

CHAPTER 6 – OUTLINE

CHAPTER 6: OUTREACH & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE TGI COMMUNITY	6.3
A. CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS & HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS THAT SERVE THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY	6.3
B. ROLE & MODE OF OUTREACH IN LOCAL TGI COMMUNITIES	6.4
C. ORGANIZATIONS SERVING LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE	6.5

CHAPTER 6: OUTREACH & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE TGI COMMUNITY

Outreach and engagement within your local TGI community is critical to working alongside, and in solidarity with, each other to protect access to care for TGI individuals. Consistent engagement, demonstrated competency and skill, and commitment are necessary to build deeper partnerships that help to protect health care access for TGI communities. Outreach and engagement carried out in a manner that respects the experiences of TGI people helps build trust and partnerships in the community, which helps to fill the gaps that existing support or protections cannot fill..

This Chapter outlines some basic steps to consider when initiating engagement with the TGI community local to the area, but it is by no means an exhaustive guide. Further, not all elements of these suggested approaches may be relevant in your area. These suggestions are as elements to consider implementing in ongoing outreach and engagement efforts tailored to the unique factors in the local area.

Chapter 7 of this Guide is an in-depth discussion about cultural competency, which is a necessary part of successful outreach and engagement. Consistent outreach and engagement will likely strengthen cultural competency over time.

A. CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS & HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS THAT SERVE THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

Engaging with organizations and groups with lived experience and/or expertise helps build relationships and identify the main stakeholders involved in this work. This helps build a network to ensure TGI individuals in need of support or resources can be directed to the right place(s) while building a more structured support network. For example, the HIV/AIDS epidemic pushed many informal networks of support into more structured organizations to specifically address the needs of LGBTQIA+ people with HIV/AIDS, particularly gay men. The San Diego Blood Sisters is one notable example, a group of lesbians who organized blood drives to collect donations. When the government, doctors, and scientists refused to care for HIV positive patients, lesbians stepped in. This is only one example of the types of grass root efforts within the LGBTQIA+ community that have extensive histories in each of your communities. Having some context and appreciation for an organization's history and contributions to the

advancement of LGBTQIA+ rights and services helps enhance engagement efforts.

Unfortunately, many institutions and governments are still not designed with TGI people in mind, and many explicitly exclude or criminalize TGI people. The needs and diversity among TGI individuals are often not reflected in existing systems and institutions like the U.S. health care system. Local community-based LGBTQIA+ organizations are often a trusted resource for TGI individuals to access health care services and other resources. However, even some LGBTQIA+ organizations can be less inclusive of, or exclusive to, the needs of their TGI community so researching local organizations to see what programming they offer can be a way to learn about local resources. Community-based organizations and providers serving LGBTQIA+ people are often some of the most knowledgeable of emerging systemic issues and barriers to accessing health care services in the community. Connecting with community-based organizations and health care providers serving LGBTQIA+ people is a vital part of outreach and building trust with the LGBTQIA+ community.

However, many community-based organizations tend to be geographically located in more metropolitan areas, which often means LGBTQIA+ people in rural areas have fewer options for local resources and services. Consequently, rural communities often experience higher rates of the barriers to GAC detailed in this guide because of the limited to no options around them.

As the result of two simultaneous pandemics, COVID-19 and MPOX, community-based organizations have adapted to provide services remotely and many organizations continue to maintain hybrid models to access their services, either in person or remotely. Telehealth and virtual options to join community-based organization programming has helped eliminate barriers to accessing services and resources. For example, LGBTQIA+ community centers frequently organize and host support groups that are hybrid which allows individuals to join in person or online. Building trust with community-based organizations that are not geographically located in or near your neighborhood can also help identify places that serve the broader community for individuals who would otherwise have to travel longer distances to access those resources.

Establishing a direct point of contact at your organization to promptly address any questions or concerns from the community partners you're engaging with helps build consistency to nurture the relationship. A

direct point of contact is responsible for responding to questions or concerns in order to help build trust, establish credibility, and identify clear lines of communication to address any barriers to accessing your organization's services.

B. ROLE & MODE OF OUTREACH IN LOCAL TGI COMMUNITIES

Effective outreach and engagement is more about quality than quantity. Attending big community events with the largest number of attendees can expand an organization's reach and exposure to the local community to educate about their services. For example, while pride parades and related events are a great opportunity for exposure and to distribute informational materials, they may not be ideal to building deeper trust with the community.

However, it is just as important, if not more effective, to attend smaller scale, regularly scheduled events, such as community support groups, resource fairs or monthly gatherings. Smaller events can help foster more opportunities for one-on-one time with partners to learn about the local LGBTQIA+ community and their particular needs that an organization's services can help provide. Consistent attendance or contact at community events is vital to building trust. Outreach and engagement can be an impactful tool to help cultivate opportunities for TGI community members to participate in shaping or improving existing inequities and barriers to GAC. A key point to keep in mind is engaging individuals with lived experience who are closest to the barriers are often the most knowledgeable about the solutions.

Last, engagement and outreach is a two-way street. Every community partner has something to offer and has their own areas of expertise. Understanding the work that is already being done in the community shows respect and helps avoid duplication of effort and client confusion about which organization does what. Sharing and exchanging resources nurtures trust and solidarity between community partners, and helps identify where there might be gaps that each organization can fill.

C. ORGANIZATIONS SERVING LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

Below is a non-exhaustive list of national and California-based organizations that serve LGBTQIA+ people. This list is intended to help jump start local outreach and engagement efforts:

- LGBTQIA+ community centers

- Legal associations or groups such as National LGBTQ+ Bar Association,¹ LGBTQ+ Lawyers Association of Los Angeles,² Tom Homann LGBTQ+ Law Association,³ etc.
- Medical associations or boards
- LGBTQIA+ and Gender-related health clinics
- LGBTQIA+ Advocacy groups such as TransFamily Support Services,⁴ Lambda Legal,⁵ TransLatin@ Coalition,⁶ Equality California,⁷ etc.

¹ The Nat'l LGBTQ+ Bar Ass'n and Foundation, <https://lgbtqbar.org/> (last visited Feb. 22, 2025).

² LGBTQ+ Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, <https://lgbtqlawyersla.org/> (last visited Feb. 22, 2025).

³ Tom Homann LGBTQ+ Law Ass'n, <https://www.thla.org/> (last visited Feb. 22, 2025).

⁴ TransFamily Support Servs., <https://transfamilysos.org/> (last visited Feb. 22, 2025).

⁵ Lambda Legal, <https://lambdalegal.org/> (last visited Feb. 22, 2025).

⁶ The TransLatin@ Coalition, <https://www.translatinacoalition.org/> (last visited Feb. 22, 2025).

⁷ Equality California, <https://www.eqca.org/> (last visited (Feb. 22, 2025)).

ENDNOTES