



SPRING 2023

LGBTQ+ WORKSHOP
FINDINGS &
RECOMMENDATIONS
REPORT

Prepared by:
Civil Rights Office



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This effort and insight would not be possible without the generous volunteerism of all those that attended our feedback workshops, from various community groups and local leaders as well as County stakeholders. Your perspectives will help us to continue to improve our systems for LGBTQ+ people in the County of Monterey.

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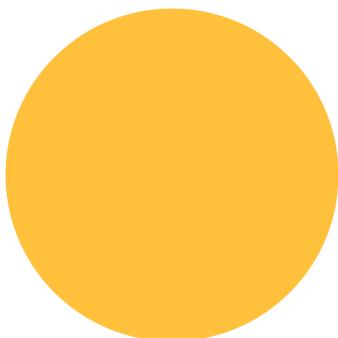
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In November of 2022, the Civil Rights Office received a referral from Supervisor Christopher Lopez, District 3, to review the creation of an LGBTQ+ Commission.

In February of 2023, the Civil Rights Office held four stand-alone community feedback sessions in-person and via Zoom. The sessions were open to all community members, and members of the LGBTQ+ community were highly encouraged to attend.

The sessions utilized Participatory Action Research methods^[1] to gather feedback and recommendations. In addition, the Civil Rights Office conducted research as to what, if any, other sister agencies are doing to focus on the LGBTQ+ community and its needs.

The goal of the community outreach and research is to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by the County of Monterey LGBTQ+ community and the opportunities to better serve them. Additionally, this research allowed a better understanding of how other jurisdictions attempt to improve government systems by involving LGBTQ+ groups.

[1] Participatory Action Research is a collaborative approach to research that centers participants as experts in their communities, neighborhoods, or condition or status. Researchers and community members, or participants, work together to understand the current climate of a given issue and identify solutions or ideas for the future. This methodology is largely qualitative by design, but substantive quantitative data can be collected and reported. This has become a best practice in research and methodology in the fields of social change and community engagement.

OVERVIEW

An overview of the recurring themes of the needs that emerged throughout the sessions were:

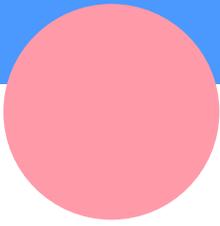
- **Local Government and Accountability:**

The community would like more intentional LGBTQ+ efforts in various capacities, including a seat on County of Monterey commissions, review of County policies, law enforcement training, inclusive and self-fill options on forms and surveys, and a community survey of those that identify with the LGBTQ+ community to determine the needs of the demographic. The community would like to see County funds tied to support local LGBTQ+ initiatives as laid out in this report.

- **Centralized Resources:** In terms of a governing body, the group wanted a body where LGBTQ+ issues are led by local LGBTQ+ people. The goal of centralized resources would be that every LGBTQ+ person would know what County services are available to them and where to find them. Recommendations included a webpage with resources or physical resource spaces throughout the County.

- **Stable Monetary Investment:** A recurring theme was to invest in the LGBTQ+ community; the participants would like the County to provide specific funding in the County's annual budget to serve the LGBTQ+ community and the issues and initiatives tied to that funding be determined by the LGBTQ+ community. Some recommendations for allocation were investing money in a physical space, stipends for the governing body that is created, or the governing body to manage a budget or facilitate grants.

- **Physical Resource Center Space:** The aspiration for many of the participants in our community sessions was establishing a physical space or center for the LGBTQ+ community. Many in the community believe they do not have anywhere to physically go for resources, services, and support in our County. The group envisioned the space as a hub for medical, mental health, and legal resources, for all ages, including seniors and youth. The group also would like counselors located in as many districts as possible and potentially having a paid County LGBTQ+ representative located in each supervisorial district.



OVERVIEW CONTINUED

- **Accessible Training and Resources:** The community would like to see free-flow sharing of culturally grounded resources made available to support LGBTQ+ affirming care and family acceptance. The participants also thought it important that the County provide training on how to best serve LGBTQ+ populations such as documentation and inclusive interactions relevant to department function, including law enforcement officers, healthcare providers, and public-facing staff.
- **Visibility/Conditions Wanted:** The groups were clear that they would like the conditions of whatever body is created to be non-threatening to immigrants and other under-resourced groups, and inclusive of any language and gender.
- **Uplifting existing bodies:** Another theme is better integration of local government and non-governmental organizations around LGBTQ+ issues, with the collaboration being intersectional in its approach. There was emphasis on supporting and uplifting those who are already doing this work for the LGBTQ+ community. The group also mentioned there might not be a need to create a governing body, but rather invest in strengthening already existing infrastructure.
- **Youth:** There was an emphasis on involving youth in the leadership of the governing body.
- **Community Research:** The participants recommended conducting a community survey to better understand the needs of the LGBTQ+ population for future County-led endeavors and to provide a deeper insight into the issues that this population wishes to prioritize.



