

MAY 2021

LGBTQ2 ACTION PLAN SURVEY

Report & Findings

LE CENTRE CANADIEN DE LA
DIVERSITÉ DES GENRES
+ DE LA **SEXUALITÉ**



THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
GENDER+SEXUAL
DIVERSITY

Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity

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CCGSD would like to thank all respondents who generously shared their feedback during this survey. We would like to thank those who have shared the survey with their networks, as well. Special thank you to CCGSD staff members Adriana Bravo and Emma Awe for their design of the process, including the results in Appendix A, and for the final submission made to the LGBTQ2S Secretariat.



Introduction

In the Spring of 2021, the Government of Canada invited civil society organizations, including the CCGSD, to provide a written submission to help inform the [LGBTQ2 Action Plan](#). Over a two-week period in May 2021, CCGSD created a survey to better understand what policy areas matter the most to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and allies across Canada. The survey results informed our written submission for the LGBTQ2 Action plan as well to provide CCGSD with knowledge on how it can better serve 2SLGBTQIA+ communities across Canada.

As an organization striving towards guidance by feminist principles, CCGSD strongly values collaborating with diverse, like-minded organizations and community representatives to consider what policy areas are impacting our communities the most to understand and develop advocacy strategies that honour the complexities of the diverse communities we serve. For us, the survey provided a much-needed opportunity to utilize a new approach to community engagement to build a deeper appreciation of the challenge we need to understand when informing policy. Additionally, it was a process of ensuring that community concerns and recommendations go directly to those with decision-making power within the Federal government.

The policy areas discussed in this survey reflect some of the key issues that matter most to 2SLGBTQ+ communities living in Canada. These policy areas do not necessarily fall within the scope of our work but it is important that we reflect the reality of diverse 2SLGBTQ+ needs.

The survey is composed of two sections: the first asked respondents to indicate the policy areas they find most important, and the second collects demographic information.

The results from the survey and its diverse respondents with different experiences will inform subsequent activities in CCGSD's work on advocacy. In developing future research reports and possible toolkits, we will take into account the advice discussed and identified within the survey. Finally, we will explore further policy dialogues that we will be convening with 2SLGBTQIA+ partners, women's rights partners, QTBIPOC partners, service providers and government officials in upcoming fiscal years.

The report provides a synthesis of the written submission to the LGBTQ2 Secretariat by CCGSD. A summary of the survey, which informed the written submission, are shared in Appendix A.

Background

Committed to strengthening diversity and inclusion, the Government of Canada recently outlined the following goals:

- Promote 2SLGBTQIA+ equality
- Protect 2SLGBTQIA+ rights
- Address anti-2SLGBTQIA+ harassment and discrimination
- Develop the first-ever federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan that will guide the Government's work to improve the social, health and economic well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

In 2020, the Honourable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth took the first steps towards creating the LGBTQ2 Action Plan by launching a public engagement process in 3 stages:

STAGE 1

An online national LGBTQ2 survey to better understand the daily realities and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada. The survey was open to anyone in Canada aged 16 or older who self-identifies as 2SLGBTQIA+. Participation was voluntary and anonymous and had over 22,000 responses.

STAGE 2

A call for LGBTQ2 civil society organizations to send written submissions by May 31, 2021 through an online form. The form provides opportunities to share views on policies and programs that could be improved and suggest new measures that could be undertaken as part of the Action Plan.

STAGE 3

Virtual roundtable discussions with the LGBTQ2 Secretariat and diverse 2SLGBTQIA+ communities including Two-Spirit, Black, racialized, people with disabilities, and trans and non-binary communities. Roundtables will be held in Spring 2021 and will be conducted on priority policy issues for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities as identified in the survey.

To help inform our written submission for Stage 2 of the LGBTQ2 Action Plan we created and launched a public survey. The survey was launched on May 6 and kept open until May 20, 11:59 pm EST.

The survey had several questions that help us better understand what policy areas you find most important to 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada.

In this report, we will summarize the survey results, findings, and how this information was incorporated into CCGSD's submission.



Thank you to all who participated and provided their valuable insights and experiences! We hope that together we can shape the future of 2SLGBTQIA+ policy work in Canada in a way that benefits our communities!



Summary of Written Submission

Over the two weeks that the survey was open, CCGSD received 284 responses. Of the 12 key policy areas highlighted in the survey (see below), 2SLGBTQIA+ health; justice and legal reform; 2SLGBTQIA+ housing insecurity/homelessness, poverty, and lack of access to affordable housing; comprehensive sex-education; and 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming curricula in public education were the 5 key policy areas that survey respondents consider most important to include in the LGBTQ2 Action Plan. When asking about what areas respondents found most important or relevant to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, in particular, we saw similar results, with the same 5 policy areas being highlighted.

