

LGBTQ INCLUSIVE SERVICES READINESS CHECKLIST

A Self-Assessment for Area Agencies on Aging

This self-assessment aims to help agencies determine how effectively they are supporting LGBTQ individuals and aid in identifying areas of growth. To get started, mark the boxes next to the actions your agency is taking to be more inclusive to the LGBTQ community. When finished, add up the number of boxes checked to determine your agency's score. Results for each score, plus related resources, are listed on the last page.

Awareness and First Impressions--To what extent has our agency created an environment that visually shows it welcomes the LGBTQ community?

- Even if our agency does not currently have clients that openly identify as LGBTQ, service providers still work from the assumption that we have LGBTQ clients.
- Our agency's pamphlets and materials that include pictures of individuals and couples also feature photos of LGBTQ older adults, older adults of color, and older adults with a range of abilities.
- Our agency provides materials that include local resources for the LGBTQ community. Our agency's calendar includes LGBTQ community events, programs, or organizations.
- Our agency displays pride flags, local LGBTQ organizations' logos, or other symbols that show solidarity with the LGBTQ community

Inclusive Language and Documentation--To what extent does our agency recognize the importance of language in being more inclusive to the LGBTQ community?

- When collecting general demographic information, our agency asks clients about their sexual orientation and gender identity in a respectful and confidential way.
- Service providers at our agency do not assume our client's sexual orientation or gender identity. Our forms include a space for clients to write in their gender identity and preferred pronouns.
- Our service providers never force clients to answer questions about their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Our service providers discuss confidentiality with clients and are honest with who does and does not have access to their information.
- Our forms have been updated to include options such as "significant other" or "partner" when clients are asked about their relationship status. Our agency has expanded our understanding of familial relationships to include families of choice.

Agency Culture, Advocacy, and Community Partnerships--To what degree is our agency focused on creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive to LGBTQ staff and clients?

- Our agency has a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected identities.
- Our agency's human resources department is dedicated to protecting our staff and clients from discrimination of any kind, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Our agency has a gender-neutral restroom or informs staff and clients that anyone may use the bathroom of their choice based on their gender identity.
- Our staff knows and uses the correct pronouns for clients, other staff members, and stakeholders.
- We involve LGBTQ experts and community members in the process of creating a more inclusive agency. Our agency recognizes that individuals cannot represent an entire community, but the inclusion of LGBTQ stakeholders provides a perspective that is necessary for finding ways to better serve the community.
- In addition to advocating for older adults, our agency also advocates for state and local policies that are beneficial for the LGBTQ community. Our agency joins LGBTQ organizations for advocacy events.
- Our agency has partnerships with local LGBTQ organizations and advocacy groups. Our agency prominently displays our partnerships with LGBTQ organizations and community events in our pamphlets, website, and other agency materials.

Education and Programming--Does our agency understand that our knowledge of the needs and identities within the LGBTQ community evolves and competency training must be ongoing?

- Our agency participates in cultural competency training for staff on how to address the needs of LGBTQ older adults and how to be inclusive to the LGBTQ community.
- Our agency requires that our staff participate in (at least) annual cultural competency continuing education programs that address the needs of the LGBTQ community.
- Our agency has LGBTQ-specific programming or has modified our current programming to better serve our clients. Our agency's meeting space is made available to diverse groups within the LGBTQ community to hold meetings or events.
- Our agency includes LGBTQ stakeholders in our efforts to become more inclusive. Our advisory boards, committees, councils, and those involved in creating and implementing programs are representative of the diverse communities we serve.

Evaluation--Does our agency use ongoing evaluation methods to identify strengths and areas of growth regarding the support we provide the LGBTQ community?

- Our agency utilizes program evaluations for clients and staff who participate in our LGBTQ specific or modified programs.
- Our agency distributes workforce surveys to agency staff to understand how prepared they are to serve our LGBTQ clients.
- Our agency asks LGBTQ community partners and organizations to give us feedback on our ongoing efforts to be more inclusive. Our agency asks LGBTQ clients and support networks about the efficacy of our services. Our agency uses data collected from evaluations to identify how effectively we respond to the needs of LGBTQ clients, staff, and stakeholders.
- The data we collect from evaluations is also utilized to create a plan to further our efforts to be more inclusive to the LGBTQ community.

Results



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Your agency has several areas to address in becoming more inclusive in serving LGBTQ clients. Your agency's lack of LGBTQ inclusive initiatives is likely creating barriers to services for your clients. Taking this assessment is a step in the right direction. Use these results to identify areas in need of improvement and create a plan to make changes within your agency that will aid in working towards a more inclusive environment for the diverse LGBTQ community you serve.

Resources:

- A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies* <http://bit.ly/2n1c9Hh>
- Top 10 Ways to Begin Creating LGBT Safety & Inclusivity for Aging Services* <http://bit.ly/2JGmbrX>



8 - 16

Your agency is working towards creating more inclusive services for LGBTQ clients, but there are still areas of improvement that need to be addressed. Review your responses and find your agency's strengths and areas of growth. This information can be used to create a strategic plan to continue your agency's efforts to create a more inclusive environment for your LGBTQ clients.

Resources:

- 10 Tips for Finding LGBT-Affirming Services* <http://bit.ly/2cTbLYb>
- A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* <http://bit.ly/2HU8RgS>
- Senior Centers & Outreach to LGBT Older Adults* <http://bit.ly/2wBnwI9>



17 - 24

Your agency has done considerable work towards becoming more inclusive to the LGBTQ community you serve. It is important to remember that the work is never done. There will always be areas of growth within each agency, and our knowledge of the LGBTQ community is always evolving. Continue the work you have been doing thus far and use this assessment to identify areas where your agency can grow.

Resources:

- LGBT Programming for Older Adults: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide* <http://bit.ly/2xTShhe>
- Strengthen Your State and Local Aging Plan: A Practical Guide for Expanding the Inclusion of LGBT Older Adults* <http://bit.ly/2tl1QSb>

This checklist was created from SAGE/National Resource Center on LGBT Aging's publications: *Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies*, *Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: Top 10 Ways to Begin Creating LGBT Safety & Inclusivity for Aging Services*, & *Strengthen Your State and Local Aging Plan: A Practical Guide for Expanding the Inclusion of LGBT Older Adults*. These publications and additional resources are available for download at lgbtagingcenter.org