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COVID-19 AND THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY: VACCINATIONS AND THE ECONOMIC TOLL OF THE PANDEMIC

As the vaccine rollout in the United States ramps up, it has become clear that there are disparities in comfort with the vaccines and a need for community outreach and education. New data analysis from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation and PSB Insights (PSB) looks at the LGBTQ community's sentiments about the vaccine and more recent data on the economic toll that the pandemic is taking on the LGBTQ community.

This new analysis of survey data on 22,000 adults in the United States details how many LGBTQ people living at the intersections of multiple marginalized identities may be less likely to say they want to get vaccinated. Furthermore, the LGBTQ community holds a diverse array of concerns about the vaccine, ranging from concerns about side effects to perceived costs of obtaining the vaccine.

The analysis also builds on past HRC Foundation and PSB [research](#) on the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on LGBTQ people. First, the brief shows how unemployment has significantly increased for LGBTQ adults and LGBTQ adults of color. Second, it shows that LGBTQ adults continue to face heightened economic consequences of the pandemic compared to the general adult population.



Photo: CDC



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Black LGBTQ Adults Are Less Likely to Want to Get Vaccinated

Containing the coronavirus has been a key social issue for the LGBTQ community, which may explain why an overall **42%** of LGBTQ adults say they are very likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine compared to **39%** of the general adult population. However, Black LGBTQ adults are less likely to say they will get vaccinated.

- + **29%** of Black LGBTQ adults are very likely to get vaccinated, compared to:
 - **47%** of white LGBTQ adults
 - **43%** of white adults
 - **42%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **39%** of the general adult sample population
 - **39%** of Latinx LGBTQ adults
 - **36%** of Latinx adults
 - **33%** of adults of color
 - **27%** of Black adults

Racial discrimination by today's medical system as well as historical distrust may explain hesitancy among the Black LGBTQ community.

Transgender People Overall and Transgender People of Color More Likely to Get Vaccinated

Transgender adults — including transgender people of color — are more likely than the general population, the LGBTQ population overall and LGBTQ people of color to say they will get vaccinated. While transgender adults of color are less likely than transgender adults broadly to say they will get vaccinated, the number is still significantly higher than the adult sample population.

- + **53%** of transgender adults and **47%** of transgender adults of color say they are very likely to get the vaccine, compared to **39%** of the adult sample population.

Bisexual Women Are Less Likely to Want to Get Vaccinated

While bisexual adults are almost as likely as the general adult population (**39%**) and LGBTQ adults to say they are very likely to get vaccinated, bisexual women are less likely.

- + **38%** of bisexual adults and **32%** of bisexual women are very likely to say they will get vaccinated, compared **49%** of lesbian and gay adults.

Older LGBTQ Adults are More Likely to Want to Get Vaccinated

LGBTQ adults over the age of sixty-five are far more likely than LGBTQ adults under the age of sixty-five to say they want to get vaccinated.

69% of LGBTQ adults aged sixty-five and older say they are very likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available compared to **57%** of all adults aged sixty-five and older in the United States.



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LGBTQ adults under the age of sixty-five are still more likely than adults under the age of sixty-five in the United States generally:

- + **47%** of LGBTQ adults aged 50-64, compared to **40%** of the general adult population aged 50-64.
- + **42%** of LGBTQ adults aged 35-49, compared to **35%** of the general adult population aged 35-49.
- + **35%** of LGBTQ adults aged 25-34, compared to **31%** of the general adult population aged 25-34.
- + **39%** of LGBTQ adults aged 18-24, compared to **31%** of the general adult population aged 18-24.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **eight out of ten** COVID-19 deaths are among adults aged sixty-five and older due to their higher risk of severe illness. This likely explains why older LGBTQ adults are more likely to say they will get vaccinated. Younger people can support public health by getting vaccinated when possible, not only to prevent their own illness, but to also protect the people they love and members of their community. Low-risk individuals who are vaccinated can save lives of high-risk individuals.

Reasons Why LGBTQ Adults Have Concerns About the Vaccine

While many LGBTQ adults say they are very likely to get vaccinated, some in the community cite a wide array of concerns they have about accessing and receiving the vaccine.

Despite the vaccines being available for free, LGBTQ adults have concerns about the cost of the vaccine, especially LGBTQ adults of color, bisexual adults and transgender adults. Prior to the pandemic, LGBTQ people experienced higher levels of poverty than non-LGBTQ people, with LGBTQ adults of color, bisexual adults and transgender adults facing the highest rates of poverty. This economic insecurity has compounded for LGBTQ people during the pandemic. Moreover, one in five LGBTQ adults prior to the pandemic did not visit a doctor when necessary because they could not afford it.

