



**FIERCE**

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**FIERCE**



**MOVING UP, FIGHTING BACK:  
CREATING A PATH TO  
LGBTQ YOUTH LIBERATION.  
NATIONAL REPORT 2013**

**MOVING UP, FIGHTING BACK**  
**CREATING A PATH TO LGBTQ YOUTH LIBERATION**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Moving Up, Fighting Back: Creating a Path to LGBTQ Youth Liberation would not have been possible without the incredible work of many powerful organizations and individuals who work daily to address the issues impacting LGBTQ youth and support LGBTQ youth leadership to create the changes that they want to see.

**We are honored to be building a social justice movement in community with our comrades and with the generous support of our allies.**

We would like to thank all the organizations and individuals who completed the survey and offered their critical insight to the challenges and opportunities for LGBTQ youth organizing. We want to especially thank the 2013 “Connect Our Roots” National Summit participants for building with us, identifying issues, and offering their vision for a national LGBTQ youth-led movement. We also want to acknowledge and appreciate the following organizations who shared their work with us for inclusion in this report: Branching Seedz of Resistance, BreakOUT!, Immigrant Youth Justice League, Streetwise & Safe and Queer Youth Space.

This report came to fruition with the support of many individuals. To Avy A. Skolnik, thank you for providing your expertise in survey development and data analysis. To Patricia Gonzalez Ramirez, thank you for translating our survey and helping us create access for LGBTQ youth who are Spanish speakers. Special thanks to Shira Hassan for coordinating and conducting survey outreach. We would like to also thank Glo Ross for generating beautiful Geographic Information System maps to help us paint the picture of what the national landscape for youth organizing looks like. To Wesley Hall for bestowing us with his graphic design skills and talent for the report. Lastly, to Soniya Munshi, thank you for your research, writing, and editing of the report and for helping us find our words to tell this story.

We would like to thank the Arcus Foundation for providing the support that allowed us to lay the foundation for our National Program. We would like to thank our current funder, the Ford Foundation, for supporting FIERCE in creating an infrastructure for our National Program and providing support to do this important research. Lastly, we would like to thank the FIERCE National Team member leaders for their energy and commitment and for their many hours of work devoted to FIERCE’s national work.

**We dedicate this report to LGBTQ youth across the country who fearlessly face and challenge oppression everyday. Your resilience, determination and strength are a testament to the power of LGBTQ youth organizing. Working together, we believe we can move up, fight back and create a movement that is For Us, By Us!**

**-FIERCE  
December 2013**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Who is FIERCE?

FIERCE is a membership-based organization that works to build the leadership and power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color in New York City. We develop politically conscious leaders who are invested in improving ourselves and our communities through youth-led campaigns, leadership development programs, and cultural expression using arts and media.

**FIERCE is committed to cultivating the next generation of social justice movement leaders who are dedicated to ending all forms of oppression.**



Photo credit: sabelo narasimhan  
(stillsabelo@gmail.com), NYC, 2012

FIERCE takes to the streets for the 8th Annual Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice. The Audre Lorde Project organizes Trans Day of Action with collaborative support from many NYC LGBTQ partners, including FIERCE!

FIERCE was founded in 2000 by a group of primarily LGBTQ youth of color. FIERCE was founded on the principle that LGBTQ youth must realize and manifest our own social and political power to change our conditions, to shape our futures, and to become effective agents of change in our communities. While many organizations in New York City provide opportunities for LGBTQ youth to access services, few groups serve as a city-wide avenue for LGBTQ youth to direct our own social change agendas. FIERCE believes that those most impacted by an issue should be the ones creating and leading the solutions to those problems. Based on this founding principle, our members lead and direct our campaign organizing, base-building, and media strategies.

## Goals of this Report

This report offers a field analysis of the current national landscape of issues impacting LGBTQ youth organizing and identifies potential political opportunities that can continue to grow the collective power of LGBTQ youth across the country. This report emerges from FIERCE's work on the national level over the past 4 years and grows out of a research project that was initiated in 2012.

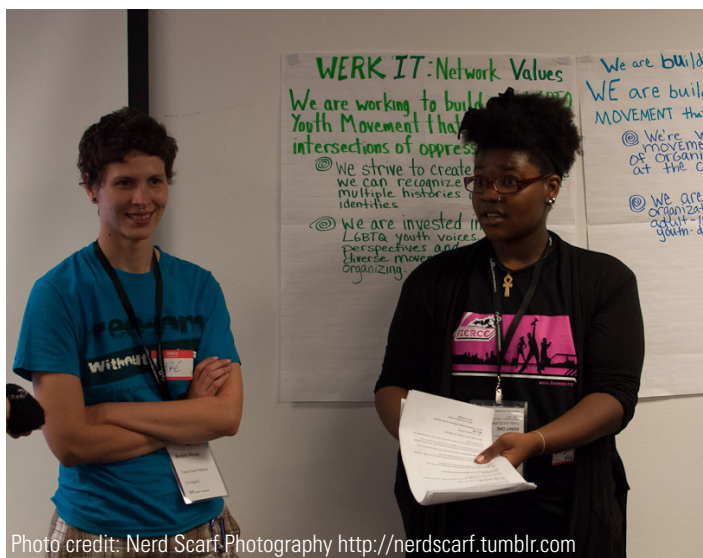


Photo credit: Nerd Scarf Photography <http://nerdscarf.tumblr.com>

FIERCE Werk It! Crew member leads a small group breakout at the 2012 Werk It! network gathering. Werk It! brought together over 50 LGBTQ youth from across the country to talk about issues they are facing, how they are responding, and how we can build networks to share resources and strengthen support and solidarity.



Photo credit: Nerd Scarf Photography <http://nerdscarf.tumblr.com>

FIERCE members, Balder and Azriel, hosting our 2nd annual Artistic Night on the pier. Our Safe Space Saves Lives Campaign fights to ensure that LGBTQ youth of color have access to safe public space, including free programming by and for LGBTQ youth of color.

## This report will:

- 1) Share data about LGBTQ youth issues and organizing that were collected through a national survey and mapping project to further national-level dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity
- 2) Present strategies that LGBTQ youth organizers and allies are utilizing to build capacity to respond to and change conditions
- 3) Offer recommendations that may further opportunities for collaborative work across regions

# Executive Summary

FIERCE is a membership-based organization that builds the leadership and power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color in New York City.

This report grows out of a national survey and mapping project, offers a field analysis of the current national landscape of issues impacting LGBTQ youth organizing and identifies potential political opportunities that can strengthen and grow the collective power of LGBTQ youth across the country.

LGBTQ youth embody intersectional identities based in race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, and other social positions. The issues that impact LGBTQ youth are intersectional as well. Our research reveals that the most critical issues impacting LGBTQ youth today are criminalization/policing; lack of housing; immigration restrictions; and concerns of safety and violence, including bias violence, school-based violence, and intimate partner/sexual violence. As we work to create solutions and change conditions for LGBTQ youth, these connections and intersections must be taken into account.

We offer the following recommendations to move our collective work forward:

**Demands and strategies must focus on the root causes of issues.** Although addressing immediate needs is essential to the survival of LGBTQ youth, long-term social change requires us to change the conditions that produce social problems.

**Youth leadership is critical.** Our social justice work must centralize the voice, visibility, and leadership of people who are most directly affected by an issue. LGBTQ youth are the ones who are best positioned to come up with solutions to the problems that impact them.

**Policy change is only effective with cultural change.** Our solutions have to address cultural institution so that we can change norms and practices of violence and oppression. Telling our own stories, in our own words and voices, is an important strategy to express the truths of LGBTQ youth experiences. It is critical to change laws and social policies that negatively impact LGBTQ youth. Effective strategies will support both the implementation of legal and policy changes, as well as shift cultural norms, practices, and beliefs that go beyond the limits of the law.

**Strategies vary according to local context and history.** National-level work needs to take local conditions into account and build networks that can both connect through similarity and also create space for work to be rooted in its specific context. To do this effectively, we need disaggregated data to better understand the intersectional complexities of LGBTQ youth. In particular, issues that impact LGBTQ youth in rural and remote areas, and other marginalized regions need more attention and resources.

**Political education is a vital component of movement-building work.** Through political education, we can better understand the interconnections between systems of oppression, institutions and social policy, and the everyday experiences of LGBTQ youth of color.



# FIERCE'S NATIONAL PROGRAM

## History

Since FIERCE's founding in 2000, we have received numerous requests from LGBTQ organizations and LGBTQ youth who want to learn about our organizing model, approach to social change, and local campaign and leadership development successes, strategies, and challenges.

In 2009 with our movement allies, we began identifying issues impacting LGBTQ youth and conducted an assessment of how youth organizing and leadership development strategies were being utilized to create change. In response to gaps that we identified, **FIERCE launched a national program to support building the capacity and increasing the visibility of LGBTQ youth issues on a national scale.**

In January 2010, FIERCE released a report, *Coming Out, Stepping Up: Organizing to Build the Power of LGBTQ Youth*, to document major challenges facing LGBTQ youth and strategies being used to address these challenges. The following themes emerged:

- 1.** The problems LGBTQ youth faced were intensifying, and transphobia, homelessness, and cuts to social services were the most urgent issues.
- 2.** LGBTQ youth issues were not being prioritized by mainstream LGBTQ organizations. While same-sex marriage garnered increasing wins and political support, these benefits do not protect LGBTQ youth of color from gender-based violence, homelessness, a lack of social services, and other forms of discrimination and abuse.
- 3.** Most LGBTQ youth organizations were using social service-based responses and not community organizing strategies to build collective power for deeper social change. While services are much needed and deeply valued, long-term change requires building power to address and change the conditions that cause the problem.

In February 2010, FIERCE hosted a day-long organizing summit at the Creating Change Conference in Dallas, Texas. The summit supported building the grassroots organizing skills of over 30 LGBTQ youth of color, many of whom were facing increased homelessness and violence and a lack of safe spaces. This interactive training space covered organizing skills and strategies for how to build the political power of LGBTQ youth of color many of whom were facing increased homelessness and violence and a lack of safe spaces.

# Current Goals and Direction of FIERCE's National Program

Through our initial work, FIERCE learned important lessons that have impacted the goals and direction of our National Program. We learned that social change strategies work best when they are culturally relevant and grounded in local conditions while also based in shared values that center youth leadership and power. Over the past several years, we have seen an increased emergence of LGBTQ youth organizing efforts across the country. Along with this increase, we see that the need to sustain LGBTQ youth leaders in a national conversation has also grown.



Photo credit: FIERCE, Baltimore, MD, 2012

FIERCE member Karen leads a media justice workshop at the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change Conference. FIERCE's first-ever national LGBTQ youth of color organizing summit was held at Creating Change in 2010.

Our work to support and grow LGBTQ youth movement infrastructure requires building LGBTQ youth capacity, including developing organizing skills and political landscape analysis, to create long-lasting change. Our work is built upon collective action through leadership development and base-building efforts that center LGBTQ youth who are most marginalized and directly affected by the problems we aim to address. We center our core value of developing LGBTQ youth of color as leaders to produce the change that they want to see in their lives.

