

---

*Delmarva LGBTQIA+  
Climate Survey Results  
2023*

---

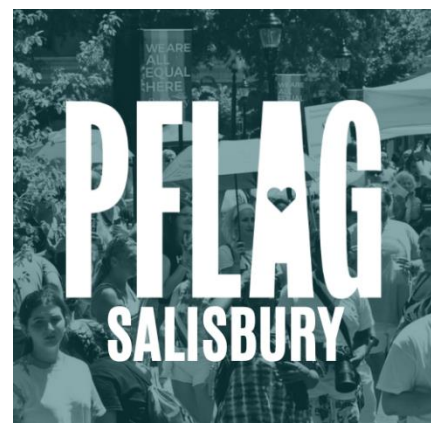


WE ARE  
ALL  
EQUAL  
HERE  
Salisbury

---

*Prepared by Dr. Nicole A. Buzzetto-Hollywood Professor  
at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and  
President of the Board for Salisbury PFLAG*

---



## About the Study

While progress has been made toward achieving equality and equity across Maryland and the United States, significant work remains. Our LGBTQIA+ community still faces challenges in almost every aspect of daily life, from housing, employment, healthcare, and education, while living with increased risks of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQ Affairs collects data from groups across the State engaging in needs assessments that articulate the needs of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders; however, no needs assessments have been completed on the Eastern Shore in recent years. Accordingly, to generate meaningful data and as part of an ongoing commitment to serving the LGBTQIA+ community on the Eastern Shore, Salisbury PFLAG administered an online needs assessment survey.

The survey was designed and administered by a faculty member at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore with an expertise in both survey design, needs assessments, and diversity equity and inclusion. Accordingly, the survey was approved by, and registered with, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore Institutional Review Board.

The survey was prepared within a professional online survey system and included a combination of dichotomous, Likert-scaled, slider scale, ordinal, short answer, and contingency questions. The Flesh Kincaid formula was applied to ensure readability for the population under consideration. Next, a basic psychometric review of the survey was conducted by a panel that included an assessment expert, multiple subject matter experts, several LGBTQIA+ community leaders, a psychologist, and a survey methodologist. The purpose of the panel was to examine the survey for validity and effectiveness and provide structured feed-back to the researcher. Following revisions, a second panel was established to provide an additional

review and feedback. Finally, the survey was pilot-tested before implementation and then modified accordingly before widespread distribution.

The survey was administered online between June and August of 2023. The survey was promoted via a flyer containing a QR code at Salisbury Pride, disseminated via PFLAG Salisbury social media pages, and distributed via email with a unique URL per participant to the PFLAG Salisbury mailing list. No identifying information was collected about participants and once the survey closed, the data was cleaned and exported for analyses.

Two hundred eighty three individuals completed the survey representing multiple counties including the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Southern Delaware.



## Executive Summary

PFLAG Salisbury was formed in 2015 and has been making a difference in the community since it was founded. Highlights include introducing Maryland's first rainbow, trans pride, and progress pride crosswalks; establishing the Salisbury Pride Parade and Festival; working with the City of Salisbury on Pride on the Plaza; organizing community art projects; influencing the passage of a gender-neutral bathroom ordinance in the City of Salisbury; engaging in legislative advocacy in Annapolis; hosting monthly meetings and other community-building events; and much more.

PFLAG Salisbury serves the largest geographic area of any PFLAG chapter in Maryland. This area includes Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties, a rural region significantly distanced from mainland Maryland, facing ever-growing disparities when it comes to resources for the LGBTQIA+ community.

