



Technical Report for the Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey (2026)

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1. Overview

This technical report documents the methodology used for the 2026 Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey. It describes the target population; the nonprobability recruitment approach; the population benchmarks and sample allocation framework; fieldwork and data-quality procedures; construction of raked survey weights; and the estimation strategy used to produce weighted descriptive results.

The survey is designed to describe the experiences, needs, and perspectives of LGBTQ+ adults in the United States. Population benchmarks derived from pooled 2021-2024 U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey data were used to guide recruitment and calibrate final survey weights. Results are presented as weighted descriptive estimates and should be interpreted in light of the nonprobability sampling approach and the limitations described in Section 6.

2. Sample Design

2.1. Target Population

The target population is adults aged 18 years or older residing in the United States who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or another sexual and/or gender minority (LGBTQ+ adults).

2.2. Sampling Method

The 2026 Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey used a nonprobability sampling approach. Participants were recruited primarily through the Community Insights Research Panel and through additional survey distribution channels intended to reach LGBTQ+ adults across the United States.

2.3. Population Benchmarks and Allocation Framework

Respondents were selected using nonprobability sampling, thus individual probabilities of selection are unknown. Population benchmarks are used to guide sampling and weighting. The benchmarks were derived from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's estimates of the U.S. LGBTQ+ adult population using pooled data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey (HPS), 2021–2024 (Flohr & Hanneman, 2026). The benchmark methodology pools 37 HPS cross-sections and uses the survey's person and replicate weights to produce population estimates for LGBTQ+ adults in the United States.

The sample allocation framework was developed using benchmark distributions across sexual and gender identity (SOGI) and key auxiliaries: U.S. Census region, race and ethnicity, age, and educational attainment. These allocation targets were used to guide recruitment and fieldwork with the goal of obtaining sufficient representation across key demographic and SOGI groups and reducing substantial departures between the achieved sample and estimated population distributions. Let p_{kj} represent the estimated benchmark for level j , and $N_{kj} = N \left(p_{kj} \frac{1}{100} \right)$ the effective allocation based on sample size to be collected. Benchmarks and the allocation framework are shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Benchmarks and Allocation Framework		
	p_{kj}	$N_{kj} = N \left(p_{kj} \frac{1}{100} \right)$
Sexual Identity		
<i>Lesbian or gay</i>	30.07%	.3007N
<i>Bisexual+</i>	65.11%	.6511N
<i>Straight</i>	4.83%	.0483N
Gender Identity		
<i>Gender Minority</i>	21.32%	.2132N
<i>Cisgender</i>	78.68%	.7868N
Region		
<i>Northeast</i>	17.26%	.1726N
<i>South</i>	36.47%	.3647N
<i>Midwest</i>	19.88%	.1988N
<i>West</i>	26.39%	.2639N

Age		
<i>18-24</i>	19.64%	.1964N
<i>25-34</i>	34.15%	.3415N
<i>35-44</i>	18.27%	.1827N
<i>45-54</i>	10.33%	.1033N
<i>55-64</i>	8.97%	.0897N
<i>65+</i>	8.63%	.0863N
Race/Ethnicity		
<i>Asian</i>	4.08%	.0408N
<i>Black</i>	9.47%	.0947N
<i>Hispanic</i>	17.92%	.1792N
<i>White</i>	61.95%	.6195N
<i>Other*</i>	6.58%	.0658N
Education		
<i>High school or less</i>	33.14%	.3314N
<i>Some college or associate</i>	34.57%	.3457N
<i>Bachelor</i>	18.91%	.1891N
<i>Graduate</i>	13.37%	.1337N
Note: * American Indian, Alaskan Native, Middle Eastern, North African, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and multiracial/ethnic individuals.		

2.4. Fieldwork

The 2026 Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey (ALCS) was fielded from August 5 through September 8, 2026. During this period, eligible respondents were invited to participate in the online survey, and responses were collected continuously throughout the fielding window. The approximately five-week field period provided respondents with multiple opportunities to participate while allowing the research team to monitor data collection and sample composition as responses were received.

3. Data

3.1. Data Quality Checks

Quality control measures were implemented at several stages of the survey process. During fielding, eligibility and data-quality checks were integrated into the survey instrument. In total, 1,101 attempted responses were excluded prior to inclusion in the submitted-response pool. Of which, 942 due to failure to meet eligibility requirements and 159 due to activation of programmed data-quality controls. After fielding, the 9,872 submitted records were subjected to a multi-stage data-quality review. This process evaluated potential duplicate or repeat submissions, response completeness and patterns, internal consistency, survey logic, and associated technical and administrative information. Concerns were assessed collectively rather than based on a single indicator, and minor signals were considered within context rather than serving as automatic grounds for exclusion. Records were excluded when the cumulative evidence indicated that a response was duplicative, ineligible, or failed to meet the criteria for inclusion in the analytic sample. Of the 9,872 submitted records, 544 (5.5%) were removed during the post-fielding review, yielding a final analytic sample of **9,328 respondents**.