Based on these reflections, the direction of our National Program currently includes:

**Cultivating and supporting a movement that successfully challenges the root causes of issues impacting LGBTQ youth.** We do this by developing a national network of LGBTQ youth organizers, who are members or staff between the ages of 13 and 24 engaged in creating change through community organizing. This network prioritizes marginalized geographic regions (e.g. the South, Midwest, Southwest and rural areas) and the leadership of LGBTQ youth of color. Using a framework of intersectionality, we will include groups that are not LGBTQ- or youth-identified but have LGBTQ youth members.

**Organizing regional and national gatherings that create support spaces for LGBTQ youth organizers to engage each other as peers, leaders, and solution-makers, to share skills and to deepen relationships.** Our aim is to strengthen capacity of peer allies to organize among themselves.

**Identifying political opportunities and/or strategies that build political power of LGBTQ youth on a national scale.** Here, we also aim to use existing and new research about the issues that LGBTQ youth face, particularly about negative impacts of social policies as well as successful attempts to change these conditions.

## Recent National Program Events

In 2012, FIERCE began a national mapping/survey research project. During this time, we continued to support skills and leadership development in national movement-building spaces, such as:



Photo credit: André Pérez, andrealanperez.com

Fresco, a youth organizer with FLY (Fearless Leading by the Youth), speaks about their experiences and shares organizing strategies to improve health and trauma services for queer youth of color on Chicago's south side.



Photo credit: FIERCE, Detroit, MI, 2012

FIERCE presents our organizing model and youth-created media at the Allied Media Conference (AMC) Werk It! Network Gathering. Since 2010, FIERCE and Branching Seedz of Resistance (Denver, CO) have been co-organizing a space for LGBTQ youth to create, connect and share with one another.

- 1.) FIERCE's Connect our Roots National Summit for LGBTQ youth of color (February 2013).
- 2.) With Branching Seedz of Resistance of the Colorado Anti-Violence Program, FIERCE co-organized two daylong gatherings at the **Allied Media Conference**. The "Werk It" gatherings brought together queer and trans youth to build relationships, share their work, discuss community issues, explore ways to stay connected and discuss collaborations using media and networking (June 2012; June 2013).
- 3.) FIERCE members and staff hosted a workshop at the 25th annual **Creating Change Conference** by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force for young people to learn more about our youth-led grassroots fundraising model (January 2013).
- 3.) FIERCE held our first ever **Multimedia Webinar** on youth leadership development. We offered an in-depth discussion on our Education for Liberation program, our values and principles about leadership development and how youth leadership is incorporated into FIERCE's organizing model (September 2012).

# 2013 CONNECT OUR ROOTS NATIONAL LGBTQ YOUTH ORGANIZING SUMMIT

**“When you rest in a place of dreamers, you can’t help but continue to dream.”**

**- Summit participant**

## Overview

From February 15-17, 2013, FIERCE organized the Connect Our Roots National Summit in Chicago, IL. The gathering was the second national summit since launching our national program in 2010 and was co-hosted by four Chicago-based organizations: Affinity, Broadway Youth Center, GenderJust, and Young Women’s Empowerment Project. Over 30 LGBTQ youth of color representing over 20 organizations attended the Summit. This space was made up of and led by LGBTQ youth organizers and designed so that participants could feel safe and empowered to express ideas, share knowledge, and build their own capacities for leadership. Additional goals of the Summit included:

- ✦ To share information about issues that LGBTQ youth face, including local challenges and strategies for change
- ✦ To deepen understanding of LGBTQ youth experiences in the U.S. and to identify skills needed to gain more local wins
- ✦ To learn through sharing skills and strengths with one another,
- ✦ To collectively vision a movement led by LGBTQ youth of color

To meet these goals, the Summit included political education and skill building workshops, spaces to network and share strategies, issue identification activities and a collective visioning session on how **LGBTQ youth can address problems that impact them.**

## Critical Connections, Intersectional Issues

Over the course of three days, many pressing problems that LGBTQ youth of color throughout the U.S. face emerged, including:

- ✦ Lack of jobs, especially employment with benefits
- ✦ Criminalization and policing
- ✦ Housing and homelessness
- ✦ Health and health care access
- ✦ Violence, such as intimate partner violence and bias violence



Photo credit: NerdScarf Photography <http://nerdscarf.tumblr.com>

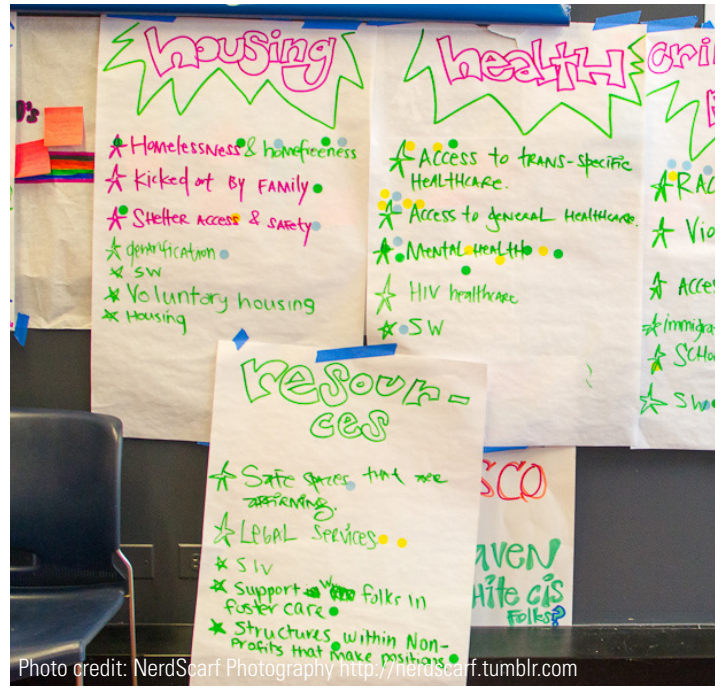


Photo credit: NerdScarf Photography <http://nerdscarf.tumblr.com>

LGBTQ youth of color identify issues impacting their lives and communities and discuss intersections of these issues at the 2013 Connect Our Roots Organizing Summit.

Participants identified specific needs and solutions to these problems, such as growth of opportunities for vocational training and jobs, changes to housing eligibility regulations, increased long-term housing options, and shortened housing application processes. We also discussed strategies to subvert social policies that criminalize LGBTQ youth. For example, the use of make-up compact cases that hold condoms can subvert Condoms as Evidence laws, which allow law enforcement to use possession of condoms as evidence of prostitution; LGBTQ youth of color are among the groups that are targeted through these laws.

**An intersectional approach to examining the ways in which different problems are structurally connected is essential to deepening our understandings of the everyday experiences of LGBTQ youth of color.**

For example, a lack of affordable, safe long-term housing is one problem that LGBTQ youth face. The experience of housing insecurity, and the specific options that are available to homeless LGBTQ youth, such as shelters and other short-term housing, put youth at increased risk of gender-based violence, police violence and surveillance. Another example is that LGBTQ youth face a lack of viable employment opportunities; this reality produces the need to engage in criminalized forms of survival work, which increases the potential of interfacing with law enforcement.

Another key finding was that **issues of intimate and/or interpersonal violence run as an undercurrent throughout the experiences of LGBTQ youth.** Participants discussed connections between individual manifestations of violence (e.g. violence that is enacted between people in relationships), systemic roots of violence (e.g. transphobia, homophobia), and structural disparities that produce conditions of safety and violence (e.g. lack of gender-accessible emergency shelter for trans and gender non-conforming survivors).

## “To Reach our Diamond State”: the Power of Collective Visioning

Through political education workshops, Summit participants reflected upon the needs, values, and experiences of the LGBTQ youth of color movement. Some of the major needs that emerged include:

- ✦ Deepen resistance
- ✦ Build resilience
- ✦ Challenge complacency
- ✦ Grow power through collective struggle
- ✦ Build coalitions and an intersectional understanding
- ✦ Attend to invisibility and visibility of issues, identities, and experiences
- ✦ Situate our organizing work within our movement histories and legacies

To close out the summit, participants reflected on the power of dreaming together: as a collective and as a people. Below are excerpts from the collective visioning group conversations:

“...[t]he power of dreaming together is definitely momentum. It is motivation. It is the force behind it all. When you can come together collectively and really just get everything out there... it gives you encouragement. The struggle that you thought was your own is not just your own.”

“...We have to be in the mindset that in our lifetime we’re not gonna end racism or homophobia. To dream knowing that is part of our mental health. We work so that we can be sustainable and live. We’re planning to live our lives for 100 years. What does sustainability look like and how do we create communities of care? QYOC (Queer Youth of Color) need to create tactics and plans and find ways to teach each other. My vision is to get all youth organizers to that place where we feel like we’re going to be living for 100 years.”

Participants reflected upon the need for continued communication, community-building, healing and support to create these visions:



Photo credit: André Pérez, [andrealanperez.com](http://andrealanperez.com)

LGBTQ youth of color and allies at the opening panel of FIERCE's Connect Our Roots Organizing Summit.

“...have solidarity with this community or otherwise -- within the general QTPOC (Queer and Trans People of Color) communities -- we have to stay solid. There was a lot of people feeling really burnt when they first came here and I’ve been having conversation with people about not giving up on radical dreams. I’ve gotten so much inspiration to go out and do things. I don’t want to lose that sense of community and give up everything...”

“If our experiences are pressure, heat and struggle...things keeping us down...we need that struggle because otherwise diamonds don’t form. To reach our diamond state -- we need the heat and struggle.”

# KEY FINDINGS FROM NATIONAL SURVEY AND MAPPING PROJECT

## FIERCE's National Research Project

In 2012, FIERCE initiated a national research project to identify issues that impact LGBTQ youth and strategies that LGBTQ youth are using to collectively build political power. This research project consisted of two parts:

- 1.) National Survey, distributed online from July 2012—May 2013.
- 2.) National Mapping Project, based on GIS (Geographic Information System) data, to produce clear, readable infographics about issues and policies impacting LGBTQ youth.

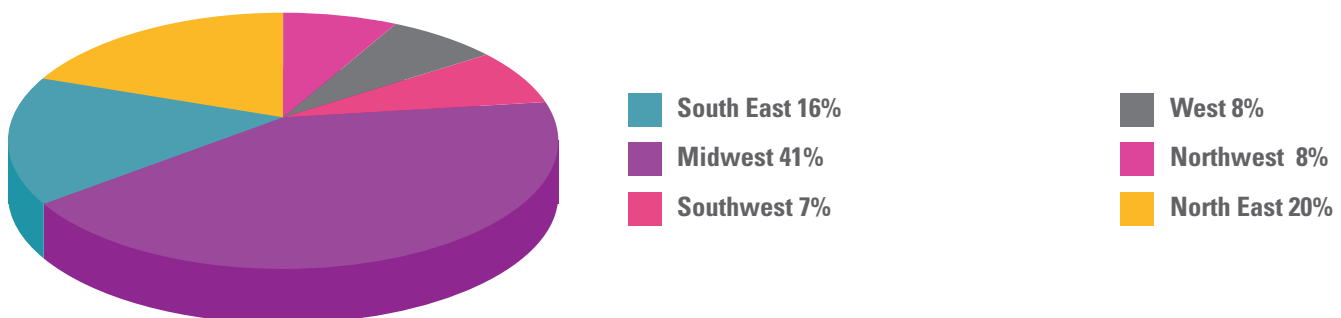
## Survey Method

We gathered data from 249 individuals and 58 organizations throughout the U.S. A research consultant developed the survey instrument with input from FIERCE staff, members, and additional consultants. The survey, in both English and Spanish, was widely distributed via email, listserves, and social networking sites. We also conducted targeted outreach and recruitment to increase participation from LGBTQ youth and allies.

