

Preliminary Findings • November 2009

# NATIONAL TRANSGENDER DISCRIMINATION SURVEY

by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

## EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY

Transgender people are targets of discrimination in many areas of their lives; this marginalization exposes them to tremendous social and economic insecurity. Until now, data on the prevalence and character of this discrimination has been limited to small studies and anecdotal reports. In the first comprehensive national effort to document this problem, the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force launched a six-month data collection process, interviewing 6,450 transgender people via an extensive questionnaire that covered critical topics such as employment, education, health care, housing, public accommodation, criminal justice, family life and access to government documents. Our final sample included residents of all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Data gathered from respondents was compared to US Census Bureau and Department of Labor data.

### KEY FINDINGS

- **Double the rate of unemployment:** Survey respondents experience unemployment at twice the rate of the population as a whole.
- **Near universal harassment on the job:** Ninety-seven percent (97%) of those surveyed reported experiencing harassment or mistreatment on the job.
- **Significant losses of jobs and careers:** Forty-seven percent (47%) had experienced an adverse job outcome, such as being fired, not hired or denied a promotion.
- **High rates of poverty:** Fifteen percent (15%) of transgender people in our sample lived on \$10,000 per year or less—double the rate of the general population.
- **Significant housing instability:** Nineteen percent (19%) of our sample have been or are homeless, 11% have faced eviction and 26% were forced to seek temporary space.

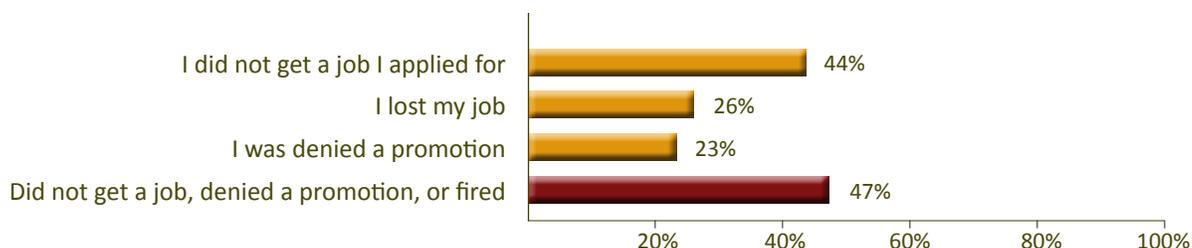
### EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

#### Unemployment and Loss of Jobs

Transgender people are unemployed at alarming rates. Overall 13% of respondents were unemployed, nearly double the national average at the time of the survey. This is even more acute for respondents who are Black (26%), Latino (18%) and Multiracial (17%).

**26%**  
lost their jobs  
because they are transgender

Forty-seven percent (47%) of survey respondents experienced an adverse job action because they are transgender—they did not get a job, were denied a promotion or were fired—that directly impacted their employment status. A staggering number of the people surveyed, 26%, lost their jobs due to their gender identity/expression. Particularly hard hit were those who were Black (32%) or Multiracial (37%).

