



The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS) is the largest survey examining the experiences of transgender people in the United States, with 27,715 respondents nationwide. The USTS was conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality in the summer of 2015. Of respondents in the USTS, 1,195 were Massachusetts residents.<sup>1</sup> This report discusses the experiences of respondents living in Massachusetts.

## Income and Employment Status

- 7% of respondents in Massachusetts were unemployed.<sup>2</sup>
- 17% were living in poverty.<sup>3</sup>

## Employment and the Workplace

- 12% of respondents who have ever been employed reported losing a job in their lifetime because of their gender identity or expression.
- In the past year, 22% of those who held or applied for a job during that year reported being fired, being denied a promotion, or not being hired for a job they applied for because of their gender identity or expression.
- Respondents who had a job in the past year reported being verbally harassed (11%) and sexually assaulted (1%) at work because of their gender identity or expression.
- 23% of those who had a job in the past year reported other forms of mistreatment based on their gender identity or expression during that year, such as being forced to use a restroom that did not match their gender identity, being told to present in the wrong gender in order to keep their job, or having a boss or coworker share private information about their transgender status with others without their permission.

## Education

- 73% of those who were out or perceived as transgender at some point between Kindergarten and Grade 12 (K–12) experienced some form of mistreatment, such as being verbally harassed, prohibited from dressing according to their gender identity, disciplined more harshly, or physically or sexually assaulted because people thought they were transgender.
  - 47% of those who were out or perceived as transgender in K–12 were verbally harassed, 16% were physically attacked, and 6% were sexually assaulted in K–12 because of being transgender.
  - 11% faced such severe mistreatment as a transgender person that they left a K–12 school.
- 24% of respondents who were out or perceived as transgender in college or vocational school were verbally, physically, or sexually harassed because of being transgender.

## Housing, Homelessness, and Shelter Access

- 21% of respondents experienced some form of housing discrimination in the past year, such as being evicted from their home or denied a home or apartment because of being transgender.
- 24% have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.
- 8% experienced homelessness in the past year because of being transgender.
- 20% of respondents who experienced homelessness in the past year avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person.

## Public Accommodations

- Respondents reported being denied equal treatment or service, verbally harassed, or physically attacked at many places of public accommodation—places that provide services to the public, like retail stores, hotels, and government offices.
- Of respondents who visited a place of public accommodation where staff or employees thought or knew they were transgender, 30% experienced at least one type of mistreatment in the past year. This included 12% who were denied equal treatment or service, 24% who were verbally harassed, and 1% who were physically attacked because of being transgender.

## Restrooms

- 10% of respondents reported that someone denied them access to a restroom in the past year.
- In the past year, respondents reported being verbally harassed (12%) and sexually assaulted (1%) when accessing a restroom.
- 62% of respondents avoided using a public restroom in the past year because they were afraid of confrontations or other problems they might experience.
- 33% of respondents limited the amount that they ate or drank to avoid using the restroom in the past year.

## Police Interactions

- Respondents experienced high levels of mistreatment and harassment by police. In the past year, of respondents who interacted with police or other law enforcement officers who thought or knew they were transgender, 52% experienced some form of mistreatment. This included being verbally harassed, repeatedly referred to as the wrong gender, physically assaulted, or sexually assaulted, including being forced by officers to engage in sexual activity to avoid arrest.
- 61% of respondents said they would feel uncomfortable asking the police for help if they needed it.

## Health

- 28% of respondents experienced a problem in the past year with their insurance related to being transgender, such as being denied coverage for care related to gender transition or being denied coverage for routine care because they were transgender.
- 31% of those who saw a health care provider in the past year reported having at least one negative experience related to being transgender. This included being refused treatment, verbally harassed, or physically or sexually assaulted, or having to teach the provider about transgender people in order to get appropriate care.
- In the past year, 20% of respondents did not see a doctor when they needed to because of fear of being mistreated as a transgender person, and 19% did not see a doctor when needed because they could not afford it.
- 33% of respondents experienced serious psychological distress in the month before completing the survey (based on the Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale).<sup>4</sup>
- 12% of respondents reported that a professional, such as a psychologist, counselor, or religious advisor, tried to stop them from being transgender.

## Identity Documents

- Only 11% of respondents reported that *all* of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred, while 61% reported that *none* of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred.
- The cost of changing IDs was one of the main barriers respondents faced, with 26% of those who have not changed their legal name and 21% of those who have not updated the gender on their IDs reporting that it was because they could not afford it.
- 32% of respondents who have shown an ID with a name or gender that did not match their gender presentation were verbally harassed, denied benefits or service, asked to leave, or assaulted.

### ENDNOTES | MASSACHUSETTS STATE REPORT

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1. The number of respondents in Massachusetts (n=1,195) is an unweighted value. All reported percentages are weighted. For more information on the weighting procedures used to report 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey data, see the full survey report, available at [www.USTransSurvey.org](http://www.USTransSurvey.org).
2. For reference, the U.S. unemployment rate was 5% at the time of the survey, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. See the full report for more information about this calculation.
3. For reference, the U.S. poverty rate was 12% at the time of the survey. The research team calculated the USTS poverty measure using the official poverty measure, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. USTS respondents were designated as living in poverty if their total family income fell under 125% of the official U.S. poverty line. See the full report for more information about this calculation.
4. For reference, 5% of the U.S. population reported experiencing serious psychological distress during the prior month as reported in the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. See the full report for more information about this calculation.



# 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey

## Massachusetts State Report

October 2017



The full report and Executive Summary of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey are available at [www.USTransSurvey.org](http://www.USTransSurvey.org).

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