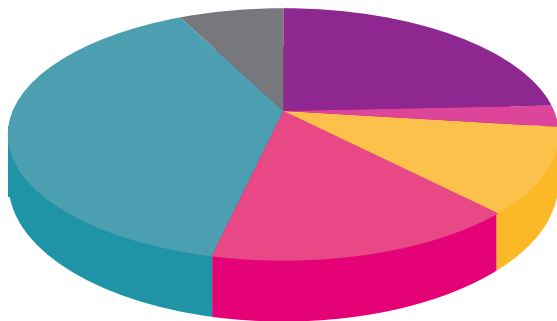
## Survey Participants

Survey participants live in 34 states, plus the District of Columbia, and were distributed throughout the U.S. (see chart). Most of the survey participants live in urban (69%) or suburban (21%) settings. Rural (including reservations) participants make up 5% of the total. 18% of participants are from the Chicago area, 12.5% are from the Twin Cities area, and 10% are from New York City. The average participating state contributed 2.5% of participants so the results are skewed towards these three regions.

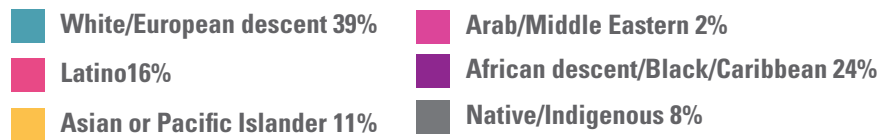
### Participants, by Region



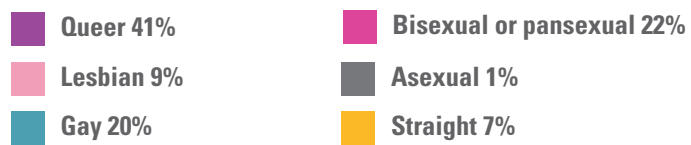
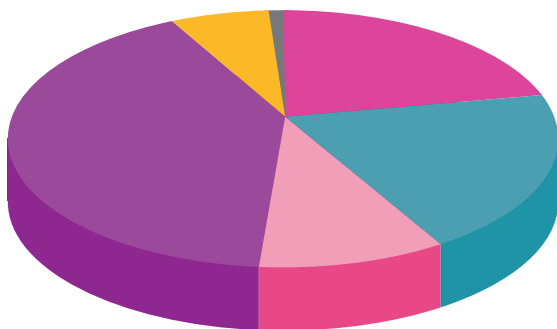
## Race/Ethnicity



Respondents' racial and gender identities, and sexual orientation, are distributed along the following lines <sup>3</sup>

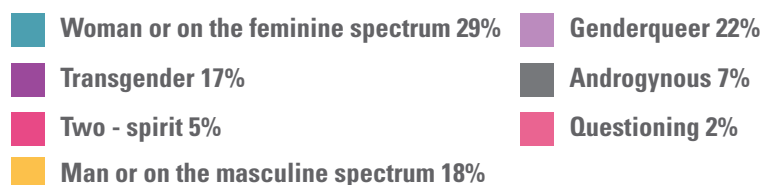
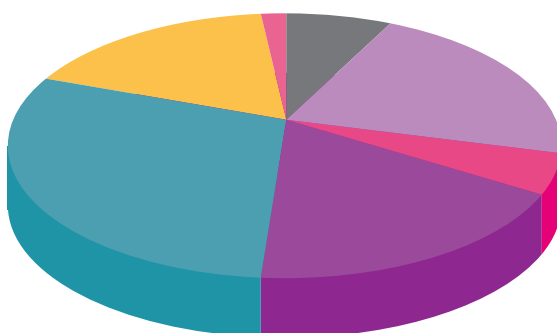


## Sexual Orientation



<sup>3</sup> For the demographic charts, the percentages reflect the total number of responses, rather than the total number of participants. The number of responses in these categories exceeds the total number of participants in the race, gender, and sexual orientation categories. Participants were given the option of marking more than one identity category (e.g. a participant could mark Latino and Black) within each demographic item. Thus, to tally the total number of participants in each category and divide them up by group membership would erase parts of participants' identities.

## Gender



<sup>3</sup> For the demographic charts, the percentages reflect the total number of responses, rather than the total number of participants. The number of responses in these categories exceeds the total number of participants in the race, gender, and sexual orientation categories. Participants were given the option of marking more than one identity category (e.g. a participant could mark Latino and Black) within each demographic item. Thus, to tally the total number of participants in each category and divide them up by group membership would erase parts of participants' identities.



## Key Issues

Survey participants were asked to identify 1) issues that currently impact LGBTQ youth in their region, 2) related policies and/or legislation that are responsible for these problems, and 3) strategies that they are undertaking to address these issues.

The main issues that emerged are:

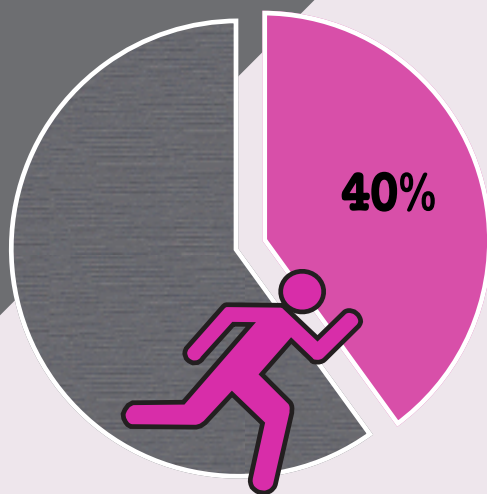
- 1) **criminalization/policing;**
- 2) **housing**
- 3) **immigration**
- 4) **safety and violence**, including bias violence, school-based violence, and intimate/sexual violence

### Criminalization and Policing

**“The fact that they pull you over and you ain’t even did nothing...just trying to catch some air. One night the police circled us 7 times, talking bullcrap to us...”**

- Survey Participant (Chicago, IL)

### Criminalization of LGBTQ Runaway Youth



Youth who identify as **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ)** make up an estimated **40%** of the overall runaway and homeless youth population.

Running away from home is considered a status offense in most states across the country. Status offenses are actions that are **illegal** and **punishable by law** when performed by minors and can include truancy, running away, violating curfew or liquor laws, and being “unruly.”



For LGBTQ youth who leave an unsafe home, these status offense laws put them on a path to the **prison system** and **NOT** the **supportive** and **safe services** they need.

## Percent and Count of Status Offenses Given to Runaway Youth by State, 2010

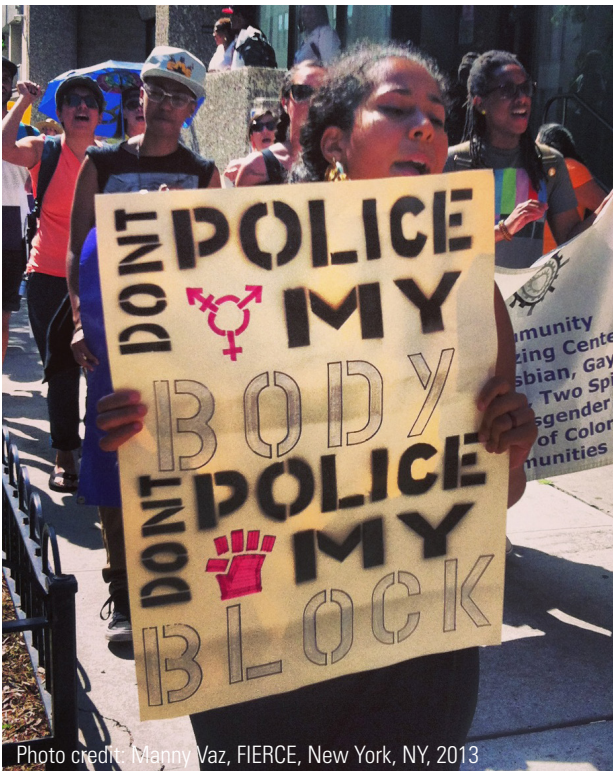
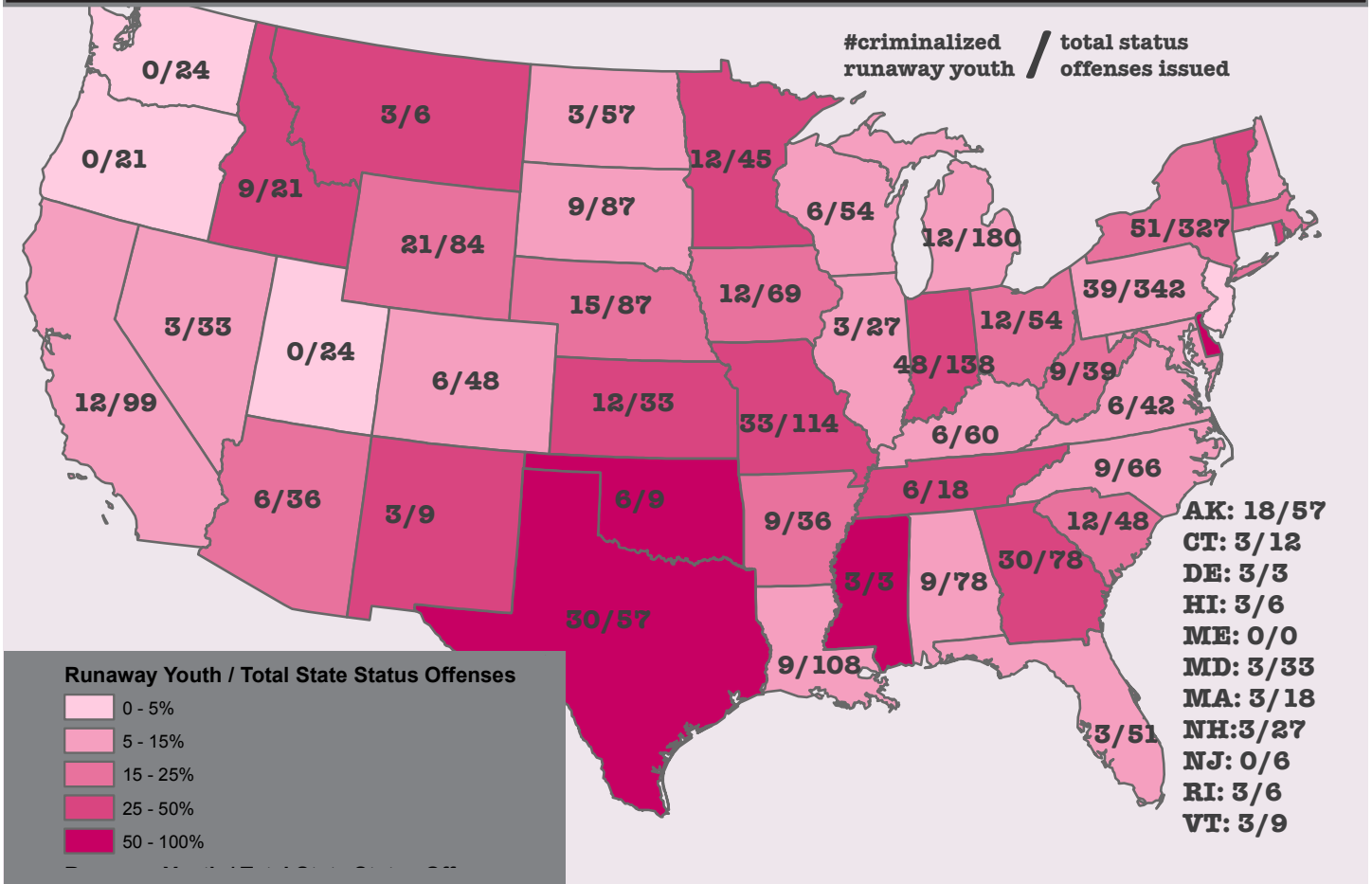


Photo credit: Manny Vaz, FIERCE, New York, NY, 2013

LGBTQ community members and allies send a message to the NYPD at the 2013 Trans Day of Action March!