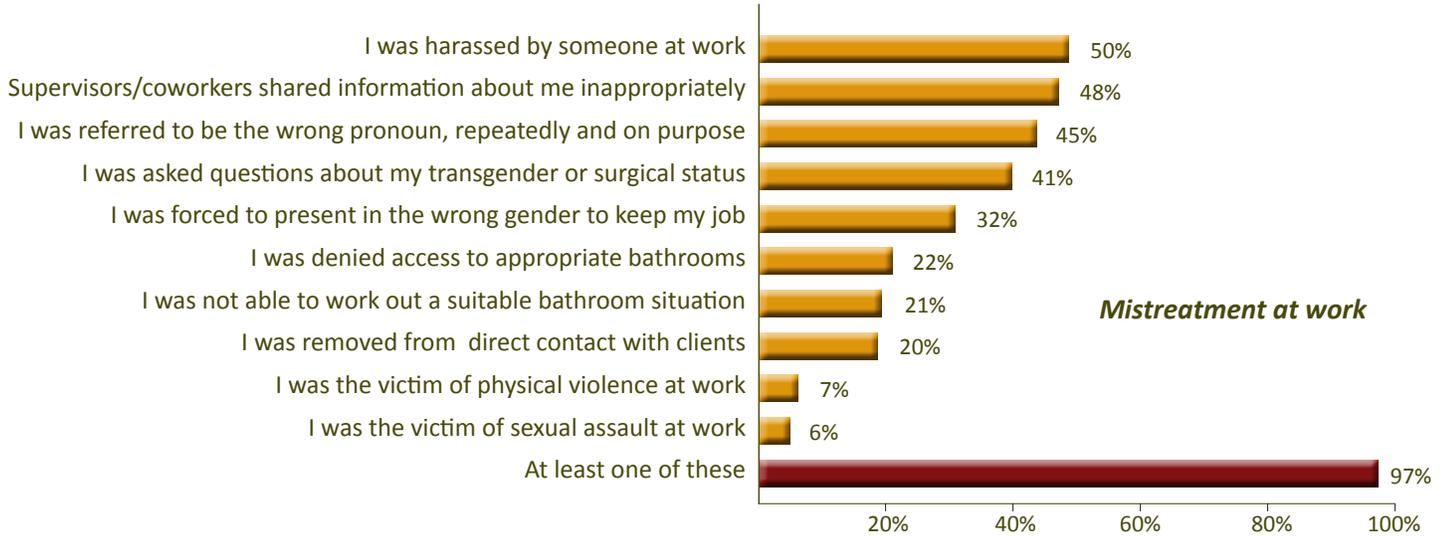


**EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES** *(continued)*

**Mistreatment and Harassment at Work—A Universal Experience**

Ninety-seven percent (97%) have experienced mistreatment, harassment, or discrimination on the job including: invasion of privacy, verbal abuse, and physical or sexual assault.

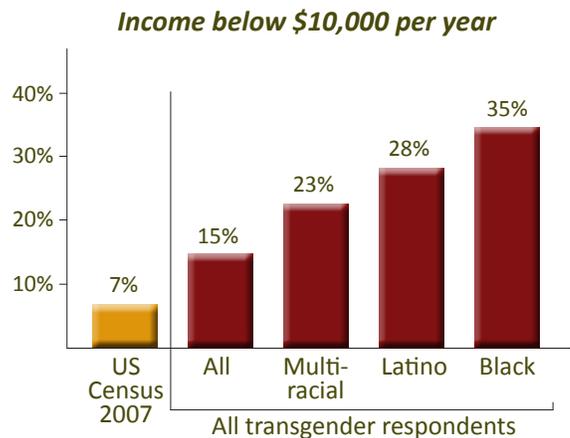
**97%**  
**mistreated at work**  
**because they are transgender**



**twice**  
 the national average earn  
 less than \$10,000/year  
 because they are transgender

**Poverty**

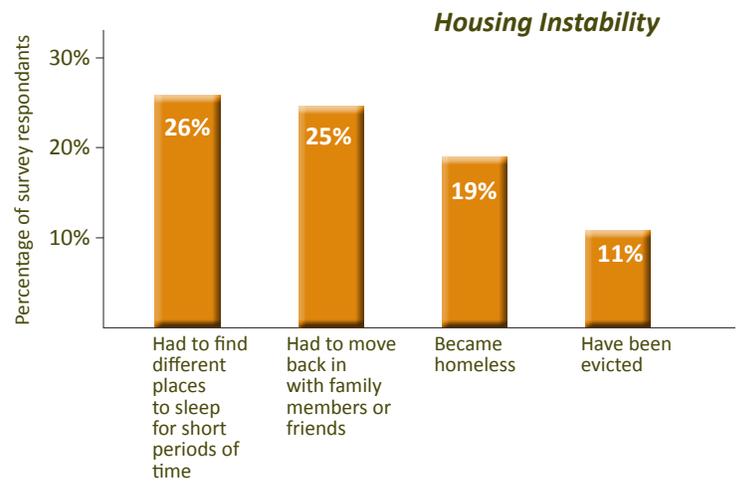
Study respondents experience poverty at a much higher rate than the general population, with more than 27% reporting incomes of \$20,000 or lower and more than 15% reporting incomes of \$10,000 or lower. Only 7% percent of the general population reports incomes of \$10,000 or lower.