- + **23%** of LGBTQ adults of color, **28%** of bisexual adults and **44%** of transgender adults are **concerned they cannot afford the vaccine**, compared to:
 - **21%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **20%** of white LGBTQ adults
 - **13%** of the general adult population
 - **11%** of white adults
 - **17%** of adults of color

In addition, LGBTQ adults, like many adults, have concerns about the vaccine being effective and whether it has unknown side effects. Compared to white LGBTQ adults, LGBTQ adults of color have significant concerns about the effectiveness and unknown side effects of the vaccine. Bisexual adults are also particularly concerned about unknown side effects compared to LGBTQ adults broadly. More than one-third of transgender adults have concerns about the effectiveness of the vaccine, and a majority of transgender adults have concerns about unknown side effects — despite this, transgender people are still more inclined to get the vaccine than their lesbian, gay, and bisexual peers.



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- + **42%** of LGBTQ adults of color, **37%** of bisexual adults and **36%** of transgender adults say they have **concerns about the vaccine not being effective**, compared to:
 - **37%** of adults of color
 - **35%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **34%** of the general adult population
 - **32%** of white adults
 - **30%** of white LGBTQ adults

- + **59%** of LGBTQ adults of color, **60%** of bisexual adults and **51%** of transgender adults say they have **concerns about potential unknown side effects** of the vaccine, compared to:
 - **60%** of adults of color
 - **57%** of the general adult population
 - **56%** of white adults
 - **54%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **50%** of white LGBTQ adults

Many LGBTQ adults, like adults generally, cite concerns with how the vaccine has been handled by the government as well as during the testing and approval process. About one-quarter of LGBTQ adults of color have concerns with the government's involvement in the vaccine as well as the testing and approval processes. Bisexual adults are significantly more likely to be concerned about the government's involvement in the vaccine process, while transgender adults are significantly more likely to be concerned about the testing and approval process of the vaccine.

- + **23%** of LGBTQ adults of color, **32%** of bisexual adults and **26%** of transgender adults have **concerns about the government's involvement** in the creation and approval of the vaccine, compared to:
 - **26%** of adults of color
 - **24%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **23%** of the general adult population
 - **21%** of white adults
 - **20%** of white LGBTQ adults

- + **27%** of LGBTQ adults of color, **28%** of bisexual adults and **40%** of transgender adults have **concerns about the testing and approval process** of the vaccine, compared to:
 - **28%** of adults of color
 - **24%** of the general adult population
 - **24%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **22%** of white LGBTQ adults
 - **22%** of white adults



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LGBTQ Adults Face Greater Unemployment and Continue to Endure Disproportionate Economic Impacts

LGBTQ adults and LGBTQ adults of color are facing the highest rates of unemployment since HRC and PSB began tracking community unemployment at the start of the pandemic.

- + **22%** of LGBTQ adults and **24%** of LGBTQ adults of color are currently unemployed due to the pandemic.
 - This was an overall **7 point** increase from **15%** for LGBTQ adults and **17%** for LGBTQ adults of color since the November elections.

LGBTQ adults, bisexual adults, LGBTQ adults of color and transgender adults are more likely than the general population to have recently had their work hours reduced due to the pandemic.

- + **31%** of LGBTQ adults of color, **29%** of bisexual adults and **43%** of transgender adults had their work hours reduced, compared to:
 - **26%** of LGBTQ adults
 - **24%** of adults of color
 - **23%** of white LGBTQ people
 - **18%** of the general adult population
 - **15%** of white adults

Resources About the Coronavirus Vaccine

- + [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety.](#)
- + [Frequently Asked Questions about Accessing the COVID-19 Vaccination.](#)
- + Learn how to access the vaccine in your state by utilizing the CDC's "[How do I get a vaccine?](#)" tool.
- + Have more questions about the vaccine? [Get more answers here.](#)

METHODOLOGY

- PSB fielded a series of nonprobability polls from April 15, 2020 to January 23, 2021
- Sample sizes vary for each question (N - 3,000 - N - 22,000).
- We use "gay and lesbian" to refer to all monosexual identities, which includes mostly gay and lesbian individuals as well as some straight transgender individuals. Monosexuality refers to people who are attracted to only one gender.
- Data are weighted to U.S. Census targets and HRC-advised targets for sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Sample sizes for transgender adults are too small to breakout by race for all questions.
- Data for employment and unemployment are stratified by the approximate fourth financial quarter of 2020. Stratification reduces bias in estimates by placing sample respondents into unique analytical groups. This analysis is stratified by time so that time is accounted for in the most recent economic estimates.