

LGBTQ+ Hunger

November 2024



TENNESSEE
JUSTICE
CENTER



TJC NUTRITION TEAM

Signe Anderson

Senior Director of Nutrition Advocacy

Anna Grace Breedlove

WIC Referral & Data Specialist

Crys Riles

Anti-Hunger Advocate

Anne Dobson Ball

WIC Partnership & Outreach Coordinator

Geraldine Hernandez-Marin

King Nutrition Fellow

28 YEARS OF HEALTHCARE JUSTICE



**TJC stands with TN families,
helping to access basic needs**

- Individual case work
- Leveraging our knowledge
- Moving systems

TJC ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY

End hunger in Tennessee by protecting and strengthening the federal nutrition programs: SNAP, WIC, & Child Nutrition Programs

- Improve access and remove barriers to programs
- Advocate for solutions to systemic issues
- Educate and inform
- Provide policy expertise
- Direct client work



FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program
for Women, Infants, and Children

NSLP: National School Lunch Program

SBP: School Breakfast Program

SEBT: Summer EBT

SFSP: Summer Food Service Program

CACFP: Child and Adult Care Food Program

CSFP: Commodity Supplemental Food Program

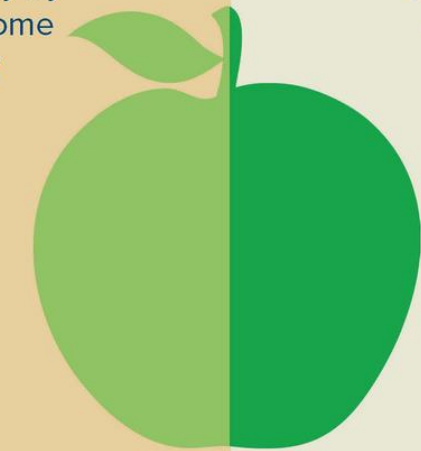
SNAP STRENGTHS

SNAP REDUCES HUNGER

and food insecurity by providing low-income people necessary food money.

SNAP IMPROVES DIETARY INTAKE

and health, especially among children and with lasting effects.



SNAP BOLSTERS LOCAL ECONOMIES

by increasing money spent for food at local retailers.

SNAP LIFTS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE out of poverty.



FRAC
Food Research & Action Center

LGBTQ+ HUNGER

- Nationally, **15-20% LGBTQ+ people** faced food insufficiency in 2023
 - Non-LGBTQ+ people = **10.4%**
- **20% of LGBTQ+ high schoolers** report experiencing hunger
 - Increase of **33%** for some non-White students
- LGBTQ+ Hunger affected by **systemic disparities** in poverty, housing, transportation, education, healthcare, and more.
 - Deepened by **intersecting identities** such as race, sex, or ability.

Source: [FRAC](#), [UCLA](#)

TENNESSEE



State-specific barriers increase these issues

- State legislation is **actively hostile** to LGBTQ+ people
- Certain factors cause **economic instability** in housing, employment, and other sectors
- Lack of support in **rural areas**, plentiful in TN