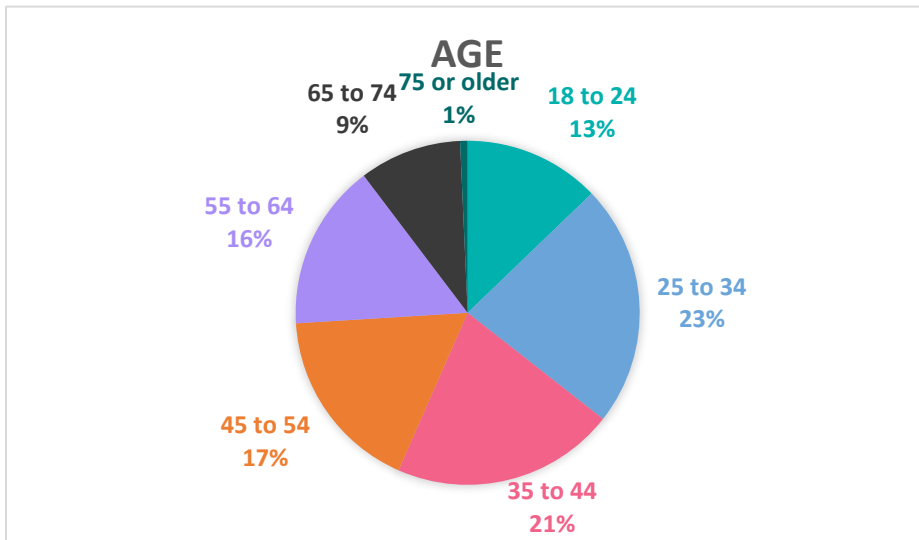
The 2023 Delmarva LGBTQIA+ Climate Survey provides a snapshot of the queer community on the Eastern Shore. This initiative is propelled by advances in LGBTQIA+ rights in the Maryland legislature, which are co-occurring with the erosion of the civil liberties of LGBTQIA+ Americans in conservative states. Highlights of the findings are as follows:

- A resounding statistic from the survey is that when asked to rank the inclusiveness of the community on the Eastern Shore for LGBTQIA+ people from 0 to 100, the average score was a 54
- Respondents were generally satisfied with access to local government and available public services but were dissatisfied when it came to safety for LGBTQIA+ individuals, support for LGBTQIA+ families, and interactions with police.
- Participants indicated that they were dissatisfied with support for LGBTQIA+ individuals, parents, elders, and transgender youth and adults.
- A consistent theme running throughout the results was the lack of sufficient medical care for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.
- Overwhelmingly, respondents do not consider schools on the Eastern Shore to be safe for LGBTQIA+ youth. This sentiment while strong among all respondents was especially intense among participants who identified as transgender or gender non conforming.
- Respondents indicated dissatisfaction when it came to general access to healthcare, gender affirming care, mental health services, and reproductive care.
- Semantic analysis of a qualitative short answer question related to health care found the greatest issues to be a lack of providers, discrimination and/or bias from providers, long waits for appointments, far distances needed to travel to access providers, issues with cost, and providers lacking knowledge about the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Semantic analysis of a short response question designed to gauge perceived community needs found that the most common themes were medical services, support/resource/advocacy, mental health services, support for LGBTQIA+ youth in local schools, a LGBTQIA+ community center, more LGBTQIA+ groups, a lack of social activities, more education/training/knowledge, and resources and a shelter for unhoused LGBTQIA+ individuals.

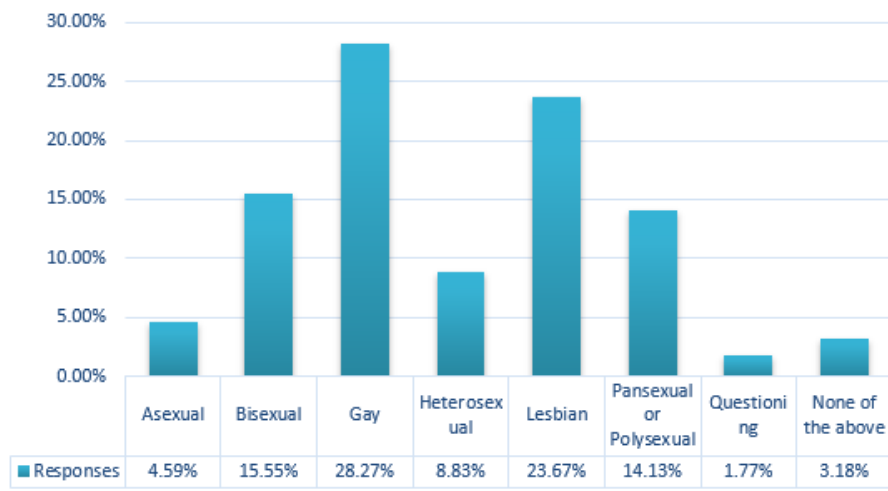


While these results are unsurprising, they are a strong indicator that more work and an expansion of services are needed on the lower Eastern Shore.

