

Collecting Data from LGBTQ+ Communities



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WITH EXCERPTS FROM

COLLECTING DATA ABOUT LGBTQI+ AND OTHER SEXUAL AND GENDER-DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Caroline Medina and Lindsay Mahowald

Center for American Progress

May 24, 2022

[https://www.americanprogress.org/article/collecting-data-about-
lgbtqi-and-other-sexual-and-gender-diverse-communities/](https://www.americanprogress.org/article/collecting-data-about-lgbtqi-and-other-sexual-and-gender-diverse-communities/)



A decorative graphic in the top-left corner consisting of several overlapping, wavy, horizontal bands of color in a rainbow spectrum: purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.

GLOSSARY

SEXUALITY

- SOGISC: Category of demographic data that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics
- Lesbian: A woman who is attracted to other women
- Gay: A man who is attracted to other men
- Bisexual/Pansexual/Omnisexual/Polysexual: Attraction to two or more genders
- Asexual: Experiencing little to no sexual attraction to other people
- Aromantic: Experiencing little to no romantic attraction to other people



GLOSSARY

GENDER

- Transgender person or trans person: A person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth
- Cisgender person: A person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth
- Intersex: A variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the typical definitions of female or male.

WHY TRACK DATA ON LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS?

- Advance research agendas
- Evaluate population trends
- Identify community based-needs
- Provide high-quality services
- Track and address discrimination
- Equitably distribute funding and other resources
- Shape evidence-based policy solutions to promote equity and reduce disparities faced by LGBTQ+ populations

SURVEYING LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS

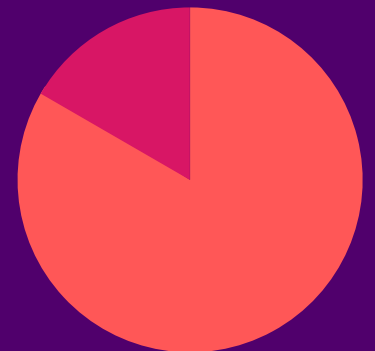
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Collect data with specific and well-defined goals in mind
- Data should be collected, maintained, and used with strong privacy
- Entities collecting data should adopt and post clear non-discrimination and confidentiality policies
- LGBTQ+ people should be meaningfully involved in question development, testing, and evaluation

WHO BENEFITS FROM LGBTQ+ DATA COLLECTION?

- Policymakers
- Researchers
- Service Providers
- Advocates
- Anyone seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people

"More than 5 in 6 LGBT adults cannot be identified by existing questions in non-experimental surveys conducted by the US Census Bureau such as the ACS and the US Census" (Mahowald & Medina, 2022)



FEDERAL DATA COLLECTION

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The Biden administration will be implementing the following policies that will require federal agencies to collect SOGISC data to support the LGBTQ+ community and promote equity.

- Executive Order 13988 (1/20/21)
- Executive Order 13985 (1/20/21)
- Federal Evidence Agenda on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Equity (1/24/23)

SOGISC ITEMS FUNCTION WELL IN SURVEYS

- People generally understand questions about gender identity and sexuality and are willing to answer them
 - People with intersex traits also appear willing to answer survey questions on this topic
- Securing LGBTQ+ participants does not require an added level of effort
- Gender identity and sexuality items are answered consistently across modes (phone, paper, online surveys—self-reporting and by proxy)



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