UNIQUE ISSUES

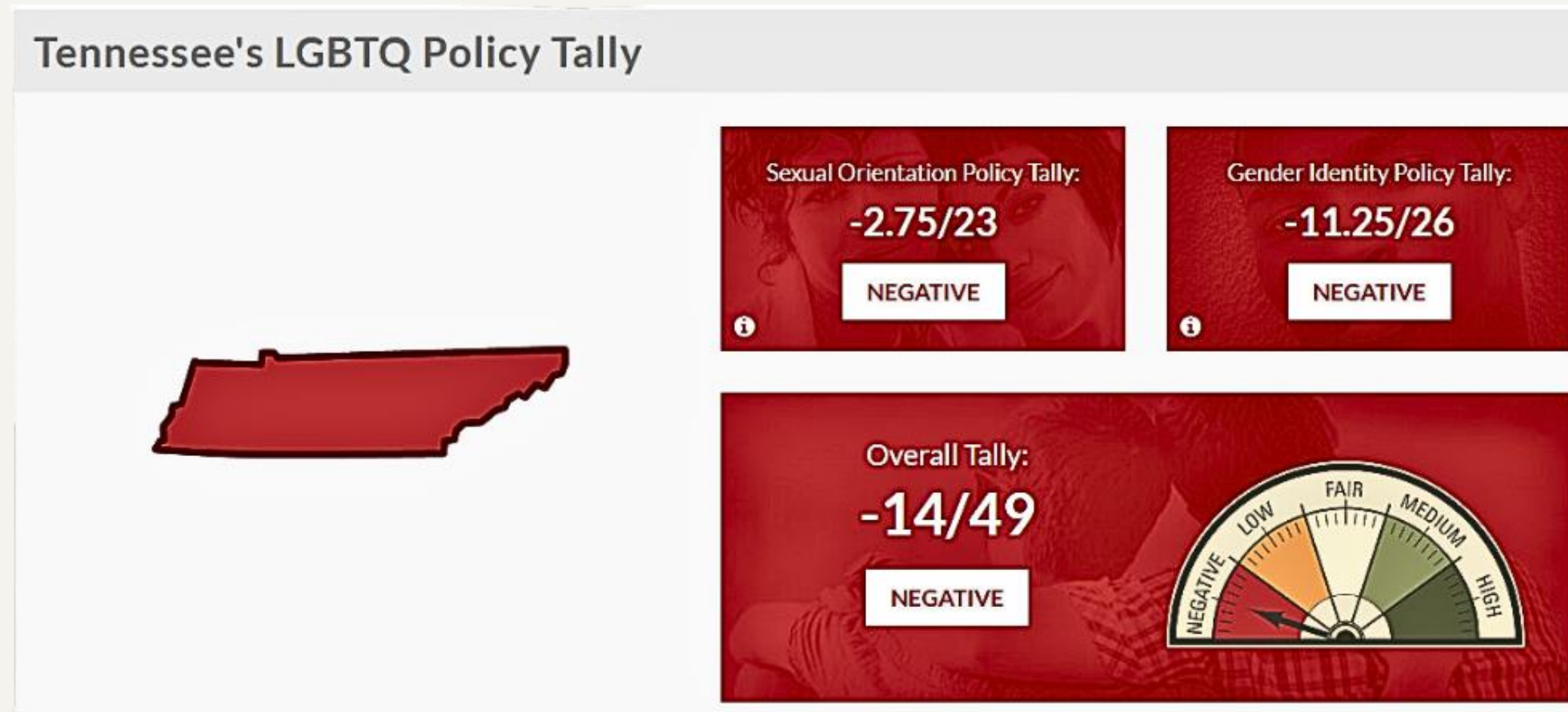
- **LGBTQ+ Tennesseans** face unique sociocultural issues
 - Cultural and religious norms can result in ostracizing and social neglect
 - **Abandonment of children and young adults**, results in homelessness
 - 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+
- Lack of family support, faith communities, and social networks can cause negative **mental health and employment outcomes**
- LGBTQ+ people are 2.7x more likely to be **victims of violent crime** than their cisgender & heterosexual peers.
- Causes reduced **economic stability and mobility**
 - Directly tied to hunger



UNIQUE ISSUES

Tennessee passed more anti-LGBTQ+ laws than any other state

- Twenty-four bills have passed the General Assembly since 2015
- These include restrictions on gender-affirming care, artistic expression, bathroom usage, sports, school curriculum, gender markers on official documents, and more.



SNAP

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

- Formerly Food Stamps
- Allows participants to buy food with an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card at grocery stores and farmers markets
- Mitigate hunger for all low-income people



SNAP & OUR ECONOMY

6,400 TN grocers/authorized SNAP retailers

SNAP contributes **\$1.8 billion** to local TN economy (2022 USDA data)

\$1.00 SNAP benefits generates at least **\$1.50** in local economic activity



BARRIERS

Verification Documents

- Mismatched name and gender on documents can cause confusion
 - TN does not allow changing gender marker on some documents like birth certificate

Potential Discrimination

- Prejudice with presumed discrepancies between paperwork and personal presentation (name vs. voice and appearance, for instance)
- Issues with disclosure of household makeup (same sex couples)
 - Perceived/expected or actual prejudice