MODEL ANALYSIS

The Civil Rights Office also explored the existing models at related government agencies to inform recommendations:

San Francisco LGBTQ+ Committee was established over 25+ years ago. The committee depends on its committee members to bring forth new projects that the group finds on their own, mainly around policies. The group was mostly made up of people who worked for government and non-profits. San Francisco, however, has multiple staffed non-profits in their region, whereas Monterey County has one.

Santa Clara Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs is its own office within the Division of Equity and Social Justice, and currently has two full-time staff and one part-time administrative assistant; their operational budget is \$800,000 per year. The office relies heavily on cross-agency collaboration and its behavioral health department. It is important to note that the office does not provide direct services; instead, they focus their efforts on training, policy, and research.

San Mateo LGBTQ+ Commission is within a department like the Civil Rights Office. The Office in San Mateo staffs two commissions and has one full-time employee (FTE) dedicated to these commissions. The Commission has one Board of Supervisors member on the commission. San Mateo mentioned that with a commission, the role and duties of the members needs to be clear, as they are prone to confusion, especially believing their charge is greater than assigned. In addition, San Mateo discussed barriers related to the Brown Act; e.g., quorum and in-person meetings, restriction of the free-flow of information because of strict agenda requirements, the County's geography and the difficulty for the commissioners to attend meetings, etc.

OBSERVATION & RECOMMENDATION

OBSERVATION

It was clear that the participants of each community session want whatever is created to have “teeth;” meaning, that the body have a certain level of power in decision-making, policy approval and implementation, and resource distribution. Repeatedly, the overall emphasis was a shared aspiration for the County to host and support a drop-in resource center for the LGBTQ+ community. Most of the discussions were focused on working to see what the most productive avenue would be to achieve the goal of a physical space and what type of governing body would be most effective.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on community input, research, and analysis, it appears that a collaborative would be the most effective to advance the goals and needs of the LGBTQ+ community. This collaborative should include representation from local community organizations and those currently advancing LGBTQ+ work, including Salinas Valley Pride, Monterey Peninsula Pride, and Monterey County departments. The vision for this collaborative is most similar to the Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP). The community we worked with would ultimately like a Monterey County LGBTQ+ Resource Center, and we believe at this time, this body would be the most effective vehicle to achieve that goal.

COST

To achieve this goal, the Civil Rights Office will need additional support to set up and coordinate the collaborative. Currently, the Civil Rights Office expends the following resources in managing one of its two public commissions and committee: the Civil Rights Office currently spends on average 27 total hours per month dedicated to one commission. Those 27 hours include time spent by the Civil Rights Officer, an Analyst, and an Administrative Secretary – Confidential to prepare the agenda, interact with the commissioners, schedule the meetings and presenters, compliance with the Brown Act, and attend the meeting. In the chartering of the body, the Civil Rights Office expects a heavy lift requiring at least a half-time employee working 20 hours per week; i.e., .5 Full-Time Employee (FTE). We reviewed two possible options that would achieve that goal at the least amount of cost.

One option is the hiring of a .5 FTE Equal Opportunity Analyst at an approximate cost of \$74,306 fiscal year. This position is similar to a Management Analyst and is the first level of the Analyst series in the Civil Rights Office.

Another option is the hiring of .5 FTE Equal Opportunity Specialist at an approximate cost of \$56,009 per fiscal year. This position is similar to a technician in the Human Resources Department.

Both positions are fully benefited and, although the Equal Opportunity Specialist is less costly, the hiring of an Equal Opportunity Analyst would allow for higher-level analytical work at a small difference in cost. In addition, the Analyst position, once the collaborative – or whatever body the Board of Supervisors elects – is formed, could not only work on the LGBTQ+ body, but could also help coordinate the other Civil Rights Office commissions and committee to foster greater collaboration between the commissions, commissioner and community engagement, and participation.

FUNDING SUMMARY

\$74,306

50% FTE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ANALYST

27

Hours spent
on
Commission
currently

50%

FTE
Employee

20

Hours a week

\$56,009

50% FTE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SPECIALIST



THANK YOU

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