



# Injustice at Every Turn:

A look at Black respondents in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey

In 2008, the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force launched a nationwide study of anti-transgender discrimination in the United States. Over a six-month period, 6,456 transgender and gender non-conforming people answered a seventy-question survey, reporting on their experiences of discrimination and abuse at home, in school, in the public sphere, and in the workplace, as well as with landlords, doctors, and public officials, including judges and police. The survey results revealed that transgender and gender non-conforming people face pervasive discrimination in virtually all aspects of their lives.

One of the most important findings of the study was that the combination of anti-transgender bias with structural and interpersonal racism meant that transgender and gender non-conforming people of color, including those who are Black, experience particularly devastating levels of discrimination. In response, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) has partnered with the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to offer this report on discrimination against Black transgender and gender non-conforming people.

The information in this report is based on the experiences of the 381 respondents who described themselves on the survey as Black only or Black and multiracial.<sup>i</sup> When this report uses the phrase “due to bias,” it refers to questions on the survey that asked about respondents’ experiences of anti-transgender bias, but the results also show the complex interactions of that bias with race and socioeconomic status.

## Key Findings

- Discrimination was pervasive for all respondents who took the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, yet the combination of anti-transgender bias and persistent structural and interpersonal acts of racism was especially devastating for Black transgender people and other people of color.
- Black transgender and gender non-conforming people often live in extreme poverty, with 34% reporting a household income of less than \$10,000/year. This is over twice the rate for transgender people of all races (15%) and four times the general Black population rate (9%). This is over eight times the general U.S. population rate (4%).<sup>ii</sup>
- Black transgender and gender non-conforming people are affected by HIV in devastating numbers. Over one-fifth of Black respondents reported being HIV positive (20.23%) and an additional 10% reported that they did not know their status. This compares to rates of 2.64% for transgender respondents of all races, 2.4% for the general Black population, and 0.60% for the general U.S. population.<sup>iii</sup>
- Almost half (49%) of Black respondents reported having attempted suicide, compared to 41% of all study respondents and 1.6% of the general U.S. population.<sup>iv</sup>
- Black transgender people who were out to their families found acceptance at a higher rate than the overall sample of transgender respondents. Those respondents who were accepted by their families were much less likely to face discrimination.
- Over half (55%) of Black respondents said their family was as strong today as before they came out. This level of family acceptance was higher than for any other racial group in the study. Family acceptance correlated with lower rates of negative outcomes such as suicide, homelessness, and becoming HIV positive.



## Education

Nearly half of Black people who attended school as transgender faced harassment.

Black respondents who attended kindergarten through twelfth grade expressing a transgender identity or gender non-conformity reported alarming rates of **harassment (49%)**, **physical assault (27%)**, and **sexual assault (15%) at school**; harassment was so severe that it led 21% to leave

school. Six percent (6%) were also **expelled due to bias**.

Respondents who were harassed and abused by teachers in kindergarten through twelfth grade settings showed **dramatically worse health and other outcomes** compared to those who did not experience such abuse. **Peer harassment and abuse also had highly damaging effects.**



## Employment Discrimination

Black transgender and gender non-conforming people had an **extremely high unemployment rate** at 26%. This is higher than the rate of the overall sample (14%) and over three times the rate of the general population (7%) at the time the survey was fielded.<sup>v</sup>

Thirty-two percent (32%) of Black respondents **lost a job due to bias**, and 48% were **denied a job** because of their transgender identity or gender non-conformity.

Forty-six percent (46%) of Black respondents were **harassed**, 15% were **physically assaulted**, and 13% were **sexually assaulted at work**.

Half (50%) of Black respondents reported being forced to participate in the underground economy for income, including **sex work and drug sales**.



## Housing Discrimination and Homelessness

Black transgender and gender non-conforming people endured various forms of direct housing discrimination; 38% reported being **refused a home or apartment due to bias**, and 31% reported being **evicted due to bias**.