LGBTQ youth are criminalized in a variety of ways, from social policies that criminalize behaviors to biased policing that targets LGBTQ youth. Youth are criminalized for using public space and put at further risk due to the lack of protections that are available when interfacing with public institutions, like schools and hospitals.

56.6% of respondents indicated that criminalization and policing impact LGBTQ youth in their region. Racial profiling was identified as the most prevalent concern. Although there are patterns to the impacts of criminalization at the national level, and commonalities across regions, the laws and policies that most impact LGBTQ youth can vary according to local context. Below is a sampling of policies and practices that were named by survey respondents as responsible, overtly or indirectly, for the criminalization of LGBTQ youth:

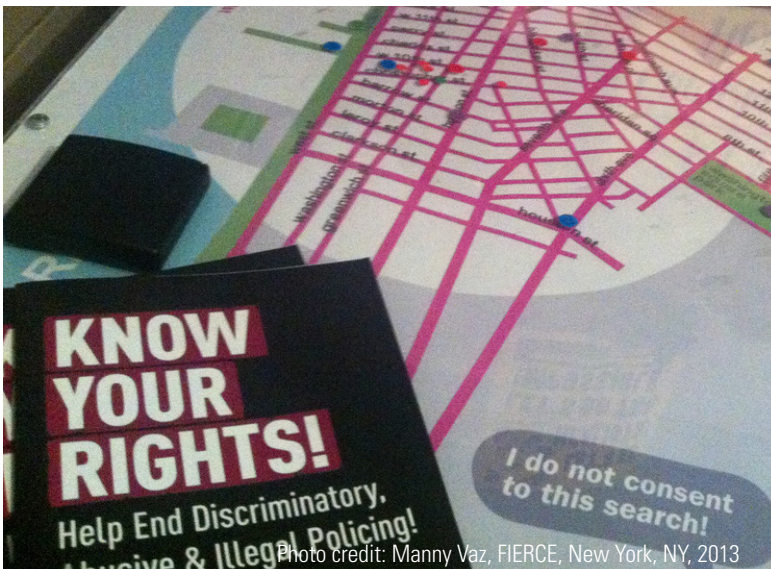
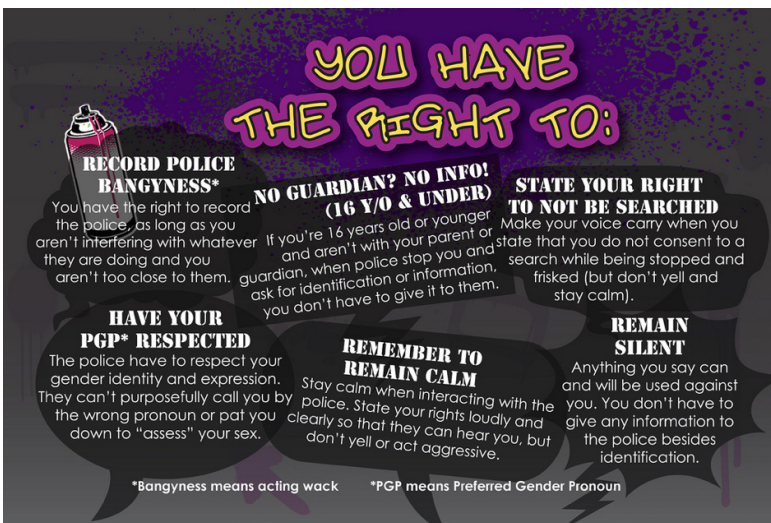


Photo credit: Manny Vaz, FIERCE, New York, NY, 2013

In the Summer 2013, FIERCE members created a community outreach and education tool called the Know Your Rights Swag Wagon, which includes participatory action research tools to learn about LGBTQ youth of color experiences with the police.



FIERCE distributes Know Your Rights information to LGBTQ youth at Know Your Rights trainings and street outreach. These cards were created by FIERCE youth organizers.

✦ Stop and Frisk profiling practices through which LGBTQ youth of color are stopped by law enforcement because they appear “reasonably suspicious” (New Orleans, LA; New York, NY)

✦ Curfew laws which prohibit young people from being out in public space during certain hours (New Orleans, LA; Minneapolis, MN; Chicago, IL)

✦ Condoms as Evidence laws, which take possession of condoms as evidence of prostitution (San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY)

✦ Sit Lie ordinances, which prohibit sitting or lying on the sidewalk or any other public space (San Francisco, CA) and Sidewalk laws, which prohibit sitting or busking in public (Olympia, WA)

✦ (Gang) loitering laws, which authorize law enforcement to force the dispersal of a group of people in public space (Minneapolis, MN; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI): “Loitering laws, laws designed to “crack down” on sex trafficking end up with incarcerated or otherwise punished sex workers, and no real support.”

✦ Quality of Life Ordinances which police behaviors that are normally non-criminalized or make minor offenses (e.g. drinking in public, graffiti, littering) into criminal activities (New York City, NY): “Quality of life” policing, especially the criminalization of homelessness and survival on the street.”

✦ Police harassment (Chicago, IL): “Police harassing innocent people and ack of doing their job the right way. How thirsty the police is, how they are just putting stuff on people. That’s why I just stay in the house.”

## Housing

**“Housing is the biggest problem. Most of us are homeless and we can’t get our lives started til we have somewhere safe to be.”**

- Survey Participant (Chicago, IL)

Housing for LGBTQ youth is a critical issue, indicated by 56.9% of respondents. Specific issues named include homelessness, being kicked out by parents, a lack of affordable housing, and a lack of safe and gender-accessible shelter space.

There are many different kinds of federal, state, and local policies that work to produce housing insecurity for LGBTQ youth. For example, the 1996 reforms to social welfare (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act) limit access to public benefits, ranging from housing to healthcare to food stamps. These limitations decrease social and economic safety nets as well as access to basic survival needs. Additionally, housing policies that limit affordable and/or subsidized housing and shelter access (including lack of gender nondiscrimination policies), and laws that regulate the use of public space (e.g. loitering laws, and quality of life ordinances) prohibit LGBTQ youth access to safe space.

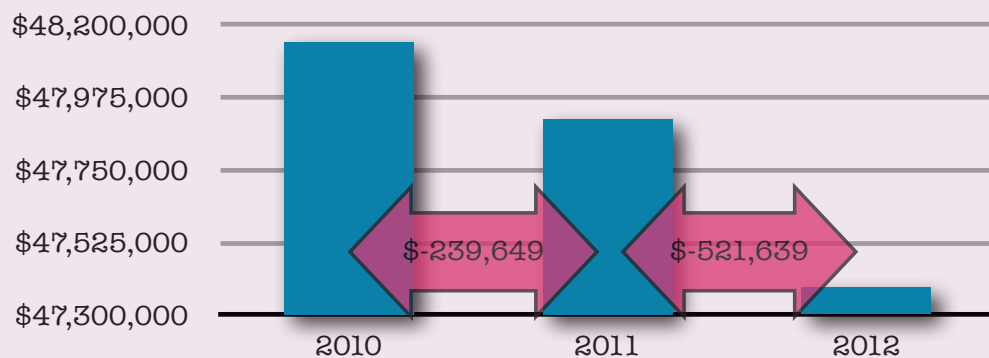
As the following maps indicate, decreases in federal funding for social services through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act increase vulnerabilities for LGBTQ youth without secure housing. The regions that are most affected by budget cuts also house the higher percentages of LGBTQ youth in programs that offer basic shelter and related services.

### Funding for Basic Center Programs

Each year, the Department of Health and Human Services **requests and distributes federal money** under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act for Basic Center Programs.

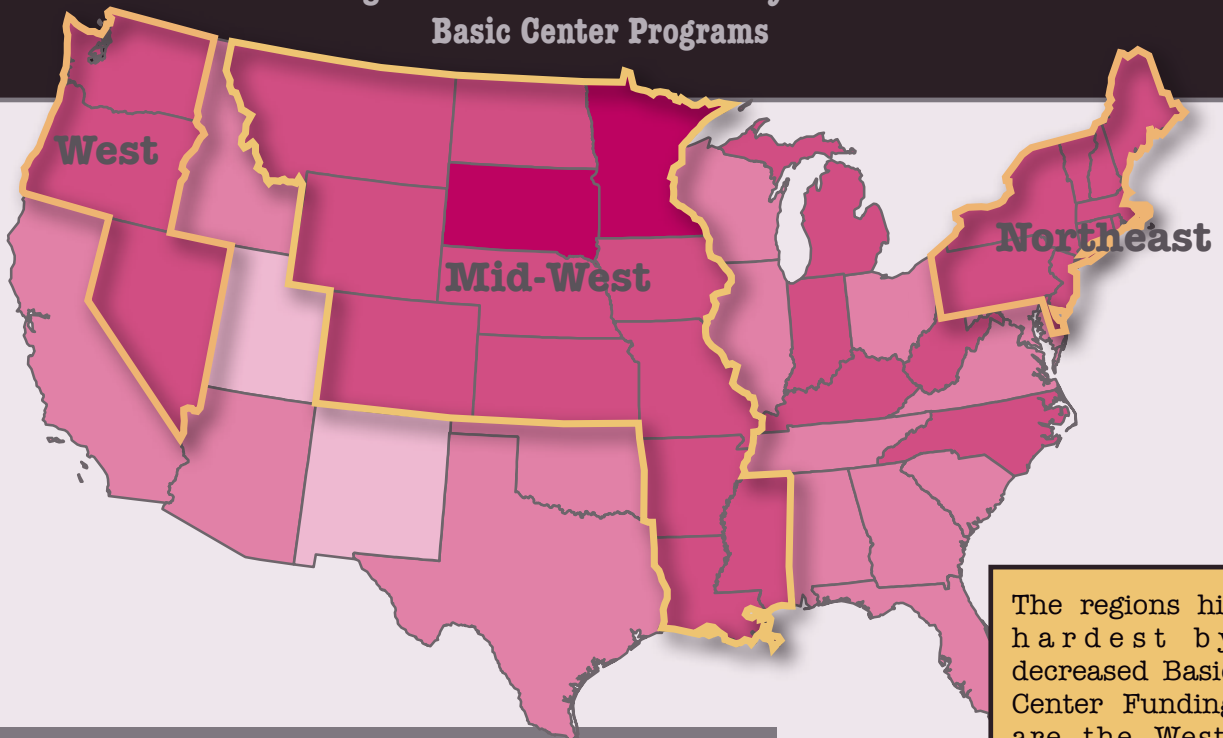


Total Federal Funding for Basic Centers has **decreased** overall from 2010 - 2012.