BARRIERS

Unclear Definitions

- Misconceptions about what constitutes a “household”
- Chosen families may choose not to apply to avoid issues

Stigma and Fear

- Cultural shame and internalized fear may cause individuals to avoid the process altogether
- Mistrust of government due to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation
- Fear of being outed
- Past experience with government programs
- Misgendering and symbolic violence



TIME LIMITS

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD)

- 18-54 years old
- must work or volunteer on average 20 hours per week to receive SNAP benefits beyond 3 months in 3 years

Exemptions

- pregnant
- children < 18 years old
- veterans
- unhoused
- formerly in foster care
- [many more](#)

LGBTQ+ people are **unemployed and underemployed** at much higher rates than peers

- This is even deeper for intersecting identities like **race and ability**

Source: [CAP](#),



WIC

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC)



- Health support and food benefits to pregnant and postpartum people, infants, & children up to age 5
- WIC EBT card with funds to buy nutritious foods
- Nutrition education and counseling
- Breastfeeding education and support
- Referrals to other health and social services

ELIGIBILITY OF WIC



CATEGORICAL

INCOME

TN RESIDENT

NUTRITIONAL
RISK

ELIGIBILITY - CATEGORICAL

Who can receive WIC?

- Pregnant/postpartum people
- Infants
- Children under 5
- Primary Caregivers
 - Grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.
 - Single fathers
 - Foster parents



WIC does **not** require immigration/citizenship status

BARRIERS

Unclear Definitions

- Non-binary or transgender parents who do not identify as "women" but meet the physiological requirements for WIC participation (e.g., pregnancy or breastfeeding) may encounter confusion or fear discrimination during the application process

Household Makeup

- Same-sex or chosen family households may complicate eligibility or confuse caseworkers
- Fear of being outed during the process



OPPORTUNITIES

TN WIC works with families on a case-by-case basis to make sure everyone eligible is covered!

Non-birthing parents/caregivers can receive benefits on behalf of a child in their care, regardless of custody.

WIC is a great option for families of all makeups!



NASHVILLE LAUNCHPAD

Alec Miller (he/they)

Program Director



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**ADVOCATES ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE
OVER 20,000 PEOPLE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS IN NASHVILLE**

Open Table Nashville

“





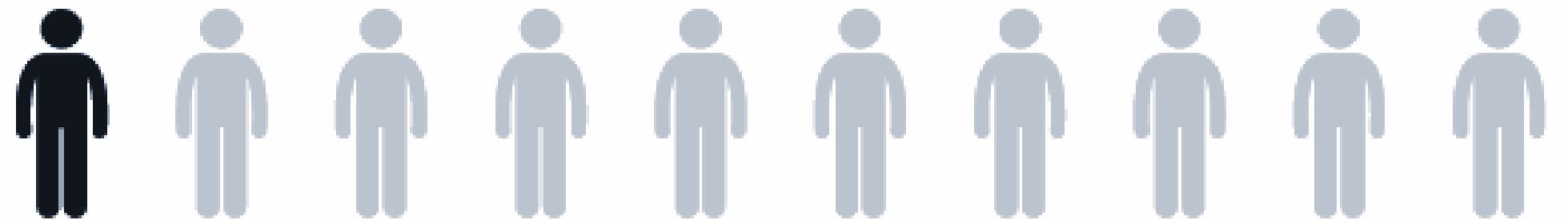
**MORE PEOPLE
THAN WILL FIT IN
BRIDGESTONE ARENA!**

YOUNG ADULT HOMELESSNESS

- Unique needs and lack of access
- Homelessness doesn't always look how we expect it to

1 IN 10

Proportion of young adults 18-24 who experience homelessness in any given year.



