

Annual Report on Resources and Services Provided to LGBTQI+ Individuals Entering DV Emergency Shelters (January 1 – December 31, 2024)

Pursuant to LL 130 of 2021 to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of social services to report on services and resources provided specific to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, gender non-conforming and non-binary residents of domestic violence emergency shelters, NYC HRA's Office of Domestic Violence Services (DVS) respectfully submits the report below.

1. The total number of survey forms distributed by the department pursuant to paragraph 4 of subdivision k of section 15 of chapter 1 of the charter:

In total, there were 16,318 HRA survey responses for CY2024, of which 114 were responses submitted by clients who received services from Domestic Violence Services.

2. The total number of individuals who self-identified as LGBTQI+ on the survey forms distributed pursuant to paragraph 4 of subdivision k of section 15 of chapter 1 of the charter:

In total, there were 2,533 HRA survey respondents that self-identified as LGBTQI+ for CY2024, of which 29 were responses submitted by clients who received services from Domestic Violence Services.

3. A description of the department's efforts to collect data specifically about LGBTQI+ individuals utilizing domestic violence emergency shelters:

Demographic gender enhancements were made to the HRA DVS Shelter Occupancy Referral and Tracking System (SORTS) to include additional gender designations. Capturing data, specifically about LGBTQI+ individuals utilizing domestic violence services, can be challenging due to issues of confidentiality. LGBTQI+ individuals often face unique barriers and concerns when seeking support for domestic violence, such as fear of discrimination, stigma, or outing. These concerns can make it difficult for them to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity, even when accessing services specifically designed for the LGBTQI+ community. The Department is currently making efforts to assure individuals seeking support that personal information obtained will be kept strictly confidential and procedures are in place to protect their privacy, including providing information on how data will be anonymized and stored securely.

4. A description of what the department has determined are the specific service needs of domestic violence emergency shelter residents who identify as LGBTQI+:

- **Training Staff:** Provide comprehensive training to HRA DVS program and DV residential and non-residential provider staff on LGBTQI+ issues, including cultural sensitivity, awareness of diverse identities, and understanding the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI+ survivors. This will help create an environment where individuals feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **LGBTQI+ Inclusivity:** Encourage provider intake forms follow Federal and State regulations and that assessment tools, and data collection mechanisms include options for diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. This allows individuals to self-identify accurately without fear of judgment or discrimination.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Assure individuals seeking support that their personal information will be kept strictly confidential to keep with Federal and State regulations.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Promote best practices with both DV residential and non-residential service providers to implement trauma-informed practices that prioritize survivors' safety and well-being to create a supportive environment that respects survivors' autonomy and choices, enabling them to share their experiences and identities more comfortably.
- **Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with LGBTQI+ organizations and community groups to build trust and establish referral networks. This can help increase awareness of domestic violence services and encourage LGBTQI+ individuals to seek support.

5. A description of the types of services and resources provided at domestic violence emergency shelters specific to residents who identify as LGBTQI+:

HRA DVS is mandated by NYS Social Service Law to establish and fund residential and community-based programs that provide temporary emergency housing and supportive services, including prevention and intervention services, crisis counseling, advocacy, economic empowerment programs and legal services to help families and individuals impacted by domestic violence, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, marital status, disability, or immigration status. Domestic violence residential and non-residential services are inclusive and available to all survivors, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity to ensure that LGBTQI+ survivors feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to seek help.

6. A description of the department's outreach efforts to reach LGBTQI+ individuals who may be eligible for domestic violence emergency shelter services:

LGBTQI+ Community Outreach

DVS is state mandated to provide DV non-residential services as well as residential services, and contracts with a network of community-based organizations that provide counseling, legal services, advocacy, economic opportunity services, and DV education and outreach in the community. One such organization is the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) that in addition to OCFS Non-Residential core mandated

services such as advocacy, counseling, referral & information, and community outreach, provides diverse programming tailored to the needs of LGBTQI+ and HIV-affected survivors of violence, including support groups for hate violence, sexual violence and intimate partner violence, and drop-in groups for transgender and gender non-conforming. AVP has an English and Spanish language hotline that is available 24/7 providing crisis intervention, safety planning, short term counseling, advocacy, and information/referral services. In addition, AVP provides free legal services to LGBTQI+ and HIV affected survivors in all five boroughs of New York City.

AVP served 830 clients in CY'24.

7. To the extent practicable, the total number of complaints the department received regarding domestic violence emergency shelter services provided to residents who identify as LGBTQI+, disaggregated by complaint type:

In CY'24, DVS did not receive any inquiries or complaints regarding domestic violence emergency shelter services provided to residents who identified as LGBTQI+. This includes any inquiries/complaints forwarded via the Intranet Quorum (IQ) system.

8. Recommendations for enhancing outreach efforts and services offered by the department specifically for domestic violence emergency shelter residents who identify as LGBTQI+:

- Encourage the use of clear and inclusive language that explicitly states that all survivors, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, are eligible for services, avoiding gender-specific terms, using inclusive language such as "all survivors" or "individuals of all genders."
- LGBTQI+ competency and cultural sensitivity training focusing on the unique needs and experiences of LGBTQI+ survivors.
- Collaboration with LGBTQI+ organizations and community groups to help build trust and credibility within the LGBTQI+ community and show a commitment to addressing the specific needs of LGBTQI+ survivors.
- Outreach and awareness efforts to engage in targeted outreach efforts to LGBTQI+ communities and organizations that can include participating in LGBTQI+ events, hosting workshops or educational sessions, and utilizing LGBTQI+ friendly media platforms to raise awareness about the services offered.
- Provide LGBTQI+ specific resources and referrals to survivors that can include LGBTQI+ friendly legal services, healthcare providers, counseling services, support groups, and other relevant resources.

9. The total number of unduplicated department and contracted provider staff who have completed the training regarding LGBTQI+ individuals to be provided pursuant to subdivision c of this section during the preceding fiscal year:

LGBTQI+ Training

Total number of program and provider staff who took LGBTQI+ training in CY'24	266
Number of HRA DVS Program staff who took DSS 2024 LGBTQI+, The power of inclusion, offered by the DSS Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:	134
Number of HRA DVS program staff who took DCAS LGBTQI+ training in CY'24 (available to all NYC new hires):	12
Number of DVS residential contracted provider staff that completed LGBTQI+ training in CY'24	120