## Federal Funding for Homeless and Runaway Youth 2010 - 2011

### Basic Center Programs



The regions hit hardest by decreased Basic Center Funding are the West, Mid-West, parts of the South and the Northeast.



## Runaway and Homeless LGBTQ Youth

### The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)

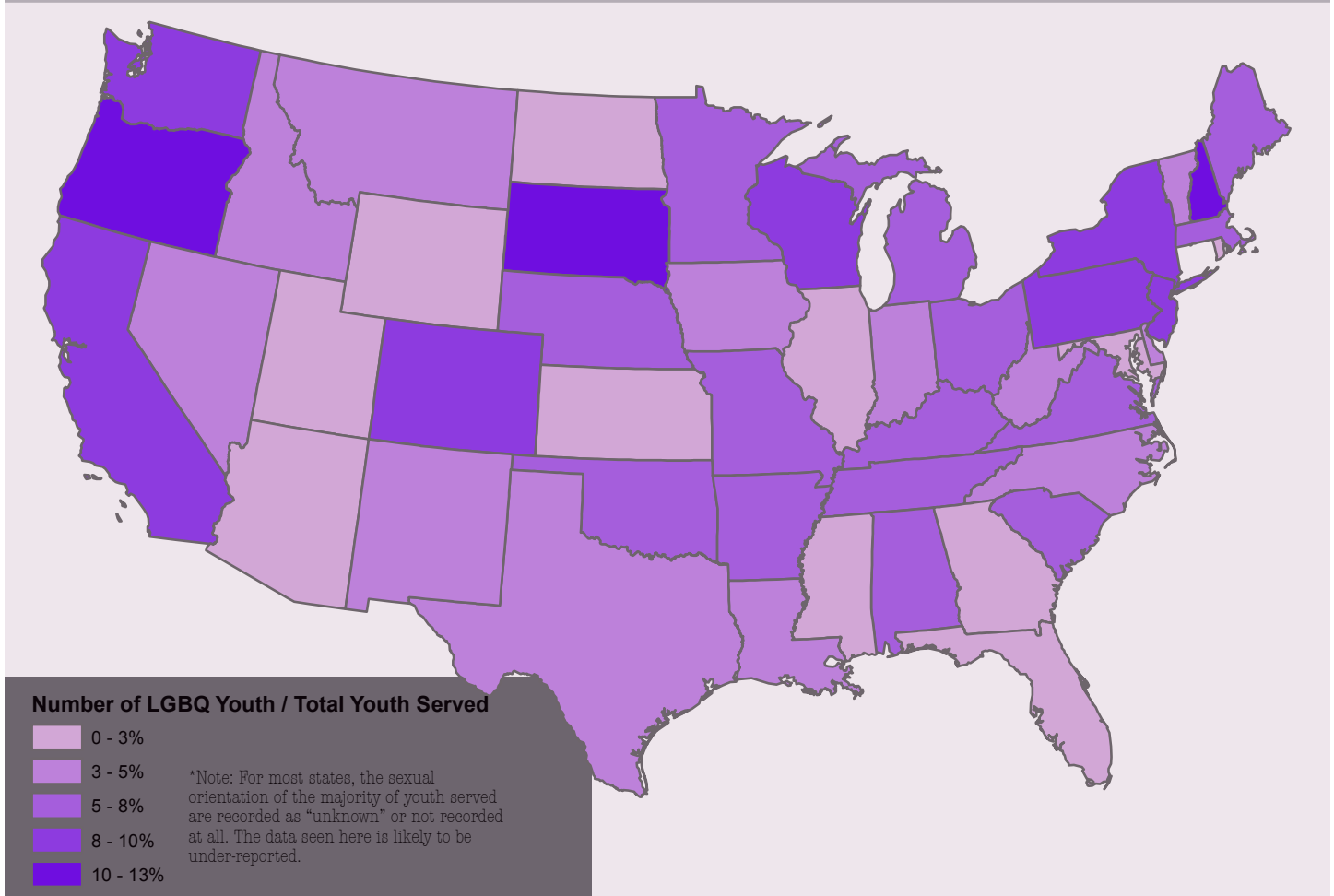
First signed in 1974, and last amended in 2008, the RHYA authorizes federal funding for three programs—the Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program, and Street Outreach Program—to assist runaway and homeless youth.



### Basic Center Programs

The programs provide youth up to age 18 with emergency shelter, food, clothing, counseling and referrals for health care.

Percentage of LGBTQ Youth in Basic Center Programs\* | April 2011 - March 2012



**The regional specificities of housing and homelessness issues are revealed through the local conditions described by survey participants:**

“Unspecified shelter gender polices and a lack of youth-specific overnight shelters.”  
(Chicago, IL)

“There are so many policies to address; especially since the new Scott Walker administration that is looking to privatize schools and state aid, taking away power from unions, SB107, which is forcing many folks into homelessness.”  
(Madison, WI)

“Lack of shelter (specifically youth shelter under DYCD & domestic violence shelter) beds; there is an insufficient amount of shelter beds for all populations seeking shelter, but these two in particular are ridiculously underfunded.”  
(New York City, NY)

“The erosion of social services and the social safety net. It’s getting harder and harder to get into a shelter, to get cheap medical care at the local clinic, etc. More people are needing these services at the same time that they are getting cut, so we’re getting left behind.”  
(Los Angeles, CA)

# Immigration

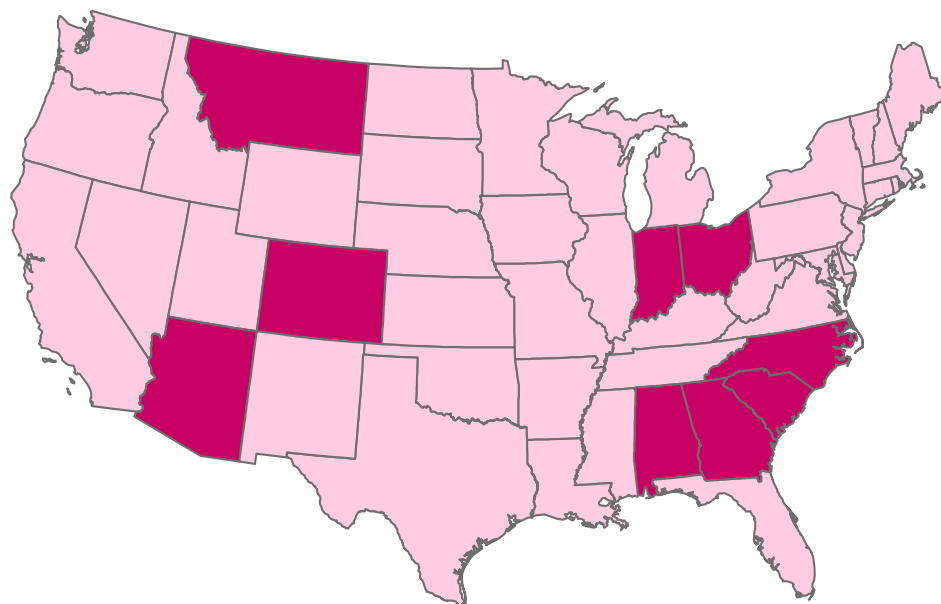
**“ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) is incredibly powerful in all parts of the South, particularly rural areas where it is harder to amplify the stories of immigrants under siege, and organize with them.”**

**--Survey Participant (Goldsboro, NC)**

LGBTQ youth are impacted by the various policies and practices that regulate immigrants’ lives, their mobility, safety, and access to resources.

For example, policies that criminalize immigrants increase vulnerability to detention and deportation. These policies include national initiatives like Secure Communities, which requires information-sharing between local law enforcement and immigration enforcement, and state laws like Arizona’s SB 1070, which sparked many copycat laws, that require police officers to determine the immigration status of people who they deem to be “reasonably suspicious” to be in the U.S. illegally.

Changes to social welfare policies (e.g. PROWRA) have restricted all immigrants’ access to public benefits like cash assistance and food stamps. There are more severe impacts on undocumented immigrants who are essentially banned from all benefits except emergency Medicaid. For LGBTQ youth, in particular, access to college and to financial aid is a main concern. Survey respondents repeatedly name that the DREAM Act not being passed is a serious immigration policy concern. If passed, the DREAM Act would create a conditional path to citizenship for undocumented youth. Being on this path would also increase and regulate eligibility for financial assistance, such as federal loans and work-study programs.



**States that Ban Enrollment in Higher Education Institutions  
OR Ban In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students**

