil questionnaires

A promotional banner for the WA LGBTQ+ Survey. It features the survey logo on the left, a QR code on the right with the text "Responda a la encuesta" above it, and a paragraph of Spanish text at the bottom. The background is a mix of purple, blue, and orange geometric shapes.

Responda a la encuesta

WA LGBTQ+ SURVEY

La Comisión LGBTQ de Washington ha encargado esta encuesta, la primera de su clase, dirigida por la Universidad Estatal de Washington para conocer las experiencias de los ciudadanos LGBTQ+ de Washington –desde adolescentes a adultos– en todo el estado. Sus comentarios ayudarán a la Oficina del Gobernador a comprender mejor las características de personas como usted y contribuirán a la formulación de recomendaciones políticas fundamentadas.

Preliminary data analysis and cleaning

- Monthly preliminary analysis during data collection to guide outreach
- Participants were screened for study eligibility based on the following criteria:
 - Living in or being a resident of Washington State
 - Being age 11 or older
 - Identifying as LGBTQ+
 - Not having previously completed the survey
- Multiple team members conducted rigorous screening for invalid responses (bots, etc)

Data analysis

- Statistical analyses (frequencies, descriptives, correlations, regressions) conducted by WSU SESRC and lead principal researcher (SPSS v28)
- Qualitative analysis and coding of open-ended responses led by WSU SESRC, supported by WSU research assistants
 - SESRC inductively analyzed selections of participants' written responses to create codebooks
 - SESRC staff and research assistants used the codebooks to assign codes to participants' written responses
 - Intercoder reliability established between coder pairs

Outreach

Outreach approach

- WSU Media Relations activities prior to study launch generated statewide coverage and enthusiasm about the project



New WSU study will examine Washington's rainbow reputation

By KIRO 7 News Staff

November 28, 2023 at 5:44 pm PST



Outreach approach

- Timed survey launch to align with start of Pride
- Shared the survey link online
 - Posted on @walgbtqsurvey social media
 - Emailed to LGBTQ+ and other relevant organizations
- Conducted additional media relations
- Distributed and posted print materials
- Hosted in-person outreach and survey administration events



Focused outreach

- Preliminary analysis of participant race/ethnicity showed underrepresentation of Latine and Asian people
- In September 2024, team launched focused outreach:
 - Additional engagement with relevant community organizations, student groups, businesses, etc
 - Op-ed in *International Examiner*
 - Targeted online ads
 - Public service announcements in English, Spanish, Chinese
 - Recruitment through survey firm SAGO



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Edward R. Murrow
College of Communication

The critical importance of BIPOC representation in state LGBTQIA+ survey

By Dr. Crystallee Crain - January 13, 2025



Free pride flag image, public domain LGBTQ CC0 photo.

As activist June Jordan reminds us, “We’re the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

The [Washington LGBTQ+ Survey](#), led by Washington State University’s Murrow College of Communication and sponsored by the [Washington State LGBTQ Commission](#), stands as a landmark initiative in understanding and supporting our state’s diverse Two-spirit — an umbrella term for third genders in Native America — and LGBTQIA+ communities.

It is a first-of-its-kind statewide survey aimed at raising the voices of queer adolescents and adults living in Washington to state policymakers. While the survey has successfully gathered insights from more than 5,400 Two-spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members across every Washington county, a crucial demographic gap has emerged that demands our immediate attention and action before the survey closes on January 31, 2025.

Communities of color know all too well that without information about us we can’t make the case for the social and political changes needed. Two-spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities of color face additional barriers and exclusions that the Washington LGBTQ+ Survey aims to provide context for.