4. Survey Weights

4.1. Weight Construction

Final survey weights were constructed using iterative proportional fitting (raking). Raking adjusted the distribution of survey respondents to align with target population benchmarks for sexual identity, gender identity, gender, region, age, race and ethnicity, and educational attainment. Weights were applied at the respondent level and used in all reported weighted estimates. The resulting weights help ensure that the weighted sample reflects the target population's distribution across these characteristics.

The final raked weight for each i individual is estimated by starting with equal weights and raked across k auxiliaries $x = X_1, X_2, \dots, X_k$ such that X_k has levels $j = 1, \dots, J_k$ with targeted benchmarks p_{kj} . For each x the weighted proportion is

$$\widehat{p}_{kc}^{(t)} = \frac{\sum_{i: X_{ik}=c} w_i^{(t)}}{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i^{(t)}}$$

and $w_i^{(t)}$ is the current weighted proportion of the respondent in the step of the rake. Then, the raking adjustment factor is the ratio of the benchmark and this current weight, or

$$r_{kc}^{(t)} = \frac{p_{kc}}{\widehat{p_{kc}^{(t)}}}$$

and is used to update (i.e., rake) the respondent weights for each level of variable by

$$w_i^{(t,k)} = w_i^{(t,k-1)} \frac{p_{k,X_{ik}}}{\widehat{p_{k,X_{ik}}^{(t,k-1)}}}$$

then iterated across all variables by

$$w_i^{(t+1)} = w_i^{(t)} \prod_{k=1}^K \frac{p_{k,X_{ik}}}{\widehat{p_{k,X_{ik}}^{(t,k-1)}}}$$

and convergence is achieved.

4.2. Diagnostics

The raking procedure converged after 19 iterations using a convergence tolerance of 1×10^{-12} and final weights were normalized to preserve the analytic sample size such that $\sum_{i=1}^N w_i = N = 9,329$. In order to reduce variance in weights and oversized or undersized weights, age groups 18-24 and 25-34 were collapsed to 18-34 for raking as well as any respondent with less than a high school degree or some college/associate's degree. The lower tail of weights includes lesbian or gay, Midwest, 65+, Graduate, and residual race/ethnicity identities. The upper tail of weights includes Bisexual+, South, 18-34, Less than a Bachelor's, and Hispanic.

5. Estimation Strategy

5.1. Point Estimation

For each outcome, estimated proportion $\widehat{p}_{kj}$ are computed using respondents' final raked survey weight. The weighted proportion is the sum of final weights among respondents reporting the outcome divided by the sum of final weights among all respondents included in the analysis. Raked weights were aligned with the target population on selected demographic characteristics described in the earlier section on benchmarking (see section 2.3). For we estimate $\widehat{p}_{kj}$ as

$$\widehat{p}_{kj} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i y_i}{w_i}$$

5.2. Variance Estimation

The analytical sample contained $N = 9,329$ from the target population. Standard errors, confidence intervals, or margins of sampling error are not reported (though confidence intervals were calculated and *may* be provided upon request). Although final survey weights were raked to align the sample with target population distributions on selected demographic characteristics, the survey used nonprobability recruitment. Accordingly, conventional design-based variance estimates would not fully reflect uncertainty associated with nonprobability selection, residual coverage and nonresponse bias, or the weighting model. Results should therefore be interpreted as weighted descriptive estimates.

6. Considerations

6.1. Non-probability Sampling

The survey used nonprobability recruitment; therefore, each member of the target population did not have a known or nonzero probability of selection. Results are presented as weighted descriptive estimates, not probability-based population estimates. Margins of sampling error and conventional confidence intervals are not reported because they cannot fully reflect uncertainty associated with nonprobability recruitment, coverage, nonresponse, and residual selection bias.

6.2. Calibration Uses and Limitations

Final survey weights were raked to align the respondent sample with target population distributions on selected demographic characteristics. Raking improves alignment with these known population benchmarks and may reduce bias when calibration variables are associated with both survey participation and the outcomes measured. Raking cannot eliminate bias from unmeasured differences between respondents and the target population, inaccurate benchmark data, weighting-model choices, or recruitment and coverage limitations. Unequal weights can also increase the variability of estimates.

7. Authors

Charleigh Flohr

Senior Statistician

Human Rights Campaign Foundation

Tari Hanneman

Senior Director, Research & Education

Human Rights Campaign Foundation

8. References

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