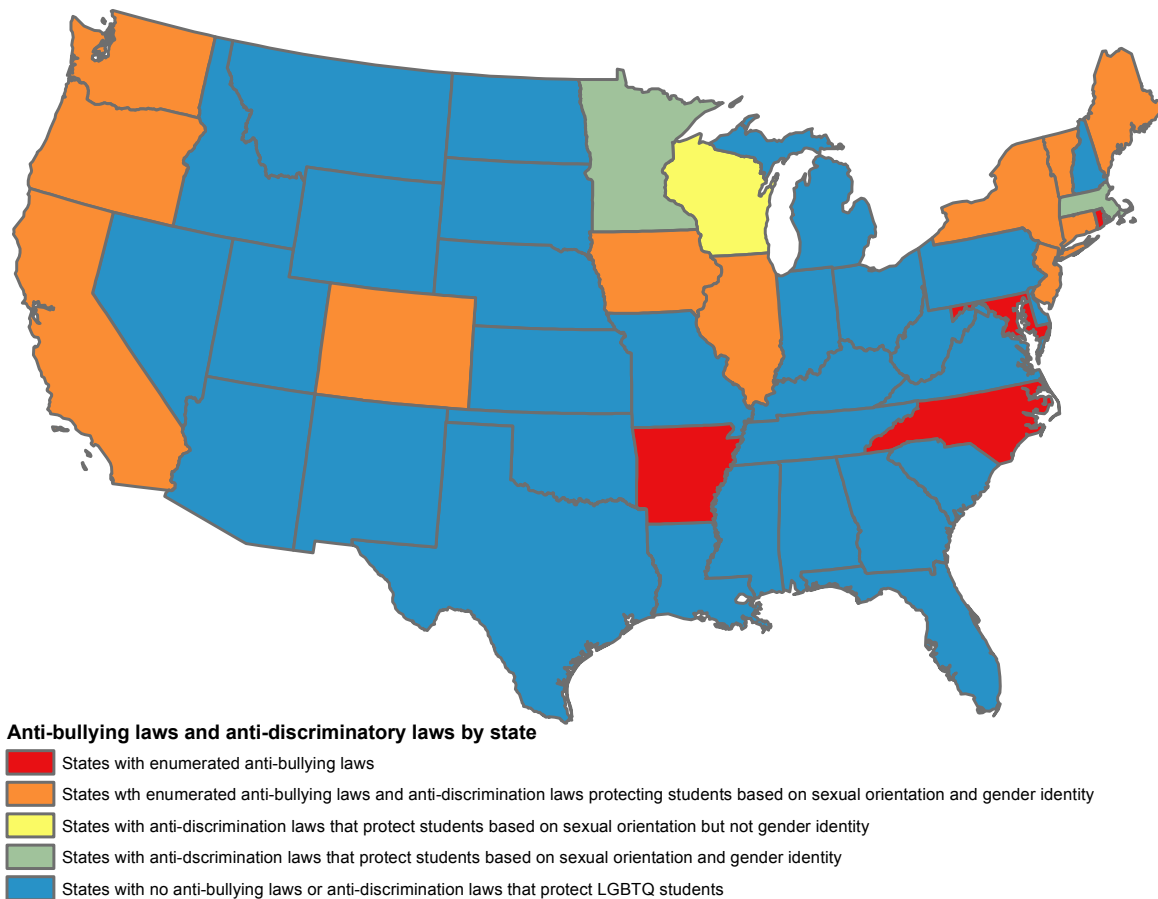
States with no Ban  
States with Ban



## Safety and Violence

**“I would think bullying, because being bullied is not fun. No one likes being bullied.”**

**--Survey Participant (Chicago, IL)**



LGBTQ youth experience everyday violence in a multitude of ways, including through acts of violence that are actively perpetrated against them by individuals and institutions, like schools and jails. Violence is also experienced through a lack of protection and overall neglect of their safety and well-being.

Most respondents in our survey identified safety and violence as critical issues that impact LGBTQ youth. Bias violence was marked by 58.1% of survey participants. Anti-trans violence was the largest concern in this category, followed by anti-LGB violence and gender-based violence against female-presenting people. School-based violence (56%), such as bullying and anti-LGBTQ staff, and concerns related to intimate partner violence (52%) were also named as important problems.



For LGBTQ youth who are experiencing violence, accessing support is a challenge. The lack of safe domestic violence shelter space for trans and gender non-conforming survivors, as well as cisgendered male survivors, and the lack of LGBTQ-sensitive social service are named as critical needs for LGBTQ youth throughout the U.S.

In LGBTQ communities, hate violence and bullying have become focal points for policy advocacy. However, these policies—such as hate crimes legislation or anti-bullying ordinances—often rely on criminal legal intervention and punishment as solutions to violence. These policies put communities of color, and specifically LGBTQ youth of color, at further risk of violence. The growth and strengthening of policing techniques and prison industries negatively impacts LGBTQ youth of color, who are already targeted by the criminal legal system and its agents. These policies are framed as mechanisms to protect communities that are vulnerable to interpersonal violence but ultimately produce more institutional violence against them.

## Discussion of Key Findings

**Intersectionality:** LGBTQ youth of color embody intersectional identities based in race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, and other social positions. The issues that impact LGBTQ youth are intersectional as well.

For example, running away from an unsafe home is considered an illegal act in most states in the U.S. Here we see how **family violence** can produce **housing insecurity** which can lead to **being criminalized**:

**Family violence --> running away from home/homelessness --> criminalization.**

It is impossible to separate out different issues that impact LGBTQ youth because these forms of violence, discrimination, and abuse at both interpersonal and institutional levels are intertwined. Solutions then, must also take these connections into account. Policy responses that address one problem (e.g. bullying) through strategies that create more problems (e.g. criminalization) are not effective.

Through understanding intersectional connections, there is a potential to focus on organizing strategies that address root causes of these systemic issues. At the same time, there is an opportunity to build alliances with other groups working on similar concerns who may also have LGBTQ youth in their constituencies.

**Local context:** The issues that impact LGBTQ youth are both national in scope and specific to a local context. This is most evident when we compare responses between urban and rural participants:

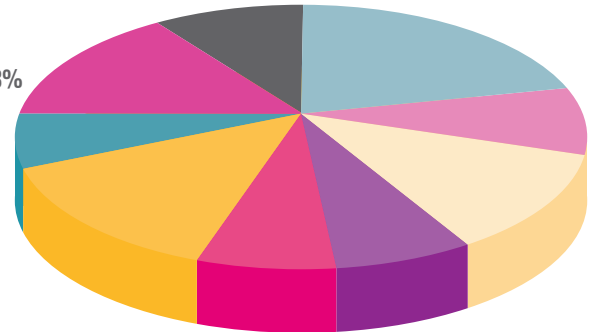
Access to trans-specific health care and anti-trans violence are the only high impact issues in both settings. The top two issues that are named in rural settings: lack of access to financial aid for immigrants and sexual violence in the context of cruising/pick-ups, are specific to remote/rural areas.

We also see this regional contrast when we compare the issues that respondents think the LGBTQ youth of color movement should organize around:

<b>Top 5 Issues that Impact LGBTQ Youth (Rural/Remote)</b>	<b>Top 5 Issues that Impact LGBTQ Youth (Urban/Suburban)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚩 Lack of access to financial aid for immigrants</li> <li>🚩 Sexual violence in the context of cruising/pickups</li> <li>🚩 Anti-LGBT school staff</li> <li>🚩 Access to trans-specific health care</li> <li>🚩 Anti-trans violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚩 Homelessness</li> <li>🚩 Bullying</li> <li>🚩 Anti-trans violence</li> <li>🚩 Racial profiling</li> <li>🚩 Access to trans-specific health care</li> </ul>

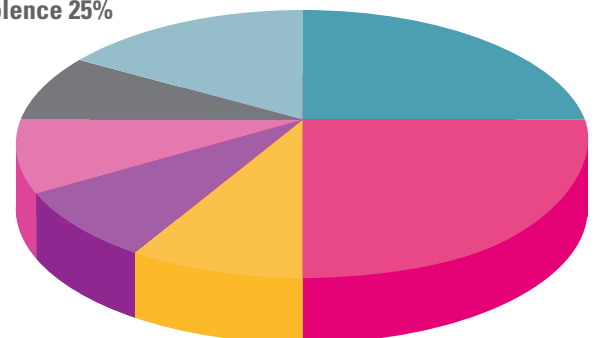
**If you could pick just one, what issue do you think should be the focus of a national LGBTQ youth of color movement? (Urban)**

- 🚩 Housing and Homelessness 15%
- 🚩 Anti-Violence 11%
- 🚩 Economic Justice 7%
- 🚩 Safe Schools and Anti-Bullying 8%
- 🚩 Empowerment and self esteem 13%
- 🚩 Criminalization 22%
- 🚩 Health Care 7%
- 🚩 Other 10%
- 🚩 Family 7%



**If you could pick just one, what issue do you think should be the focus of a national LGBTQ youth of color movement? (Rural)**

- 🚩 Immigration reform 8%
- 🚩 Bullying, school safety, & antiviolence 25%
- 🚩 Support for mental health need 8%
- 🚩 Criminalization 25%
- 🚩 DV Shelter for LGBTQ Survivors 8%
- 🚩 Land and water rights 17%
- 🚩 Marriage 8%



Again, we see here that while there are some overlapping concerns—around criminalization and violence— there are varying priorities, based on local context. Land and water rights is an issue that emerges as a priority in remote/rural areas and not in urban settings, whereas housing and homelessness is an issue in urban areas but not in rural/remote ones.

That immigration issues did not show up as more of a concern for urban respondents perhaps reveals how our social movements are organized rather than that this issue is not relevant to urban LGBTQ youth. Are LGBTQ youth organizations engaged in organizing around immigrant rights or is this work happening primarily in immigrant rights groups? There is an increasingly visible movement of UndocuQueer organizers, but on a broader level, more intersectional and intergenerational organizing will support the integration of immigration concerns into LGBTQ youth work and concerns that face LGBTQ youth into immigrant rights efforts.

**Social Policies and Social Problems:** Through our survey research, we see that only 76 out of 177 participants eligible to answer questions about policy and legislation offered responses—less than half the eligible respondents. Although further research can illuminate the reasons behind the hesitancy to respond to this question, this arena is potentially a gap in which political education and other resources may help to deepen understandings of the connections between various levels of oppression.

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHTS

### What are LGBTQ youth doing to respond to the problems that they are facing?

The following map indicates the distribution of LGBTQ Youth Direct Action Organizing Groups across the country.

#### LGBTQ Youth Direct Action Organizing Groups



**Gay Straight Alliance**, San Francisco, CA  
**Branching Seedz of Resistance**, Denver CO  
**Affinity Community Services**, Chicago IL  
**Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Youth**, Chicago IL  
**BreakOUT!**, New Orleans LA  
**Riot Youth of THE Natural Zone**, Ann Arbor MI

**Detroit Represent!**, Detroit MI  
**FIERCE**, New York NY  
**Streetwise and Safe**, New York NY  
**PRYSM**, Providence RI  
**Brothers United and Young Brother United**, Nashville TN  
**Queer Youth Space**, Seattle WA

Here, we spotlight some examples of effective community organizing that works towards creating more safety and justice by and for LGBTQ youth. The strategies we highlight take into consideration the following:

- ❖ Social change work must focus on the root causes of issues in order to effect long-term change
- ❖ LGBTQ youth are the ones who are best positioned to come up with solutions to the problems that impact them.
- ❖ Issues, identities and experiences are intersectional and interconnected.
- ❖ Policy change is not the end, and it is only effective along with cultural change. Some strategies directly engage institutions that negatively impact LGBTQ youth, and some strategies serve to grow alternative spaces outside of existing structures. These strategies do not need to be mutually exclusive, especially as multiple strategies are needed to effect social change.
- ❖ How we do our work will vary according to local context and history.

## Branching Seedz of Resistance (Denver, Colorado)



Branching Seedz of Resistance (BSEEDZ) is a space created by and for queer youth to come together to further self-determination, community power, and cultural change in the struggle for safety and justice in LGBTQ communities. Their work uses many strategies, including community organizing, action research, direct action, and youth-led production of arts and media.



Photo credit: FIERCE, Detroit, MI, 2012

Youth-created media to educate, inspire and empower. Branching Seedz and FIERCE co-coordinated two national network gatherings at the Allied Media Conference in 2012 and 2013.

Founded in 2009 as a project of the Colorado Anti-Violence Program, **BSEEDZ creates safe spaces and artistic expression with digital media to produce systemic cultural shifts about violence.** Working from a framework of strength and resilience, BSEEDZ works to both increase literacy about existing cultural and media messages as well as to actively make and distribute stories about their intersectional identities and experiences.