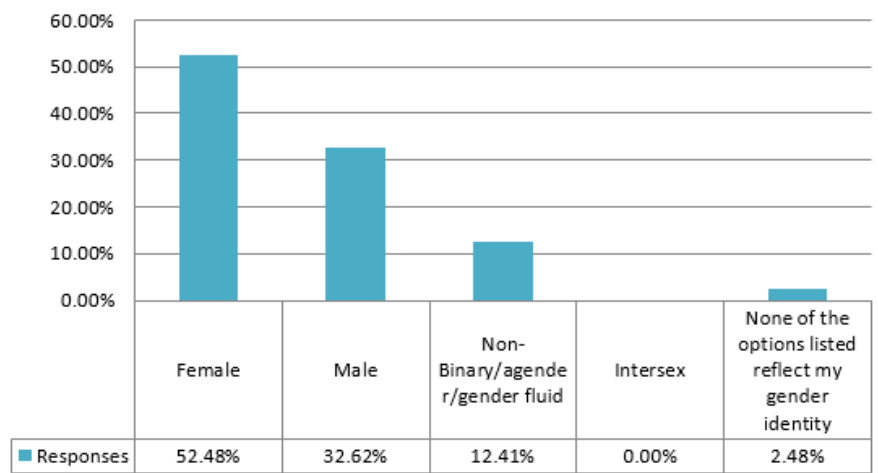
# Participant Demographics



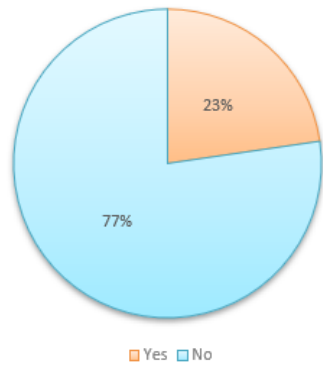
## Sexual Orientation



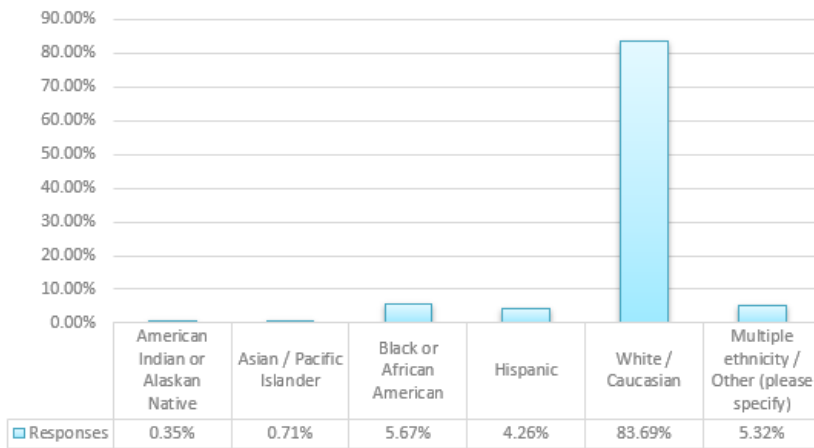
## Gender Identity



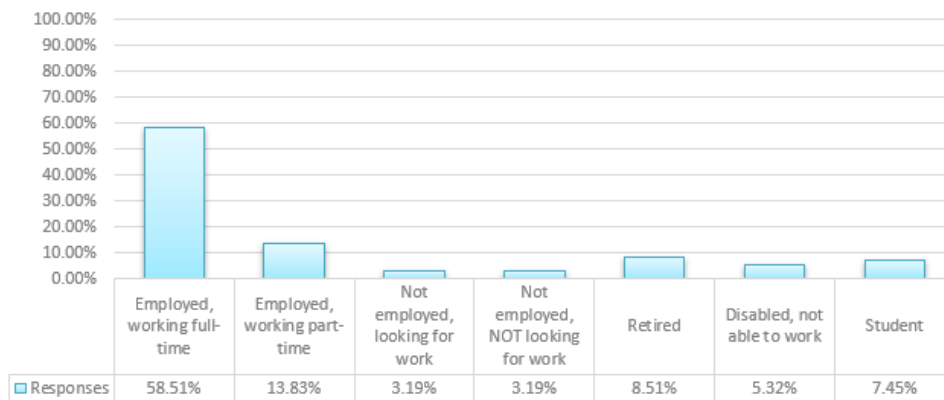
### Identify as a transgender or as a gender non conforming person