Black respondents were **much less likely to own homes** than the general population with a rate of 14%. This compares to 32% of transgender people of all races in the study and 67% of the general U.S. population.<sup>vi</sup> Also, for comparison, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that “minority home ownership” nationwide is 49.7%.<sup>vii</sup>

An alarming 41% of Black respondents reported **experiencing homelessness** at some point in their lives, over five times the rate of the general U.S. population.<sup>viii</sup> Of those who had experienced homelessness, many tried to access shelters but were either **denied access altogether (40%)** or experienced **harassment (61%)**, **physical assault (32%)**, or **sexual assault (31%)** at the shelter.

41% of Black respondents experienced homelessness.



## Health Care

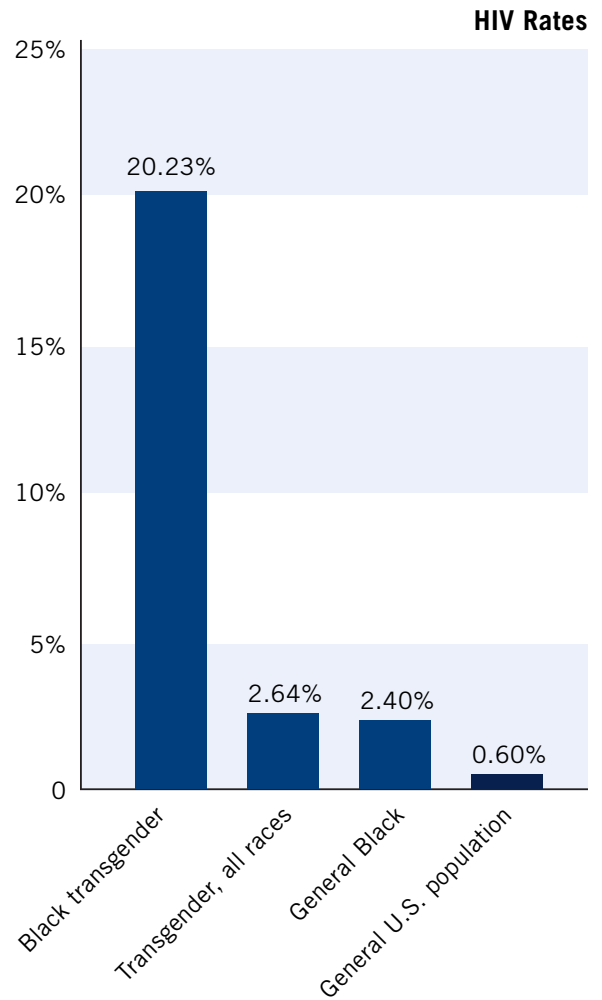
Health outcomes for Black transgender and gender non-conforming people show the **appalling effects of social and economic marginalization**, including **much higher rates of being HIV positive, smoking, drug and alcohol use and suicide attempts** compared to the general population.

Twenty-one percent (21%) of Black respondents reported being **refused medical care due to bias**.

Thirty-four percent (34%) of Black respondents reported **postponing care when they were sick or injured due to fear of discrimination**.

Research has shown that generally, African Americans have much lower suicide rates than other racial groups. However, nearly half of Black respondents (49%) reported having **attempted suicide**, compared to 41% of all study respondents and 1.6% of the general U.S. population.<sup>ix</sup>

Black respondents were **affected by HIV in devastating numbers**. Over one-fifth reported being HIV positive (20.23%) and an additional 10% reported that they **did not know their status**. This compares to rates of being HIV positive of 2.64% for transgender respondents of all races, 2.4% for the general Black population, and 0.60% for the general U.S. population.<sup>x</sup>



## Abuse by Police and in Prison

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of Black transgender and gender non-conforming people who had interacted with the police reported **harassment**, 14% reported **physical assault**, and 6% reported **sexual assault**.

Thirty-five percent (35%) of Black respondents had been **arrested or held in a cell due to bias** at some point in their lives.

Half (51%) reported **discomfort with seeking police assistance**.

Physical and sexual assault in jail and prison is a serious problem. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of Black respondents who had been to jail or prison reported being **physically assaulted** and 32% reported being **sexually assaulted while in custody**.