Youth members at BSEEDZ have developed digital stories and visual posters to express messages about body image, youth resistance, unity, resilience and community organizing. Most recently, young queer and two spirit people of color members of BSEEDZ completed a digital film project called Rainbow Warriors to portray the resiliency their community experiences in response to the emotional and physical effects of suicide. In this film, youth members of BSEEDZ share stories of “pain, struggle and survival, [which] are not only self-healing but are shared in

faith that they will help guide and remind us of the sacredness of life for following generations of young Rainbow Warriors who deal with depression, suicide, bullying and other modern catastrophic symptoms caused by the colonization of our minds, bodies and spirits.” As Rainbow Warriors, **this group of young organizers, artists, and healers work towards the holistic healing and liberation of themselves and their communities**, in part by sharing the “expertise and tools that have kept young queer people alive” to other young people. [www.coavp.org/bseedz](http://www.coavp.org/bseedz)

## BreakOUT! (New Orleans, Louisiana)



BreakOUT! fights the criminalization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth who are directly impacted by the criminal or juvenile justice system in New Orleans. **Their work advocates for concrete policy changes to build a safer and more just New Orleans and also builds on the rich cultural tradition of resistance in the South** to grow the power of LGBTQ youth through youth organizing, healing justice, and leadership development programs.



Photo credit: Rush Jagoe

In 2013, BreakOUT! youth members created a #KnowYourRights media strategy with several tips for navigating discriminatory police encounters as part of their efforts to hold the New Orleans Police Department accountable while keeping community members safe.

BreakOUT!’s We Deserve Better campaign tackles issues of the criminalization and policing of LGBTQ youth. This campaign was sparked by a unique opportunity when the Department of Justice finally began an investigation into the practices of the New Orleans Police Department after decades of violence, brutality, and corruption. As part of the campaign, BreakOUT! mobilized LGBTQ youth, especially Black transgender young women, to share their stories and experiences with the DOJ, who was holding community listening forums to collect anecdotal evidence for their investigation.

These listening forums offered BreakOUT! a space to begin to lay the foundation for a larger campaign, **as young people sharing stories about how they were directly affected by criminalization – with young trans women held in the center – also started to come up with solutions and a vision for changes they wanted to see.** These changes are not limited to discriminatory policing practices but included larger issues about the whole criminal injustice system, and other structural injustices such as the lack of jobs and housing for LGBTQ youth of color.

After organizing for two years, BreakOUT! members celebrated a campaign victory when the New Orleans Police Department issued Policy 402, to address the treatment of LGBTQ communities. The policy mandates that gender identity or sexual orientation can not be used as reasonable suspicion or probable cause, as well as a protocol for stopping and searching trans people, and a requirement that police officers go through training on LGBTQ issues.

The We Deserve Better campaign work is far from over, however. Youth members continue to organize for a safe and just city. Their work includes ensuring that this policy is implemented and enforced; community members are engaged and informed about these changes and their rights; and that violations and other complaints are collected through methods that make it safe for people to speak up about their experience with law enforcement. After implementing an aggressive “Know Your Rights” strategy, **members are excited to transition into thinking more about what will really keep their communities safe**—including addressing issues of over-incarceration, gentrification, and lack of opportunities for youth in New Orleans. [www.youthbreakout.org](http://www.youthbreakout.org)

## Immigrant Youth Justice League (Chicago, IL)



Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL) is a Chicago-based organization founded in 2009 by undocumented students to stop the deportation of the group’s co-founder, Rigo Padilla. Influenced by gay liberation movements, especially the work of Harvey Milk, the work of IYJL **aims to humanize the struggles of undocumented immigrants by giving voice to their stories, in their own words.** Early on in its first anti-deportation campaign, un-

documented organizers began to disclose their status publicly. This led to the Coming Out of the Shadows strategy, along with the “Undocumented, unafraid” slogan, which urges undocumented immigrants to speak publicly about their experiences, including about the additional risks, stigma and criminalization that can occur after coming out as undocumented.

IYJL has been at the forefront of highlighting the intersections between the LGBTQ and immigrant communities. Recognizing the complexities involved in being “out,” LGBTQ-identified IYJL members started to come out as “undocu-queer, bringing forth the connections between their different identities and experiences, telling their stories to bolster their advocacy efforts and creating community with one another. IYJL was an active member of the LGBTQ Immigrant Rights Coalition of Chicago and has organized Coming Out of the Shadows events that address the intersectional experience of queer undocumented youth.

For IYJL, **the act of coming out, especially as a form of self-determination and political escalation, has also taken the form of civil disobedience.** IYJL has been an active participant in national organizing for immigrant rights, including key collaborations to do targeted direct actions and civil disobediences that encouraged elected officials to support immigrant rights, and/or to hold them accountable when they did not. IYJL members were part of the team that organized the first civil disobedience with undocumented students in Tucson, Arizona, as well as the second one in Washington D.C. in 2010. Since then IYJL members also participated in civil disobedience activities in Alabama, Arizona, Washington D.C., Georgia and Illinois. For IYJL, this work is about **changing the minds of politicians and the general public, which includes shaping popular media representation of undocumented immigrants— young people, their families, and their communities.** [www.iyjl.org](http://www.iyjl.org)

## Streetwise & Safe (New York, NY)



Streetwise and Safe is a **multi-strategy initiative working to build and share leadership, skills, knowledge and community among LGBTQQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Questioning) youth of color who experience criminalization, particularly in the context of the policing of poverty, “quality of life” offenses, and involvement or perceived involvement in survival economies.**

In New York City and across the country police and prosecutors routinely use the fact that people have condoms on them or on their premises as evidence that they are intending to engage in prostitution related offenses. This practice, in combination with discriminatory policing practices like stop and frisk, allows police to use LGBTQ youth efforts to protect themselves as tools to profile them, puts LGBTQ youth of color at even greater risk of STI’s, HIV, and unwanted pregnancy, and increases the likelihood of being harassed and assaulted by law enforcement. Knowing that carrying condoms may result in them being confiscated, thrown away, or used as evidence of a crime because LGBTQ youth of color are often profiled as being engaged in deviant behavior regardless of what they are doing, they are often deterred from taking and using condoms even though they are committed to protecting themselves and their communities.



Youth leaders from Streetwise & Safe and BreakOut! at the 2012 Allied Media Conference. SAS and BreakOut organized workshops at the AMC to share their work around policing and the importance of LGBTQ Know Your Rights Education.

This is why **SAS works to support the leadership and raise the visibility of LGBTQ youth of color who are or profiled as being engaged in the sex trades in local, state and national campaigns** to put an end to the use of condoms as evidence of prostitution-related offenses. SAS serves on the executive committee of the No Condoms As Evidence Coalition which is working to end this practice in New York City and throughout New York State. SAS youth leaders have met with city and state legislators, local law enforcement and District Attorneys to highlight the devastating impacts of this practice on their communities and advocate for their right to protect themselves, and shared their experiences and voices at City Council Hearings. They have also worked with national partners to challenge the practice in other states, and to get the federal government to take action

at the national level. SAS also supports the rights and safety of LGBTQ youth of color by sharing “know your rights” information rooted in the realities of what it means to live policed at drop in centers and other places youth of color gather throughout the city. [www.streetwiseandsafe.org](http://www.streetwiseandsafe.org)

## Queer Youth Space (Seattle, WA)



Queer Youth Space (QYS) is a **free, accessible, visible, and affirming youth-led community venue that emerged to respond to the lack of space available to young queer people.** Existing all-ages spaces are often filled with crowds that perpetuate heterosexism, and most queer community options are inaccessible to youth due to explicit 21+ age restrictions, location and/or cost.

In 2010, over 200 queer youth came together to talk about these gaps, their needs and feelings about existing community spaces, and a vision for what they wanted to be different (documented in The Mutiny Charter). This meeting led to community organizing to create a youth-led and adult-supported physical space. For the next two years, while seeking a permanent location, QYS created temporary spaces (e.g. open mic nights, dances, and other events) that queer youth could attend and feel supported. QYS also held a summer organizing lab in 2012 for queer youth to learn together about how to better center marginalized communities in their community organizing.

QYS opened its own physical space in Fall 2012 in a central location in Seattle. Offering cultural arts, paid work, community organizing training and a general place to socialize and work, QYS provides queer youth with opportunities to build communities and enact change. Having their own physical space is critical to meeting the needs of queer youth as it allows them to “challenge entrenched heterosexism in more powerful ways than purely temporary venues. **What [their] space’s form promises to be is something very special and very queer: a space that (by definition) cannot be measured, traced, or pinned down.”** [www.queeryouthspace.org](http://www.queeryouthspace.org)



# MOVING FORWARD:

## FIERCE's Recommendations for Future Work

As we move forward, we need to ask what social change strategies build the presence, capacity, and effectiveness of LGBTQ youth work. Based on our current research, we offer the following reflections and recommendations for our collective movement-building efforts:

**Demands and strategies must focus on the root causes of issues.** Although addressing immediate needs is essential to the survival of LGBTQ youth, long-term social change requires us to change the conditions that produce social problems.

**Youth leadership is critical.** Our social justice work must centralize the voice, visibility, and leadership of people who are most directly affected by an issue. LGBTQ youth are the ones who are best positioned to come up with solutions to the problems that impact them.

**Policy change is only effective with cultural change.** Our solutions have to address cultural institutions, including the media, so that we can change norms and practices of violence and oppression. Telling our own stories, in our own words and voices, is an important strategy to express the truths of LGBTQ youth experiences.

It is critical to change laws and social policies that negatively impact LGBTQ youth. Effective strategies will support both the implementation of legal and policy changes, as well as shift cultural norms, practices, and beliefs that go beyond the limits of the law.

**Strategies vary according to local context and history.** National-level work needs to take these local conditions into account and build networks that can both connect through similarity and also create space for work to be rooted in its specific context.

To do this effectively, we also need disaggregated data so that we can better understand the intersectional complexities of LGBTQ youth. In particular, issues that impact LGBTQ youth in rural and remote areas, and other marginalized regions, need more attention and resources.

**Political education is a vital component of movement-building work.** Through political education, we can better understand the interconnections between systems of oppression, institutions and social policy, and the everyday experience of being LGBTQ youth of color.

