

# LGBTQ+ Inclusive Services Readiness Checklist

## A Self-Assessment for Aging Service Organizations



“We welcome everyone” is a frequent answer from organizations asked about what they do specifically for LGBTQ+ older adults. This approach, while well-intentioned, misses the mark. LGBTQ+ older adults do not take this invitation for granted. Instead, they look for specific signs that they are in fact welcomed and that the agency knows enough about LGBTQ+ older adults to treat them with dignity and respect. This checklist will help you determine how big your current welcome mat is, and what else you can do to make it even better.

Mark the boxes next to the actions your agency has or is taking. Add up the number of checked boxes and see how you measure up on the last page, where you can also find resources for further growth.

***Awareness and First Impressions* – To what extent has our agency created an environment that visually shows it welcomes the LGBTQ+ community?**

- Our website, pamphlets and materials explicitly welcome LGBTQ+ elders.
- Our website also features a non-discrimination statement that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Our non-discrimination statement is also posted in a prominent place in the agency.
- Our publications, wall decorations, and social media all include images of individuals and couples who are LGBTQ+, people of color, and individuals with various (dis)abilities.
- Our agency takes advantage of opportunities to be publicly associated with LGBTQ+ organizations and issues. “Associated” includes co-sponsoring events, staffing resource tables, and having visible staff at parades and rallies.
- Our agency displays pride flags, rainbows, and other symbols that show solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.
- Staff members understand that few LGBTQ+ older adults fit stereotypes and are careful to never seem surprised when an elder comes out to them.

***Inclusive Language and Documentation* – To what extent does our agency recognize the importance of language and privacy to LGBTQ+ older adults?**

- All new clients are asked to share the name and pronouns they want staff to use for them. These are written down and used consistently by all staff.

- New clients are provided the opportunity to share their sexual orientation and their gender identity but are assured they are not required to answer. Interviewers are prepared to give clear answers if a client asks why the information is being solicited.
- Our service providers discuss confidentiality with clients and are honest about who does and does not have access to client information.
- Clients are asked about who is important in their life without staff assuming the answers will be spouses, children, or grandchildren.

***Agency Culture, Advocacy, and Community Work – To what degree is our agency focused on creating a world that is welcoming and inclusive to LGBTQ+ staff and clients?***

- Agency leadership is committed to protecting staff and clients from discrimination of any kind. Staff are trained repeatedly in techniques for defusing conflict and bias, and are positively acknowledged when they use these skills.
- Our agency has either a gender-neutral restroom or posts signage in multi-user bathrooms that everyone is welcome to use the bathroom they are most comfortable in. Staff are prepared to accompany anyone fearful of multi-user facilities.
- LGBTQ+ individuals are welcome on and are present at all staff levels and on the agency's Board of Directors/Advisory Board.
- In recognition of the fact that federal, state, and local policies profoundly affect LGBTQ+ elders' wellbeing in a myriad of ways, our agency works to identify and pursue appropriate advocacy efforts.

- Our agency partners with local LGBTQ+ organizations and advocacy groups. We prominently display our partnerships with LGBTQ+ organizations and advertise community events in our pamphlets, website, social media, and other agency materials.
- LGBTQ+ groups are encouraged to use our agency's meeting space for their own events.
- Our agency maintains a regularly-updated list of LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+-friendly community services to which we can refer LGBTQ+ clients if they need additional supports.
- LGBTQ+ staff are supported in being out if they so choose, and are encouraged to share their expertise with other staff and with clients.

***Education and Programming – Does our agency understand that needs and identities within the LGBTQ+ community evolve and staff competency training must be ongoing?***

- Our agency works with staff to identify opportunities they can pursue to increase their knowledge of how to meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Our agency involves LGBTQ+ clients in designing new or adapting existing programs to better serve the needs of LGBTQ+ clients. LGBTQ+ stakeholders serve on advisory boards, committees, councils, and anywhere else programming decisions are made.

***Evaluation – Does our agency use ongoing evaluation methods to identify strengths and areas of growth regarding the support we provide the LGBTQ+ community?***

- Our agency utilizes anonymous program evaluations for clients and staff who participate in programs designed specifically for or modified for LGBTQ+ clients.

- Our agency distributes workforce surveys to agency staff to understand how prepared they are to serve our LGBTQ+ clients.
- Our agency asks LGBTQ+ community partners and organizations to give us feedback on our ongoing efforts to be more inclusive.
- Our agency uses data collected from evaluations to identify how effectively we are responding to the needs of LGBTQ+ clients, staff, and stakeholders.
- Evaluation data is also utilized to create a plan to further our efforts to be more inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community.

## Results

0-8 Your agency's minimal attention to LGBTQ+ clients and staff is likely creating barriers for your clients. Taking this assessment is a step in the right direction. Use these results to identify areas in need of improvement and create a plan to make changes to help create a more inclusive environment for members of the diverse LGBTQ+ elder community.

### Resources:



*Facts on LGBTQ+ Aging*

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource/facts-on-lgbt-aging/>



*LGBT Programming for Older Adults:  
A Practical Step-by-Step Guide*

<https://www.sageusa.org/LGBTProgrammingforOlderAdults>

## Results

**9-18** Your agency has made important steps toward creating more inclusive services for LGBTQ+ clients, but there are still areas where improvement is possible. Review your responses to identify your agency's strengths and deficits. Use this analysis to create a strategic plan to continue your agency's efforts to create a more inclusive environment for your LGBTQ+ clients.

### Resources:



*Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults: A Practical Guide to Creating Welcoming Agencies*

<https://www.sageusa.org/InclusiveServicesForLGBTOlderAdults>



*Plan Your Way to Better Inclusion of LGBT Elders (webinar)*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L023M\\_M-VBQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L023M_M-VBQ)

## Results

**19-26** Congratulations on addressing many critical ways of making your LGBTQ+ clients feel safe and included. But your work is not done! The needs of the LGBTQ+ community are constantly changing, so keep assessing and evolving, using your LGBTQ+ staff and clients as your primary sources of information and ideas

## Resources:



*A Practical Guide to Collecting Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* <https://www.sageusa.org/InclusiveQuestions>



*Strengthen Your State and Local Aging Plan: A Practical Guide for Expanding the Inclusion of LGBT Older Adults* <https://www.sageusa.org/StrengthenYourState>

## About SAGE

At SAGE, we envision a world where LGBTQ+ elders are valued, have limitless opportunities, and thrive. Since 1978, we have led the way in advocating for policies, services, and resources that empower LGBTQ+ elders to live openly and authentically. Our dedicated team members work nationally and globally to protect our rights, build health and longevity, and preserve the vibrancy of our community as we age. Each one of us has a place to create a bright and vibrant future for the LGBTQ+ community as each one of us lights the way for the next generation to follow. Learn more at [www.sageusa.org](http://www.sageusa.org)

## About SAGECare

SAGECare is SAGE's training and credentialing program that helps aging services, healthcare providers, and long-term care organizations create more welcoming and culturally responsive environments for LGBTQ+ older adults. With expert-led trainings, ongoing support, and a nationally recognized credentialing system, SAGECare equips professionals and organizations with the tools they need to deliver inclusive, person-centered care. Organizations partner with SAGECare to strengthen staff competency, reduce disparities, and demonstrate their commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion. Learn more at [www.sagecare.org](http://www.sagecare.org)