35% of Black respondents had been arrested or held in a cell due to bias.



## Methodology

The National Transgender Discrimination Survey was developed and fielded by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Links to the online NTDS survey instrument were distributed through a network of more than 900 trans-serving and trans-led advocacy and service organizations, support groups, list-

serves and online social networks. Nearly 2,000 paper surveys were distributed to hard-to-reach transgender and gender non-conforming populations. A total of 6,456 completed questionnaires were included in the final data set, 381 of which were Black, including multiracial people.

For the full report and detailed recommendations, please visit our websites at [www.TheTaskForce.org](http://www.TheTaskForce.org) or [www.TransEquality.org](http://www.TransEquality.org) (see: [http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports\\_and\\_research/ntds](http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/ntds) or <http://transequality.org/Resources/index.html>). More information about the survey is available at [www.EndTransDiscrimination.org](http://www.EndTransDiscrimination.org).

## Notes

- i. Some numbers in this report differ slightly from other reports based on the NTDS data because generally those report only on those who were Black and not Black multiracial because Black multiracial people were included in the separate multiracial category. In this report, however, Black-only and Black multiracial respondents were counted together.
- ii. U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey," Annual Social and Economic Supplement (Washington, DC: GPO, 2008).
- iii. United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and World Health Organization (WHO), "2007 AIDS Epidemic Update" (2007): [http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007\\_epiupdate\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf); Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, "The HIV-AIDS Epidemic in the United States" (2007): <http://www.kff.org/hiv/aids/upload/3029-071.pdf>.
- iv. "U.S.A. Suicide: 2002 Official Final Data," prepared for the American Association of Suicidology by John L. McIntosh, Ph.D. Official data source: Kochanek, K.D., Murphy, S.L., Anderson, R.N., & Scott, C. (2004). Deaths: Final data for 2002. National Vital Statistics Reports, 53 (5). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 2005-1120. Population figures source: table I, p.108. of the National Center for Health Statistics (Kochanek et al., 2004), see [http://www.sprc.org/library/event\\_kit/2002datapgv1.pdf](http://www.sprc.org/library/event_kit/2002datapgv1.pdf).
- v. Seven percent (7%) was the rounded weighted average unemployment rate for the general population during the six months the survey was in the field, based on which month questionnaires were completed. See seasonally unadjusted monthly unemployment rates for September 2008 through February 2009. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation: September 2008," (2008): [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst\\_10032008.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst_10032008.htm).
- vi. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "U.S. Housing Market Conditions, 2nd Quarter, 2009" (Washington, DC: GPO, 2009): [http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/ushmc/summer09/nat\\_data.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/ushmc/summer09/nat_data.pdf).
- vii. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "U.S. Housing Market Conditions, 2nd Quarter, 2009" (Washington, DC: GPO, 2009): [http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/ushmc/summer09/nat\\_data.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/ushmc/summer09/nat_data.pdf). HUD did not define "minority" in this report.
- viii. United States Conference of Mayors, "Hunger and Homelessness Survey" (2006): 48, <http://usmayors.org/hungersurvey/2006/report06.pdf>.
- ix. "U.S.A. Suicide: 2002 Official Final Data," prepared for the American Association of Suicidology by John L. McIntosh, Ph.D. Official data source: Kochanek, K.D., Murphy, S.L., Anderson, R.N., & Scott, C. (2004). Deaths: Final data for 2002. National Vital Statistics Reports, 53 (5). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 2005-1120. Population figures source: table I, p.108. of the National Center for Health Statistics (Kochanek et al., 2004), see [http://www.sprc.org/library/event\\_kit/2002datapgv1.pdf](http://www.sprc.org/library/event_kit/2002datapgv1.pdf).
- x. United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and World Health Organization (WHO), "2007 AIDS Epidemic Update" (2007): [http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007\\_epiupdate\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf); Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, "The HIV-AIDS Epidemic in the United States" (2007): <http://www.kff.org/hiv/aids/upload/3029-071.pdf>.



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