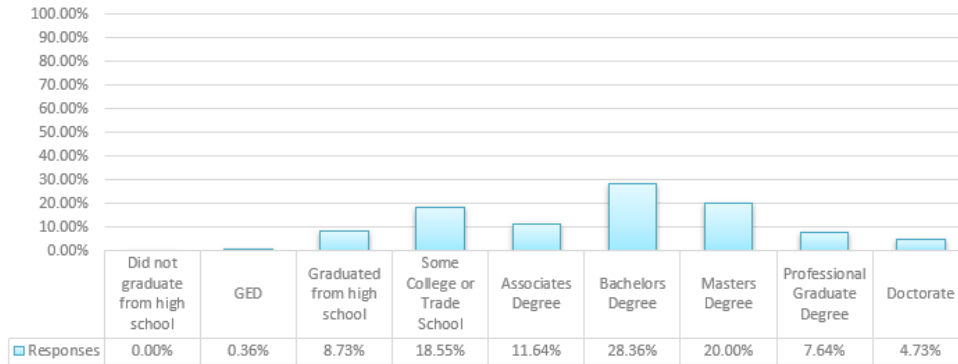
### Race Ethnicity



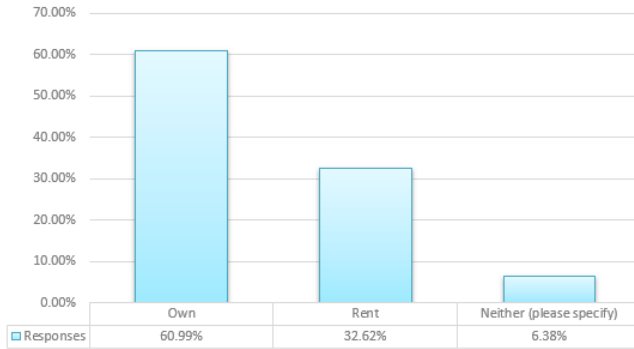
### Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?



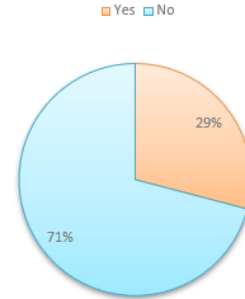
## What is the highest level of education you have completed?



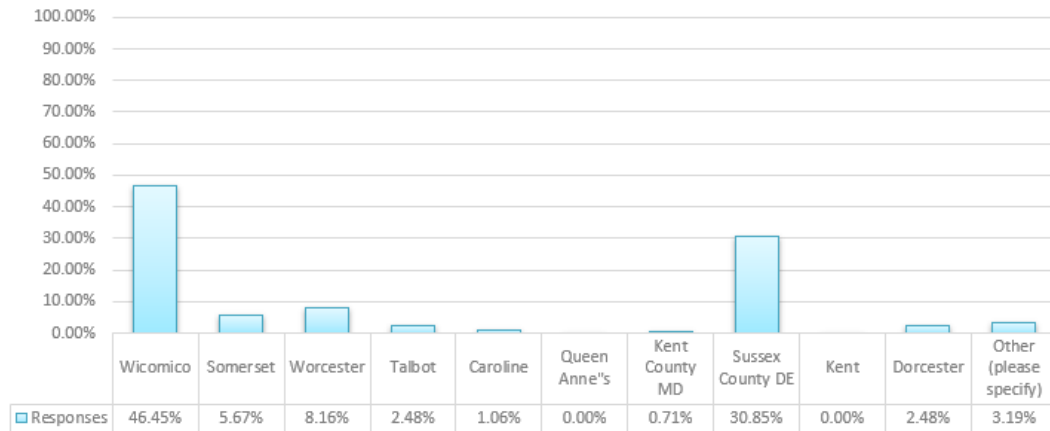
## Rent or own the place where you live



## Are there any children currently living in your home?



## In what county do you live?

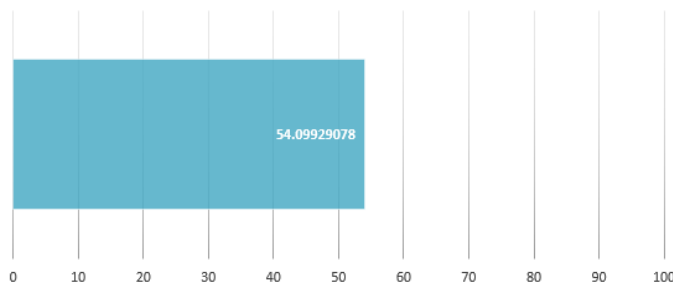




## Participant Perceptions

Participants were asked to rank their perception of how inclusion the community is for LGBTQIA+ individuals on a scale from zero (hostile and unwelcoming) to one hundred (extremely inclusive). The average of the responses was a 54.

