



QUICK TAKES • Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Workplace Issues

POPULATION

Determining the size of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population in the U.S. is, at best, difficult, and at worst, impossible, due to the indirect nature of the data collection. For example, Census 2000 asked about same-sex co-habitation, which was then used to estimate the number of lesbian or gay couples. Those not cohabitating with their partners or single lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals were thus not counted, a significant omission since the Urban Institute estimates that only 1/4 of gay men and 2/5 of lesbians are part of a couple at any given time.¹

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population in the United States is estimated between 13 million and 17 million. Estimates range from 3-10% of the population, but Witeck-Combs estimates (based on multiple survey results) that approximately 6.5% of the population is LGBT. Market and social science researches admit that these numbers are estimates of the LGBT population as there is no way to determine a true count given the challenges of relying on self-identification to extrapolate a number.²

WORKPLACE

- There are 11 openly gay presidents of colleges in the U.S.³

BENEFITS

- 58% of large employers that offer partner benefits offer them to both opposite sex and same sex couples.⁴
- 88% of companies in the Fortune 500 included sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies. 98% of the Fortune 50 (49 companies) include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies.⁴
- Nearly 70 companies reported to the HRC that they offer comprehensive transgender health benefits.⁴
- 125 Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination based on gender identity.⁴
- Nine of the Fortune 10 prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, five prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, and eight provide benefits to same-sex couples.⁴

DISCRIMINATION

- Almost two-fifths (39%) lesbian and gay adults in America's workplaces report facing some form of hostility or harassment on the job. 11% experience very frequent or frequent harassment or discrimination.⁵
- 19% LGBT employees reported barriers in promotion due to their sexual orientation/gender identity.⁵
- Almost one in ten lesbian and gay adults state they were fired or dismissed unfairly from a previous job or pressured to quit a job because of their sexual orientation.⁶

- A small study of 155 transgender participants by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Transgender Law Center found that nearly 1 in 2 transgender people has experienced employment discrimination.⁷
- In the United States, twenty states and the District of Columbia prohibit discrimination based on one's sexual orientation. Of those states, thirteen have laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity/expression.⁸

BUYING POWER

- According to Simmons Market Research Bureau, the total spending of lesbian, gay, and transgender individuals at \$600 billion.⁹
- 58% of LGBT people would switch brands to companies that market directly to LGBT individuals.¹⁰
- 25% of LGBT adults have changed brands to a competing company that is LGBT-friendly.¹⁰

Sources

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UPDATED 12-27-07