83%

The increased risk of homelessness for Black young adults compared to young adults of other races

LGBTQ+ HOMELESSNESS

- Often experience lack of support
- Experience violence at a higher rate



120%

The increased risk of homelessness for LGBTQ+ young adults compared to their cisgender and heterosexual peers

40%

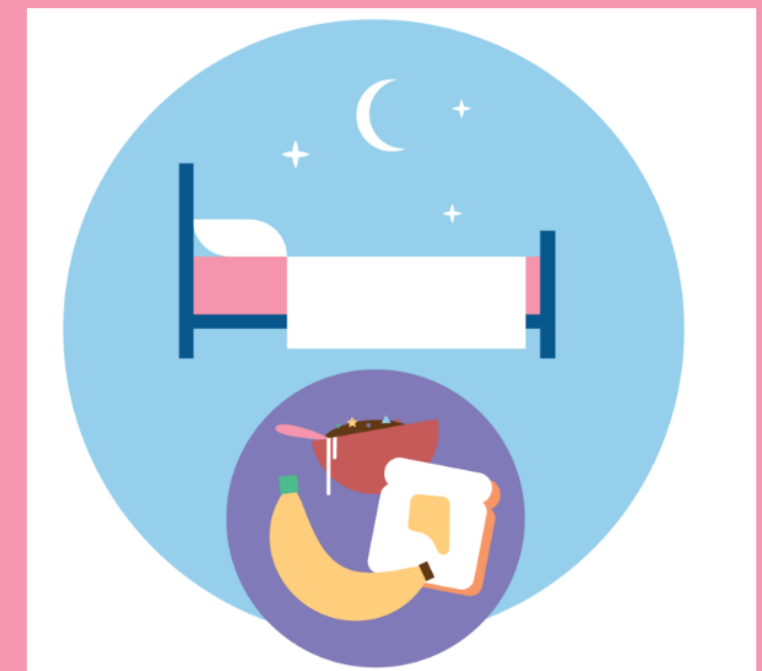
Amount of youth experiencing homelessness who identify as LGBTQ+, versus 7% of the overall population who identify.

★ **MISSION**

To create a network of temporary, safer, street-free sleeping shelters for unhoused young adults which are open and affirming to LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies.

★ **VISION**

To ensure all unhoused and displaced young adults in Middle TN have safer and more secure sleeping shelters throughout the year.



OUR HISTORY

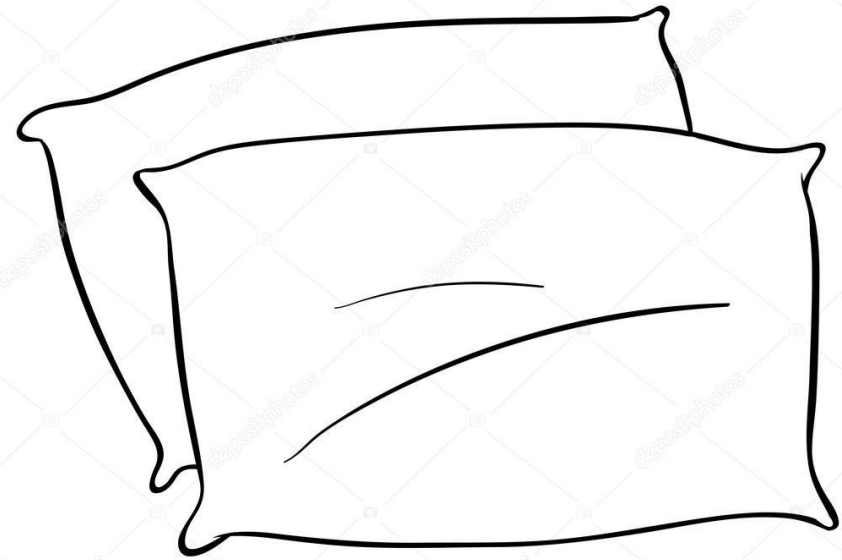


- Nashville Launch Pad began in 2014
- Intended to fill gap in unhoused young adult support
- Winter Shelter model
- Pandemic response