How inclusive would you rank the community where you reside for LGBTQIA+ people



Participants were asked to reflect on their level of satisfaction with respect to their community by responding to a series of five-point Likert scaled questions where 1 equaled extremely dissatisfied and 5 equaled extremely satisfied. Means, standard deviation, and skewness were calculated. According to the analysis, most participants were satisfied with their experiences with local government ( $\mu= 3.04$ ), satisfied with access to public services ( $\mu= 3.57$ ), dissatisfied with community resources for LGBTQIA+ individuals ( $\mu= 2.86$ ), slightly dissatisfied when it comes to safety for the LGBTQIA+ community ( $\mu= 2.99$ ), dissatisfied with support for LGBTQIA+ families ( $\mu= 2.9$ ), and dissatisfied when it comes to interactions with police ( $\mu= 2.91$ ).

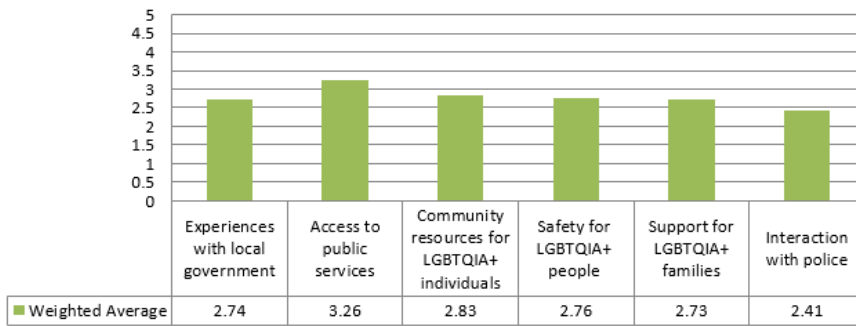
Please, express your level of satisfaction with each of the following from extremely satisfied to extremely unsatisfied.



Statement	N	Avg.	Std. Dev.
Experiences with local government	282	3.04	1.04
Access to public services	282	3.57	1.07
Community resources for LGBTQIA+ individuals	282	2.86	1.10
Safety for LGBTQIA+ people in your community	282	2.99	1.03
Support for LGBTQIA+ families	281	2.9	1.04
Interaction with police	282	2.91	1.08

When the responses of transgender participants were considered, the results were more negative in all categorized.

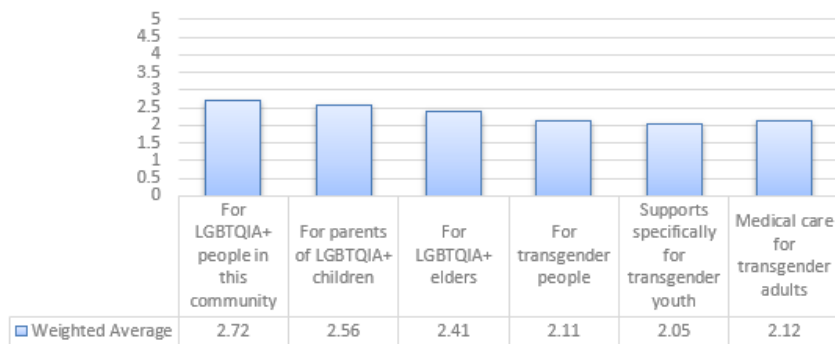
Please, express your level of satisfaction with each of the following from extremely satisfied to extremely unsatisfied.



Participants were asked to reflect on their perception of the level of support in their community in a number of areas where one equaled strongly disagree and five equaled strongly agree. Respondents disagreed that there is adequate support for LGBTQIA+ people on the Shore ( $\mu=2.72$ ), for parents of LGBTQIA+ children ( $\mu=2.56$ ), for LGBTQIA+ elders ( $\mu=2.41$ ), for transgender people ( $\mu=2.11$ ), specifically for transgender youth ( $\mu=2.05$ ), and when medical care for transgender adults is considered ( $\mu=2.12$ ).