Concerning changes to the policy areas that were listed or new policies to suggest, qualitative responses were helpful. A few respondents suggested that several policy areas be grouped, indicating that Education could encompass affirming curricula, sports inclusion, and comprehensive sex-ed. Others noted that justice and legal reform could similarly include several other sections. Other respondents noted that several policy areas presented fall outside of federal jurisdiction and that distinguishing provincial and territorial matters from federal matters is important.

We asked respondents about policy areas they felt were important that were not listed and the responses were very helpful in identifying both new policy areas and expanding on those listed in the survey.

We incorporated the top 5 policy areas that respondents felt were most important to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in particular.

POLICY 1: HEALTH CARE

In creating safer schools and communities, we called for increased mental health and social support in schools and communities delivered by service providers who are trained to meet the specific needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. We also called for increased 2SLGBTQIA+ healthcare services and mental health spaces that are free and/or subsidized. We support youth and young adults playing a key role in shaping the healthcare services they receive in Canada since youth and young adults are experts in themselves and their needs and know the best pathways for their wellness.

In addition to increased 2SLGBTQIA+ healthcare services and mental health spaces that are free, subsidized, and accessible to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in Canada, youth themselves are calling for the implementation of policies that affirm 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, as evidenced in the report, “MHCC-W2A Rainbow Youth Health Forum: Creating Safer Spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ Emerging Adults in Health Care,” compiled by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and Wisdom 2 Action. These policies would facilitate access to health services without a provincial or territorial health card, provide increased flexibility for service provision, allow for self-referral and more.

1 For more information on the LGBTQ2 Action Plan written submission, see the LGBTQ2 Action Plan - Online Submission Guide: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/free-to-be-me/lgbtq2-action-plan/online-submission-guide.html>

Summary of Written Submission

They also call for additional prevention-based initiatives that would reduce the need for urgent care, instead of providing support to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth on an ongoing basis. Survey respondents deeply care about 2SLGBTQIA+ health care and are looking for increased accountability for homo/transphobic physicians who compromise patient care; enacting qualifying exams for doctors; full coverage for gender affirmation surgeries; and increased reproductive support, to name a few.

POLICY 2: JUSTICE AND LEGAL REFORM

Despite recent actions to reform Canada's Criminal Code and entrench the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ people and sex workers in law, many reforms are still needed. Justice and legal reform remain a primary way for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to be protected at the federal level.

We focused on several key sites including i) repeal of Canada's blood ban, ii) the entrenchment of sex workers rights and protections in law, iii) entrenchment of intersex rights, status, and protections in law, and finally iv) a national ban on conversion therapy.

In line with the Community-Based Research Centre's recommendations, we called on the federal government to push Health Canada to end any discriminatory policies and practices related to blood, organ, and tissue donation by queer/trans men and instead "adopt a gender-neutral donor screening process (i.e. where people are screened the same regardless of sex assigned at birth,

gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation)." Emergent policies should reflect the most recent, relevant, and reputable scientific sources about 2SLGBTQIA+ health and HIV.

To work towards repairing the distrust between the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and blood services across the country, we suggested the federal government work in tandem with the Canadian Blood Service and Héma-Québec to establish conversations with those historically and currently affected by the blood ban. These working conversations should also provide a starting point for the development of training, policies, and changes to work environments that facilitate the implementation of a gender-neutral donor screening process by informed staff and practitioners.

The Government of Canada's 2014 Bill C-36, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, requires an amendment to improve the conditions of sex work and return control to sex workers over their working environments and safety. The Act has limited sex workers' abilities to set the conditions of their work, obtain consent and important information from clients, and access to indoor spaces. Advocacy groups, such as The Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform are calling for an amendment to the Act in consultation with sex workers affected directly.

We also called for a change to the Canadian Human Rights Act to include intersex status and work towards combatting the ongoing discrimination faced by intersex people across Canada. To ensure their legal protections continued amendment to Canada's Criminal Code is required,

Summary of Written Submission

in particular, subsection 268(3) allows for surgeries on intersex people to be conducted. The section should be amended to limit any surgeries on children until they can meaningfully participate in any decision.