Since 2014, 1,500+ guests have spent

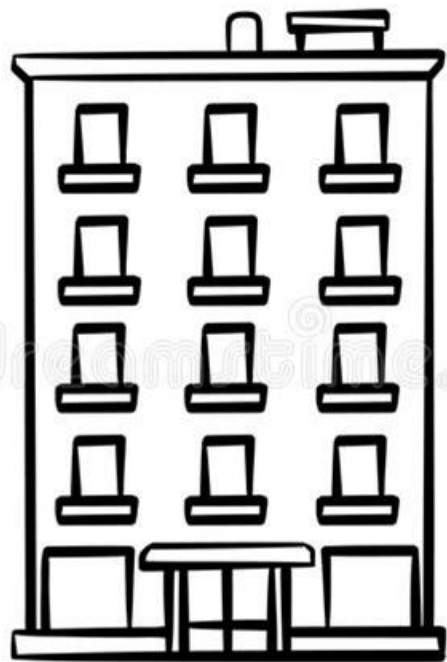
25,000+ nights at Launch Pad

OUR PROGRAMS



Emergency Shelter

Provides an LGBTQ+ affirming, safer sleeping environment, a warm meal, and a hot shower during the cold winter months (Nov 1 - April 1).



Independent-Supported Living Program (ISLP)

Provides apartment accommodations for guests for up to six months. They can focus on employment, the search for permanent housing, education goals, etc. Additionally, guests can receive mail, leave belongings, and create a routine by returning to the same, familiar place night after night.

OUR PROGRAMS

Mobile Housing Navigation Center (MHNC)

In partnership with Community Care Fellowship, we opened the sixth Mobile Housing Navigation Center in Nashville last December. This grant funded, year-round center offers 12 sleeping pods for unhoused young adults to stay in for 120 days while receiving case management support.