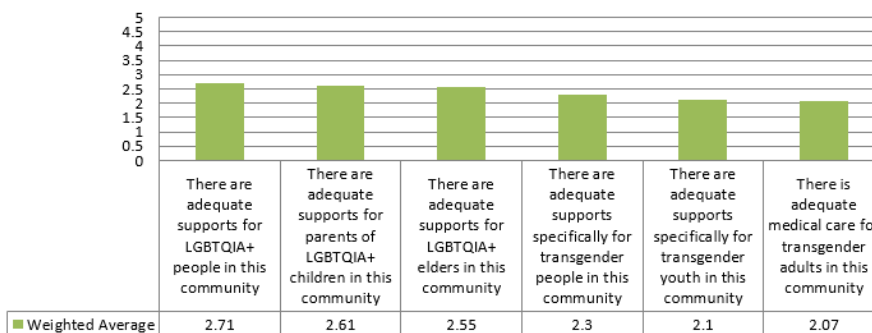
Please, express your level of agreement whether there are adequate supports in this community in each of the following areas from strongly agree to strongly disagree.



Statement	N	Avg.	Std. Dev.
Level of support for LGBTQIA+ people in this community	281	2.72	1.09
Level of support for parents of LGBTQIA+ children	281	2.56	1.09
Level of support for LGBTQIA+ elders	281	2.41	1.06
Level of support for transgender people	281	2.11	0.99
Supports specifically for transgender youth	281	2.05	0.96
Medical care for transgender adults.	280	2.12	1.04

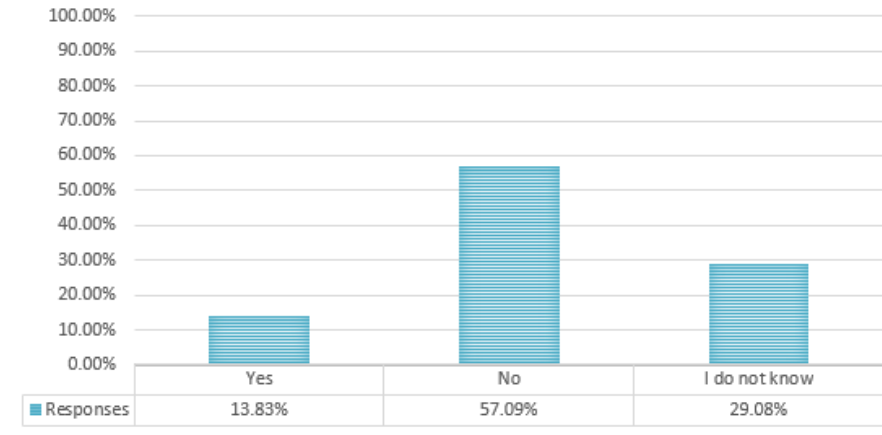
When the responses of transgender participants were considered, the results did not differ significantly.

Please, express your level of agreement to each of the following statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree.



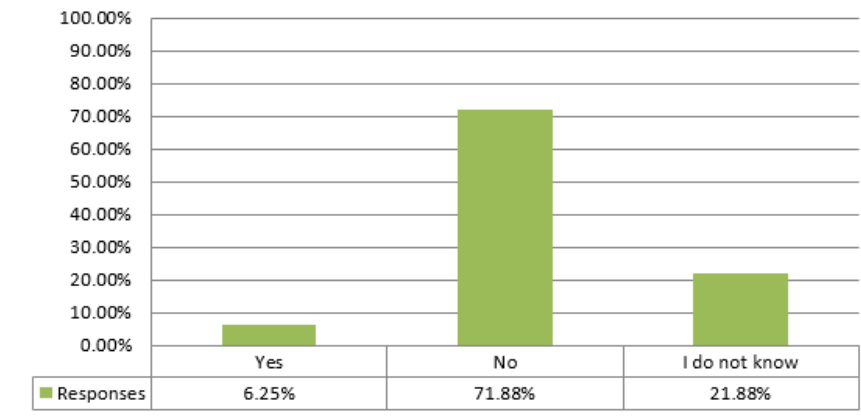
Participants were asked whether in their opinion, schools in the community are safe for LGBTQIA+ youth and only 13% responded in the affirmative with 57% responding that schools are not safe and 29% responding that they do not know.