To ensure that no member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is subjected to conversion therapy, the critiques of Bill C-8: An Act to amend the Criminal Code introduced in 2020 should be considered when discussing the new Bill C-6. The recommendations of various organizations, shared in solidarity in the report, “Conversion Therapy: A Legislative Guide to Action,” must be instated. In particular, the removal of any problematic language that disregards the discriminatory pressures of society to imply that individuals can willingly consent to conversion therapy. Additionally, it should feature more substantive limitations and consequences for practitioners of conversion therapy regardless of their religious or charitable affiliation. As Bill C-6 is considered by members of Parliament, we and other 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations encourage the implementation of a true and firm national ban on conversion therapy in Canada, and any other practices that aim to alter an individual’s sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

POLICY 3: HOUSING INSECURITY, POVERTY, LACK OF ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to the 519, a City of Toronto agency and registered charity committed to the health, happiness, and full participation

of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, there are 150,000 young people experiencing homelessness in Canada, with 25-40% identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+. Because studies of unhoused youth populations in Canada rarely considers 2SLGBTQIA+ populations specifically, this information can be limited and could be much higher. Further, percentages of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth homelessness could be higher when we consider safety levels (or lack thereof) of disclosing queer and trans identities to service providers, government institutions, community members, etc.

In ensuring that shelter spaces are safe for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, we called on the federal government to provide more 2SLGBTQIA+ specific housing options that can provide safe, affirming environments that can meet the needs of youth with specific services and supports, like changing identification cards or accessing gender-affirming healthcare, for example.

Survey respondents also advocated for a national (affordable) fair housing plan that specifically addresses how to reduce unhoused 2SLGBTQIA+ populations; the implementation of housing first models; and the mandatory construction of affordable housing.

POLICY 4: EDUCATION (AFFIRMING CURRICULA AND COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL EDUCATION)

As an organization working to educate about 2SLGBTQIA+ realities and experiences across levels and subjects, CCGSD recognises the

Summary of Written Submission

importance of educational reform to combat the silencing of 2SLGBTQIA+ voices and build spaces where youth feel safe. Although education falls under provincial and territorial jurisdictions, the current lack of 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive and affirming education is a national issue, requiring a national response.

We called for the development of a 2SLGBTQIA+ educational reform strategy that would urge the development of 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive curricula, compile data about the numbers of 2SLGBTQIA+ faculty, educators, staff and students, school board members, and trustees. We also asked for data about 2SLGBTQIA+ students' post-secondary attendance, graduation rates, financial security while in school, and access to scholarships and bursaries, with a focus on how much funding 2SLGBTQIA+ researchers receive from federal granting agencies, and to what degree 2SLGBTQIA+ research is funded. This strategy would work with and encourage provincial and territorial governments to develop educational spaces that reflect their interests while ensuring that 2SLGBTQIA+ people are included and respected in line with Canada's human rights commitments.

In addition to an educational reform strategy, we called for a specific national strategy about comprehensive sexual education (CSE) that would hold provincial and territorial governments accountable to the 2019 Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education standards. This strategy should ensure that educators have access to the necessary funds needed to obtain the appropriate training and tools to deliver new sexual education programs, as well as reform and expand existing programs.

The strategy should also incorporate a monitoring and evaluation scheme to ensure that youth across Canada are receiving the same standard of sexual education, and outline an accountability mechanism for failure to provide said standard. It should also be supplemented with community-based programs and support - defined by the community (e.g. youth, healthcare providers, parents/caregivers/guardians) themselves - to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ people are represented in affirming ways based on their specific needs and experiences.

Educational strategies such as these would ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and students are learning in safe environments, receiving the information relevant to them and their needs, and seeing themselves reflected in their educators, schools, and communities.

OTHER

In addition to CCGSD outlining these five areas, our submission also included support for the calls of two other 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, Dignity Network Canada and the Enchanté Network.

We supported the recommendations outlined by Dignity Network Canada, namely the call for a special envoy or ambassador on SOGIESC issues internationally; an overarching international SOGIESC policy plan; dedicated and specific internal staff resources on SOGIESC issues across Global Affairs Canada; the creation of an international assistance framework for SOGIESC issues across GAC funding programs in partnership with civil society and international partners; and setting a higher target for Canadian international assistance

Summary of Written Submission

funding in support of SOGIESC development issues, humanitarian aid, and human rights.

Additionally, our written submission included support for the Enchanté Network's call for the federal government to invest \$25 million a year in 2SLGBTQ+ community, health, and social services. We strongly believe that dedicated core funding is vital to the overall health and well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ people and we see this \$25 million as a floor, not a ceiling.