# NEGATIVE OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

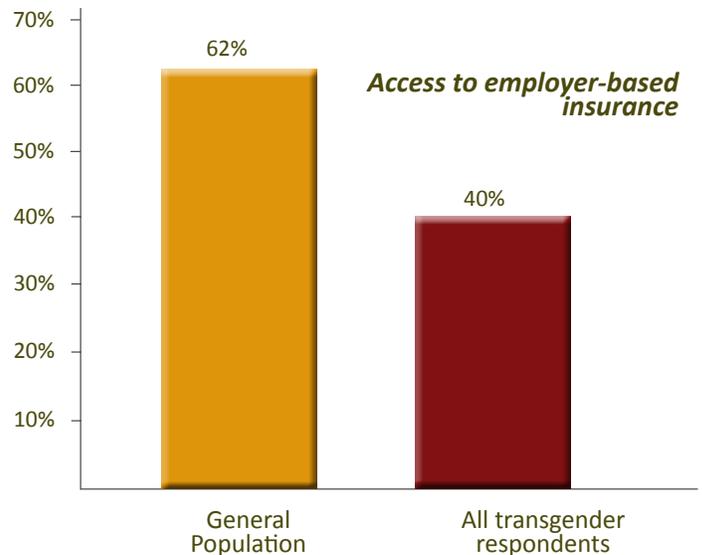
## Housing Instability

Survey respondents experienced a series of negative outcomes, many of which stem from challenges they face in employment. A large percentage of our sample reports experiencing housing insecurity due to their gender identity, with almost one-fifth becoming homeless because they are transgender.



## Lack of Health Insurance and Access to Appropriate Care

Employment issues also impact transgender people's access to health care. Transgender and gender non-conforming people do not have adequate health insurance coverage or access to competent providers. Respondents in our sample are uninsured at the same rate of the general population in the U.S.—19%—but only 40% of the sample enjoys employer-based insurance coverage, compared to 62% of the population at large. This figure underscores how high unemployment creates multiple liabilities for our sample.



## SUMMARY

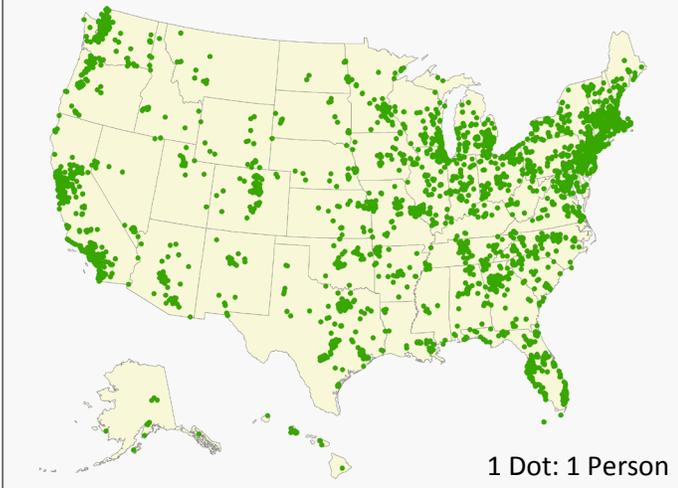
**Employment protections are paramount.** Transgender people face discrimination, harassment and anti-transgender violence in many areas of their lives. These conditions create significant barriers to employment and lead to devastating economic insecurity.

Basic employment protections for transgender people provide a crucial foundation for dignified, economically secure lives. Employment should be based on one's skills and ability to perform a job. No one deserves to be unemployed or fired because of their gender identity or expression.

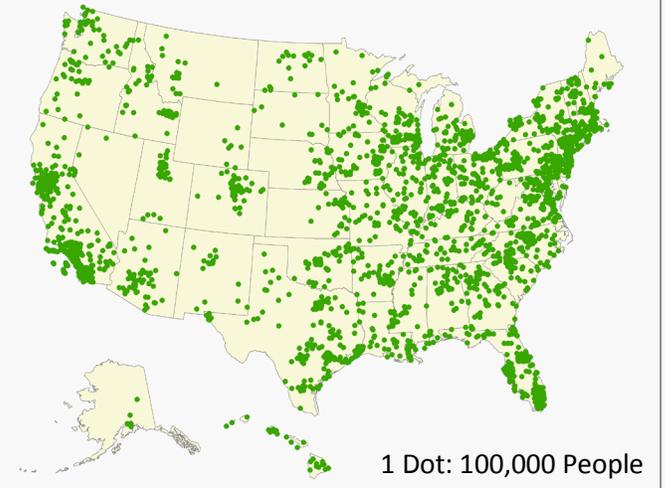
## SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Our sample reflects the geographic and racial and ethnic diversity of the nation as a whole. The maps below show that the geographic distribution of our sample very much parallels that of the general population. Further, the 2007 American Community Survey reports that 75.1% of the nation identifies as white and 24.9 percent identify as people of color across a range of racial and ethnic categories. Transgender and gender non-conforming people in the NCTE/Task Force sample identify as white at a percentage of 76%, while 24% of respondents identify as one or more of the following: Black/African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, Arab or Middle Eastern, Multiracial or Mixed Race.

Trans People in the NCTE/Task Force Sample



Population Density in the United States



## METHODOLOGY NOTE

A project team comprised of researchers, LGBT advocates and trans community leaders distributed on-line links to our survey through a network of more than 800 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.



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