### In my opinion, our schools are safe for LGBTQIA+ youth



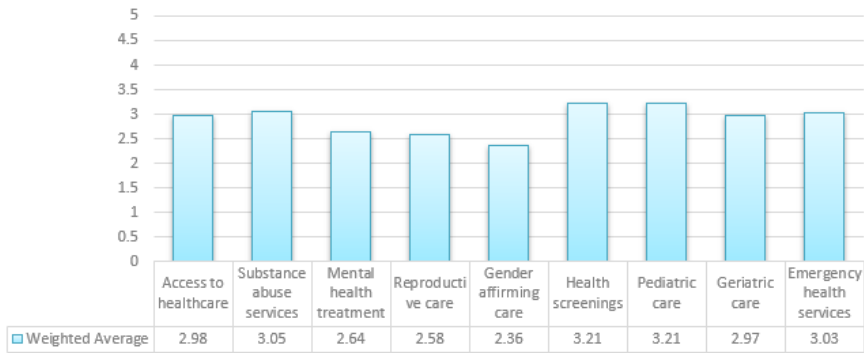
When the responses of transgender participants were isolated, it was abundantly clear that they have a more negative outlook when it comes to the safety of LGBTQIA+ students in schools with only 6% of respondents answering that LGBTQIA+ youth are safe in our schools.

### In my opinion, our schools are safe for LGBTQIA+ youth



Participants were asked to consider their satisfaction with respect to a range of health care services with one representing extremely unsatisfied and five representing extremely satisfied. According to the findings, participants were dissatisfied with their access to healthcare ( $\mu= 2.98$ ), mental health treatment ( $\mu= 2.64$ ), reproductive care ( $\mu= 2.58$ ), gender affirming care ( $\mu= 2.36$ ), and geriatric care ( $\mu= 2.97$ ). Respondents were satisfied with substance abuse services ( $\mu= 3.05$ ), health screenings ( $\mu= 3.21$ ), pediatric care ( $\mu= 3.21$ ), and emergency health services ( $\mu= 3.03$ ),

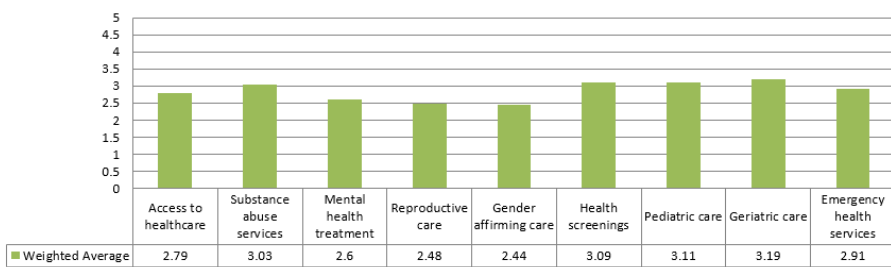
Consider your satisfaction with respect to healthcare services from extremely satisfied to extremely unsatisfied.



Statement	N	Avg.	Std. Dev.
Access to healthcare	282	2.98	1.11
Substance abuse services	279	3.05	0.99
Mental health treatment	282	2.64	1.13
Reproductive care	281	2.58	1.06
Gender affirming care	282	2.36	1.06
Health screenings	281	3.21	1.00
Pediatric care	282	3.21	1.06
Geriatric care	281	2.97	0.99
Emergency Health Services	282	3.03	1.01

When the responses of transgender participants were considered the results were similar.

The asks you to consider your satisfaction with respect to healthcare services. Please, express your level of satisfaction with each of the following from extremely satisfied to extremely unsatisfied. Select NA if they do not apply.



There were 64 responses to the qualitative short answer prompt "If you ever faced an obstacle to receiving medical care or services? Please, share that experience with us." Simple semantic analyses were conducted to identify themes. The themes identified as presenting most commonly were a lack of providers, discrimination and/or bias from providers, long waits for appointments, far distances needed to travel to access providers, issues with cost, and providers lacking knowledge about the LGBTQIA+ community.

Theme	Number of Mentions
Lack of providers	21
Discrimination bias hostile	21
Long waits	15
Distance/ Must Travel	13
Cost	9
Providers lack of knowledge	7

### Sample Responses

*I had a very hard time finding a provider who would prescribe HRT to me. It took me over a year.*

*Severe lack of education and knowledge. I have to go to DE for trans inclusive endocrinology, despite Worcester having a huge number of health care providers. Lack of medical care is a big reason I'm moving.*

*Far too few providers with long waits or closed practices. Most are not LGBTQIA+ affirming and are clearly not trained in serving diverse populations.*

*It is almost impossible to find local gender affirming care for a child. We drive across the bridge and it's a huge burden.*