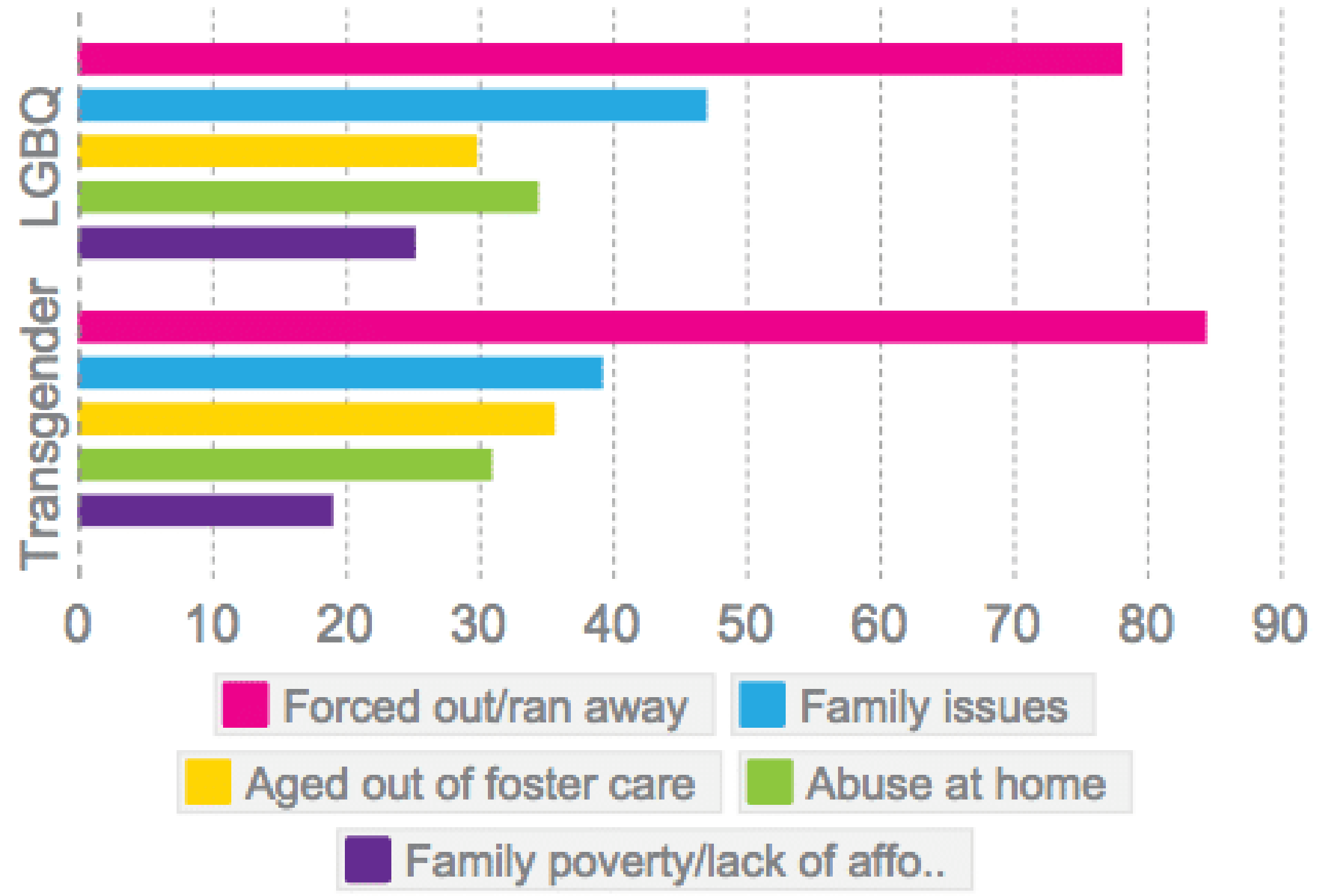


COMMUNITY CARE
FELLOWSHIP



LGBTQ+ BIAS HAS REAL LIFE CONSEQUENCES

Homelessness by Cause and Demographic



ALLOW vs AFFIRM



What are
some ways
we can
practice
affirmation?

NUTRITION ADVOCACY

Legislative Advocacy

Administrative Advocacy

Education

Sharing stories



ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY

Urge DHS to Adopt State Waivers:

- **Time Limit Area Waivers** can exempt entire geographic locations from work requirements, which cause issues for unemployed and underemployed
- **Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE)** would expand who can be on and stay on SNAP by addressing the benefit cliff



LEGISLATION

[H.R. 1510 - Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2023](#)

Sponsor: Rep. Barbara Lee (CA)

This bill would abolish the 3-month time limit for most SNAP recipients who don't meet work requirements.



LEGISLATION

[H.R.3519 - Hot Foods Act of 2023](#)

Sponsor: Rep. Grace Meng (NY)

Would allow SNAP dollars to be spent on hot, prepared foods.



ADVOCACY

Contact your legislators via phone, letter, or email.

Ask them to support these and other legislation/policies that limit access to nutrition programs.

- **Federal:** Find your Legislators [HERE](#)
- **State:** Find your Legislators [HERE](#)



WORKING GROUPS

- [WIC Champions](#)
 - Second Thursdays at 9:00am CT
- [SNAP Access](#)
 - Third Thursdays at 10:00am CT
- [Healthy Meals Healthy Kids TN](#)
 - First Thursdays at 1:00pm CT
- [Summer EBT Advocacy Call](#)
 - Third Wednesdays at 3:00pm CT
- [College Hunger Quarterly Call](#)
 - Next Meeting February 11, 2025 1:00pm CT



NUTRITION NOTE

Join Nutrition Note!

- Our monthly anti-hunger newsletter
- Updates on changes and news
- Sign up [HERE](#)



RESOURCES

- [SNAP Eligibility FAQ](#)
- [SNAP Fact Sheet \(English & Espanol\)](#)
- [WIC Fact Sheet \(English & Espanol\)](#)
- [WIC Fact Sheet \(English & عربي\)](#)
- [SNAP Application Assistance Flyer](#)
- [SNAP 3-Month Time Limits in TN](#)
- [FRAC: Addressing LGBTQIA+ Hunger, Poverty, and Discrimination](#)
- [UCLA: Williams Institute Press Release on LGBTQ Youth Hunger](#)
- [Movement Advancement Project: Tennessee's Equality Profile](#)
- [UCLA: Williams Institute Press Release on LGBT Violence](#)
- [TN WIC](#)
- [Tennessee Equality Project](#)
- [Nashville Launchpad](#)
- [OUTMemphis](#)
- [Centerlink: LGBTQ Community Center Finder](#)

Share
your
resources
in the
chat!

CONTACT US

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Senior Director of Nutrition Advocacy

sanderson@tnjustice.org

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criles@tnjustice.org

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gmarin@tnjustice.org

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