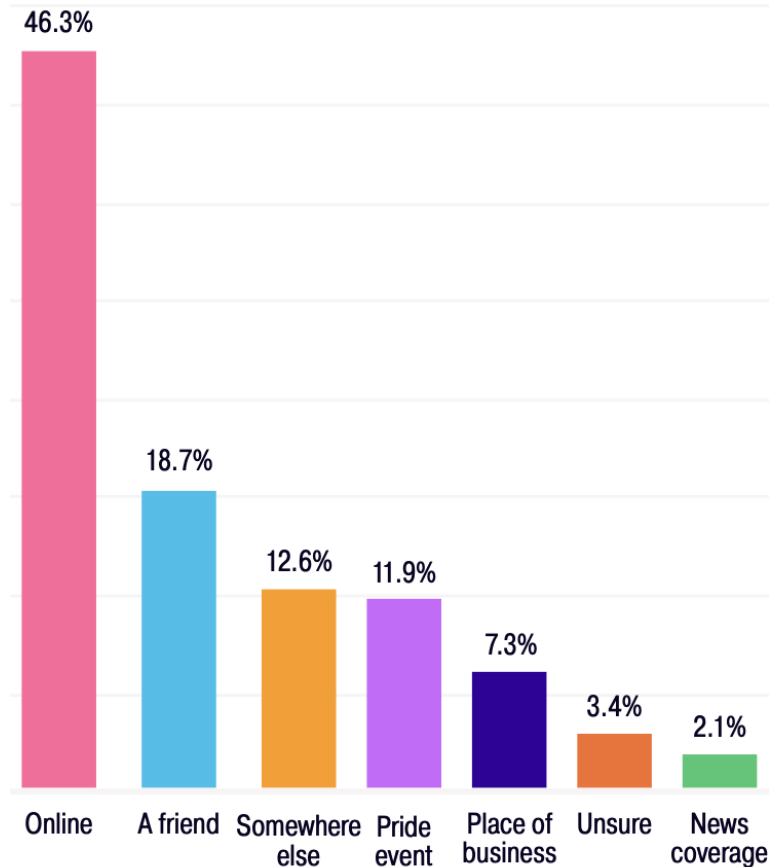
Outreach outcomes

- Sample of nearly 6,700 LGBTQ+ participants
- Representation across lifespan, from adolescents to older adults
 - Participants ranged in age from 11 to 98 years old
- Participants from every Washington county
- More than half of participants are transgender, nonbinary, or other non-cisgender identity
- Diversity across race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and other key characteristics and experiences represented

Outreach outcomes

How did you hear about this survey?

(6,095 participants)



Participant Feedback

Participant feedback

Is there anything else you'd like to share about the survey?

(935 participants)

Positive emotional responses	60.4%
Survey was a positive experience	38.8%
Grateful for survey	16.4%
Made me feel valued	2.5%
Gave me hope	1.6%
Learned something	0.9%
Survey content feedback	28.0%
Survey is missing something	22.0%
Gave context to previous answers	2.2%
Experienced mechanical/tech issue	1.7%
Noticed redundancies	0.8%
Could improve identity questions	0.5%
Found parts confusing	0.4%
Wanted another open-ended question	0.2%

Survey flow feedback	5.8%
Commented on length	5.3%
Commented on accessibility	0.5%
Data-related questions	2.9%
Asked about results availability	2.3%
Inquired about anonymity	0.6%
Negative emotional responses	2.6%
Suspicious of survey	1.3%
Expressed a general negative emotion	1.2%

Participant quotes

Positive emotional responses

The survey questions were well-crafted and covered a broad range of topics relevant to LGBTQ+ individuals.

I appreciate your inclusive wording throughout, especially with regard to asexuality and body positivity.

Survey content feedback

Hard to answer some of the questions from my experience. I have never felt discriminated against; being gay is one facet of my identity, and not a major one at that.

I'm closeted and have passed as straight my whole life, so many of the questions didn't squarely apply to me (e.g., discrimination at work, etc.), but that's 100% understandable.

Participant quotes

Survey flow feedback

Thank you for making this survey so accessible.

This survey was a little long! It almost made me not want to complete, but as someone who has developed and distributed similar surveys - and believes in community feedback and engagement - I felt it was necessary for me to complete it. I hope to see and learn about your findings when analysis is complete!

Data-related questions

I am satisfied with the survey's privacy protection measures, knowing that my personal information will be kept securely.

Thank you for doing this research. I look forward to the report back and community outcomes.

Negative emotional responses

It's a mixed feeling when surveys ask about discrimination because it brings back tough memories.

It was a sad reality check for me and my quality of life and being totally alone.

Q&A

- In the room
- Online
- [Comment dashboard](#)



Thank you!