# Appendix A

- Affinity** ~ *Chicago, IL*
- Black & Pink** ~ *Boston, MA*
- Branching Seedz of Resistance** ~ *Denver, CO*
- Broadway Youth Center** ~ *Chicago, IL*
- BreakOut!** ~ *New Orleans, LA*
- Detroit REPRESENT!** ~ *Detroit, MI*
- GenderJust** ~ *Chicago, IL*
- GLOBE - Make the Road** ~ *Brooklyn, NY*
- GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network)** ~ *Las Vegas, Nevada*
- Host Home Project of Avenues for Homeless Youth** ~ *Minneapolis, MN*
- Initiative for Transgender Leadership** ~ *Pittsburgh, PA*
- JASMYN (Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network)** ~ *Jacksonville, FL*
- Our Space, Better and Brighter Futures** ~ *Hayward, CA*
- PrYSM (Providence Youth Student Movement)** ~ *Providence, RI*
- QTeam LA** ~ *Los Angeles, CA*
- Reteaching Gender & Sexuality** ~ *Seattle, WA*
- Ruth Ellis Center** ~ *Detroit, MI*
- Southwest Youth Collaborative** ~ *Chicago, IL*
- Streetwise & Safe (SAS)** ~ *New York, NY*
- Stonewall Youth** ~ *Olympia, WA*
- Young Women's Empowerment Project (YWEP)** ~ *Chicago, IL*

# Appendix B. Survey Instrument

## SECTION 1: Tell us about yourself

1. First name, Last name
2. Can we contact you for follow up? (Note: marking yes does not mean you have to participate further if we contact you, it just means that you give us permission to contact you in 3-6 months. At that time, you are free to decide not to answer more questions.) Y/N
3. If yes, please list your best method of contact: phone, email, facebook, either is fine; (If phone, okay to leave a message? Y/N)
4. I identify as: a) of African descent/Black/Caribbean b) Arab/Middle Eastern c) Asian or Pacific Islander d) Latina/o e) Native/Indigenous f) White/European descent g) Self Id as race or ethnicity not listed  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. I identify as: a) androgynous b) genderqueer c) two-spirit d) transgender e) as a woman or on the feminine spectrum f) as a man or on the masculine spectrum g) Self-Id as gender not listed \_\_\_\_\_
6. I identify as: a) bisexual or pansexual b) gay c) lesbian d) queer e) questioning f) straight h) Self Id as sexual orientation not listed \_\_\_\_\_
7. City/Town:
8. State:
9. Zip code:
10. How would you classify your city/town: a) remote b) rural c) suburban d) urban
11. Are you involved with an organization that works with LGBTQ youth?  
Y/N If No, please skip to Section 3

## SECTION 2: Tell us about your organization

12. What is the name of your organization?
13. Organizational contact info (if different from above)
14. What is your role in organization? a) youth member b) youth member with specific leadership position (advisory board, etc.) c) paid staff, youth (under 25) d) paid staff, not youth (25 or older) e) adult volunteer f) position not listed \_\_\_\_\_
15. What type of leadership structure does your organization have for youth to make decisions about the work of the organization? a) None currently b) youth advisory board or program committee c) one youth member serves on the board of directors d) multiple youth serve on the board of directors e) the board of directors is made up mostly or entirely of youth f) we are not a c3, but our primary governing body has youth member(s) serving on it g) we are not a c3 but our primary governing body is made up mostly or entirely of youth. h) youth working group committees i) other committees that take on organizational work j) other \_\_\_\_\_
16. What is your organizational annual budget? This information is helpful to see what resources organizations have to do their work.
- \$0 - \$50,000
  - \$51,000 - \$200,000
  - \$200,001 - \$500,000
  - \$500,001 - \$750,000
  - \$750,001 - \$1,000,000
  - \$1,000,000 +
  - Not sure

Comment:

17. Approximately what percent of your organizational energy and time is devoted to each of the following activities (total should sum 100)
- Direct services (services that take care of people's immediate needs, ex: shelter, food, clothing, etc.)
  - Community Organizing (ex: developing campaigns to win policy changes or hold a figure of power accountable to decisions and actions)
  - Leadership Development (ex: educational workshops and leadership training)
  - Other activism, but not community organizing (ex: social justice, art, or media-making)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
18. How many paid full time employee positions does your organization currently have?
19. Is your organization (or the youth program within your organization if applicable) member-led? (In other words, are the youth participants decision-makers with the power to direct the mission and the work of the organization/ youth program?) Y/N
20. What communities does your organization work with? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What geographical areas does your organization work in? (e.g. city-wide, statewide, tri-county, western half of state, etc.)

### SECTION 3: In your opinion, what issues currently most affect LGBTQ youth in your region?

**Bias-motivated violence** (any type of mistreatment against an LGBT person, person of color, woman, or other member of a marginalized group based in whole or in part on a perpetrator(s)' bias against that group, e.g. physical violence, sexual violence, verbal abuse, vandalism, isolation): gender-based violence against women/female presenting people, anti-LGB violence, anti-trans violence,

**Criminalization and policing:** racial profiling, stop-and-frisk, sexual violence by police, 3 strikes laws, war on drugs laws, traffic stops/non moving violations, criminalization of truancy, condoms as evidence of sex work, mistreatment during incarceration, quality-of-life laws (harsh penalties for things such as graffiti or broken windows), gang laws, enhanced penalties/sentencing laws, access to public space, other

**Health:** HIV, access to healthcare (trans specific), access to healthcare (general), Ambulance, fire-fighter, or other first responder sensitivity,

**Housing:** being kicked out by parents, running away, homelessness, lack of affordable housing, unsafe shelter, unsafe shelter based on gender, lack of shelter, lack of shelter access based on gender, sleeping-in-public laws, gentrification, other

**Immigration:** police involved in ICE, lack of access to financial aid for college, lack of access to bilingual education, problems with ID/drivers license, asylum, access to safety/services for undocumented immigrant crime victims,

**Intimate partner violence:** access to orders of protection for LGBT survivors, access to domestic violence shelter for trans/gender nonconforming survivors, access to domestic violence shelter for queer non-trans men; access to domestic violence shelter for non-trans queer women; problems with police response, problems with community response, lack of access to LGBT sensitive services (e.g. groups, therapy, safety planning, emergency financial aid, etc.)

**Marriage:** Defense of Marriage Act, civil unions/domestic partnerships, marriage, foster care, adoption

**School-based violence:** police officers in schools, anti-LGBTQ school staff, bullying, need for Gay/Straight Alliance in school

**Sexual violence:** dating violence; cruising/pick up violence; in police custody; in context of hate violence; lack of services for queer survivors

**Not Listed** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you're not involved with an org, you are finished! Thank you!**

Check here if you'd like us to email you info about your closest LGBTQ youth organization.  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



**If you are involved with an, organization please complete the last section**

## **SECTION 4: LGBTQ Youth Organizing**

**21.** If your organization is doing work to specifically to correct any of the negative practices mentioned above, what percentage of your organizational time and energy is devoted to each type of activity listed below? activism? (Note: Please answer the question in terms of your social change projects specifically, not necessarily in terms of your entire organizational programming). Total should sum to 100.

- o Support/Services that make turn out possible (e.g. food at meetings, paying for transit, childcare, GED classes)
- o Community/Popular education (e.g. workshops that educate the members on the issue)
- o Training/Capacity building (e.g. training that educates the target or potential allies on the issue, rather than the constituents)
- o Leadership building (e.g. activities that engage the members in becoming organizers or workshop facilitators, participatory action research)
- o Lobbying/testifying (e.g. staff or leadership educating elected about the issue)
- o Coalition building (e.g. working as allies with constituencies of other issues/groups)
- o Media work (e.g. making PSAs about an issue; issuing press releases; writing op-eds)
- o Community organizing (e.g. collective, member-led campaigns designed to win policy changes using specific steps and activities directed at figure(s) in power (e.g. groups of members lobbying, marches, protests, petitions, forums, boycotts, strikes, walk-outs, etc.) %

Knowing that organizations have limited capacity and typically must prioritize which campaigns or issues they will work on, the following questions are about both your personal as well as organizational priorities.

**22.** In your opinion, what legislation or policies (local, state, and/or national) are your communities most affected by currently? (examples could include curfew laws, gang loitering laws, DOMAs, the DREAM Act, shelter gender policies, etc.)

**23.** If your organization is specifically working to address any of these laws or policies, which ones?

**24.** What issue(s) do you feel need to be addressed in your region that are currently not being addressed by any organizations locally? (For example, if your organization is working on housing, but youth are getting their IDs confiscated by police, do you think that other orgs should be working on police harassment.)

**25.** Please briefly list any campaigns your organization is currently working on

25 a. Please list any challenges or successes you are experiencing with regards to these campaigns.

**26.** Since the completion our previous survey (if applicable), please list any organizational campaign victories you've had since 2009

**27.** If you could pick just one, what issue do you think should be the focus of a national LGBTQ youth of color movement?

**28.** Any other comments, things we should have asked, or ways that FIERCE could support your work?



# Appendix C



GSA at Boulder High School  
UCAN Host Home Program  
TransYouth Support Network (TYSN)  
Lifelong AIDS Alliance  
HEYO youth program (Health Education Youth Outreach)  
QTET (Queer Teen Ensemble Theatre)  
SPARKrj.org  
Southerners On New Ground (SONG)  
Song and shenandoah valley yes alliance  
LGBT Center of Raleigh  
Detroit REPRESENT!  
Time Out Youth  
Stonewall Youth  
Help Increase the Peace Project  
UNCC Pride  
BreakOUT!  
sexuality and gender alliance  
Lgbtq alliance  
JustUsATL  
Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls  
Transgender Childcare Co-op  
LYRIC, St. James Infirmary  
NYSHN  
Gay straight alliance  
Gay Straight Alliance  
GSA North High School  
Gay Straight Alliance- North Community High School  
GLBT in Recovery Avenues for Homless Youth  
Broadway Youth Center  
GSA (Various)  
Keshet UCSD  
Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Resource Center (SMYRC)  
Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM)  
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego  
Stanford Students for Queer Liberation  
workers world party  
Black and Pink Hispanic  
Black Gay Coalition ACT UP Boston  
Riot Youth  
Spectrum  
Dreams of Hope  
Chicago Dyke March Collective and the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH)  
Freedom Inc  
Kulture Klub Collaborative  
Gender Justice LA  
Rainbow Alley - LGBT  
Community Center of Colorado  
Freedom, Inc.  
Peter Cicchino Youth Project  
New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community:  
Youth Alliance  
Gay & Lesbian Community  
Center of Southern Nevada  
Minnesota Internship Center High School  
- Safe Space Classroom  
Out Youth Austin  
The Ali Forney Center  
Queer Women of Color  
Media Arts Project (QWOCMAP)  
BAYC Our Space  
Illinois Safe Schools Alliance  
United Church of Christ  
Coalition for GLBT Concerns;  
UCC Youth and Young Adult Ministry  
Youth Outlook  
Gender JUST



## Appendix D. Outreach materials



### **Hello LGBTQ youth of color and allies:**

Some of you may have participated in FIERCE's Youth Organizing Needs survey in 2009. For those who did, thank you again! Your responses are helping to inform the summit that will be taking place in Chicago in November of 2012. We are distributing this second survey in part to see what has changed in your area since the last survey.

For those who did not take the last survey, that's ok! We still need your help with this one.

The primary purpose of this survey is to help us build more power nationally as LGBTQ youth activists of color, while still maintaining regional relevance. We'd like to learn more about the specific policy issues that are affecting you where you live. If you are an LGBTQ young person, we want to hear from you even if you are not directly involved with any specific organization. We'd like to know about policies, laws, negative practices, or other regulations that are affecting your wellbeing and safety in places like school, shelters, hospitals, public transit, the street, and other spaces you occupy. **We'd like to know, from your perspective, what are the critical issues affecting LGBTQ youth in your neighborhood, city or town, and state.**

As before, we want to hear from both members and staff at organizations, as well individuals who may not be affiliated with an organization. We also want to hear from LGBTQ youth of color, as well as allies. **Please encourage all of your youth members or participants to fill out the survey - the more responses, the better!**

Your participation in this survey helps us build a national movement together. Your responses are entirely confidential and participation is completely voluntary.

The survey can be filled out online in English [here](#) and it can be filled out in Spanish [here](#).

If the links above don't work, you can copy and paste the following into your browser:

English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2KFWS97>

Spanish: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FIERCEInventariodeJovenesLGBTysusAliado>

Thank you so much for adding your voice to this work!

In Solidarity,

Jai Dulani & Krystal Portalatin

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**FIERCE Co-Directors**