

The Coalition for Radical Advocacy and Empowerment's (CRAE) Public Statement on Homeless LGBTQ+ Youth and Young Adults in New York City

In May 2024, the Coalition for Radical Advocacy and Empowerment, a program of The LGBT Community Center, conducted a comprehensive community needs assessment that shed light on the profound challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in New York City. The assessment revealed a stark reality: LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) youth, are significantly overrepresented among the homeless youth population. While they make up an estimated 7-10% of the broader youth population, TGNC youth account for nearly 40% of all homeless youth in the city.

We know that LGBTQ+ youth are not only disproportionately affected by homelessness but also face exceptionally high rates of violence, discrimination, and health disparities. Approximately 50% of TGNC homeless youth reported experiencing violence or harassment due to their gender identity, and health outcomes are dire, with over 40% reporting untreated medical issues due to fear of discrimination in healthcare settings.

Additionally, our findings indicate that about 30% of homeless LGBTQ+ youth struggle with substance use issues—nearly triple the rate of their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts. This is compounded by significant long-term health impacts and barriers to accessing critical services.

Our community's young people also confront systemic issues such as white supremacy, anti-Blackness, transphobia, antisemitism, misogyny, ableism, and classism. These intersecting forms of discrimination exacerbate the difficulties they face and underline the need for targeted, compassionate interventions that address these specific challenges.

As an organization committed to empowering these young individuals, we are dedicated to advocating for equitable access to services and resources. We aim to provide not only direct support but also education and advocacy tools so that these young people can become strong self-advocates and leaders within their communities.

The time to act is now. We call upon local government officials, service providers, and community leaders to join us in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all LGBTQ+ youth and young adults facing homelessness in NYC. Together, we can transform the findings of this assessment into actionable change, ensuring that no young person is left without the support they need to thrive.