*It takes a long time to get appointments for any doctor, especially when establishing as a new patient. Mental health services are especially difficult to access as there are not enough providers. You cannot "shop around" to find the best fit for counselors or doctors, but generally take whomever is available.*

*Not enough Dr's, lack of expertise and serious issues you need to go to larger cities for medical care.*

*Because of the amount of people moving to the area it is often hard to schedule medical appointments in a timely fashion. specifically, obgyns, I have not had a good experience with anyone in the area and it has been extremely hard to find someone taking new patients who also takes my insurance. at my last obgyn in Wicomico county I was repeatedly asked to take pregnancy tests and then charged for them even though I specified every appointment that I am married to a woman, and there is absolutely no chance I am pregnant. I think providers in the area need to be more knowledgeable about how to interact with the LGBT community*

*I cannot find any LGBTQ+ friendly mental health care or OB/GYNs in my area, so I am going without those resources. Specifically, I asked the office where I was applying for a therapist through if there was anybody there familiar or comfortable with LGBTQ+ issues, and they told me no, and to look somewhere else.*

There were 139 responses to the qualitative short answer prompt " Please, describe what type of support or services you feel are most needed." Simple semantic analyses were conducted to identify themes. the most common themes were medical services, support/resource/advocacy, mental health services, support for LGBTQIA+ youth in local schools, a LGBTQIA+ community center, more LGBTQIA+ groups, a lack of social activities, more education/training/knowledge, resources and a shelter for unhoused LGBTQIA+ individuals, increased resources for LGBTQIA+ youth, and the need for a medical guide.

Theme	Number of Mentions
Medical Care	58
Support/Services/Advocacy/Resources	27
Mental Health Services	26
Support for Students in our Schools	18
Community Center	16
More LGBTQIA+ Groups	13
More social activities	13
More education and/or trainings	8
Shelter and/or services for the homeless community	7
More resources for youth	7
Need for a medical guide	5

### **Sample Responses**

*The shore needs support for youth in schools and parents as well as mental health for both sides of the same equation.*

*Our local PFLAG organization is wonderful. But they can only do so much. They need additional resources.*

*More trans gender affirming options for trans people, especially on the Eastern Shore (most are in or around Baltimore-which makes it difficult for some people to travel that far)*

*More lesbian events. More open discussions. More lesbian sex health topics and meetings.*

*More education and working toward openness and understanding of LGBTQIA+ community.*

*More specialists and providers of all kinds. A guide would be helpful.*

*I think we need more clear-cut access to gender affirming care. Resources are so hard to find. Especially for those on Medicare and Medicaid. I'm struggling with finding resources for myself.*

*We need funding to support organizations like PFLAG Salisbury so that they can operate a community center and hire staff*

*More public-school support in all grades. Good, affordable medical and mental health care locally.*

*Mental health services, shelter, transgender support, and school support for middle and high school LGBTQ+ students.*

*LGBTQ+ friendly general practitioner list. I've put off getting regular screening and checkups from fear of finding a friendly doctor. And mental health is generally a problem for all specially under 30 who grew up in a time where they can never turn off social interactions.*

*The City of Salisbury has a human rights council that is largely invisible and which seems to have no interest in the LGBTQ+ community. They do not come to Salisbury Pride, nor is anyone in PFLAG leadership (and the people best positioned to speak for the community) on the council. We need a dedicated LGBTQ+ commission.*

*More community get togethers for LGBTQIA people, a dedicated place for us.*

*More advocacy for LGBTQIA families and people*

*Please provide a program for people to receive “prep” medication free of charge. There also needs to be more locations that offer this service in the Salisbury area.*

*A basic understanding of gender nonconforming folks and their needs. Community space for LGBT+ people of all ages.*

*PFLAG Salisbury is a chapter of PFLAG, the first and largest national organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, plus (LGBTQ+) people and their families. As an organization that leads with love serving as ambassadors of hope and inclusivity, PFLAG Salisbury envisions a world where diversity is celebrated, and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed, all-embracing of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.*

©PFLAG Salisbury 2023

**Executive Board of PFLAG Salisbury**

Mark DeLancey, Executive Director

Dr. Nicole Hollywood, President

Lisa Taylor, Vice President

Cass Dasher, Secretary

Hayleigh LaChance, Board Treasurer

John Wright

William Wallace

Rosie Bean

Christiana McBride