Lastly, our written submission called on the federal government to modify the name of the current name from "LGBTQ2 Action Plan" to "2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan" to ensure the inclusion of the diverse identities and lived experiences that are often erased and to prioritize Two-Spirit inclusion. As part of the reconciliation process, we suggested this acronym also be applied to the name of the LGBTQ2 Secretariat and any existing language or name currently used by the Government of Canada.

Appendix A - Summary Report of Survey Responses

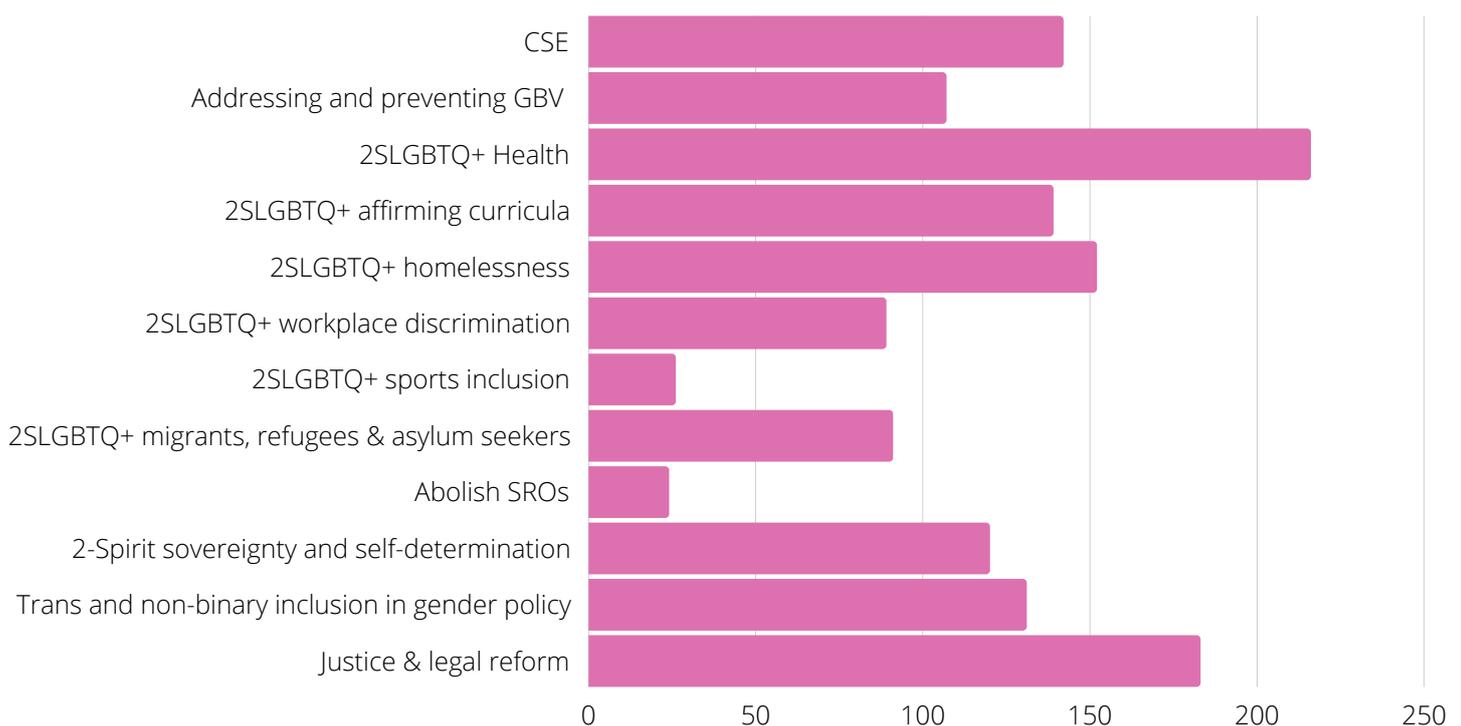
The survey was composed of two main sections: to indicate the policy areas the public finds most important to collect demographic information. The survey only had one required question and all others were optional, based on a respondent's comfortability level. If all questions were filled out, the survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete. The survey was open to the public from May 6, 2021, to May 20, 2021, and was promoted across CCGSD's social media platforms and sent out as an e-blast communication to CCGSD's supporters subscribed to our newsletter.

Over the two-week period that the survey was open, CCGSD received 284 responses. Of the 12 key policy areas highlighted in the survey, 2SLGBTQIA+ health, justice and legal reform, 2SLGBTQIA+ housing insecurity/homelessness, poverty, and lack of access to affordable housing, comprehensive sex-education, and 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming curricula in public education were the 5 key policy areas that survey respondents consider most important to include in the LGBTQ2 Action Plan.

Survey Results: Policy Areas

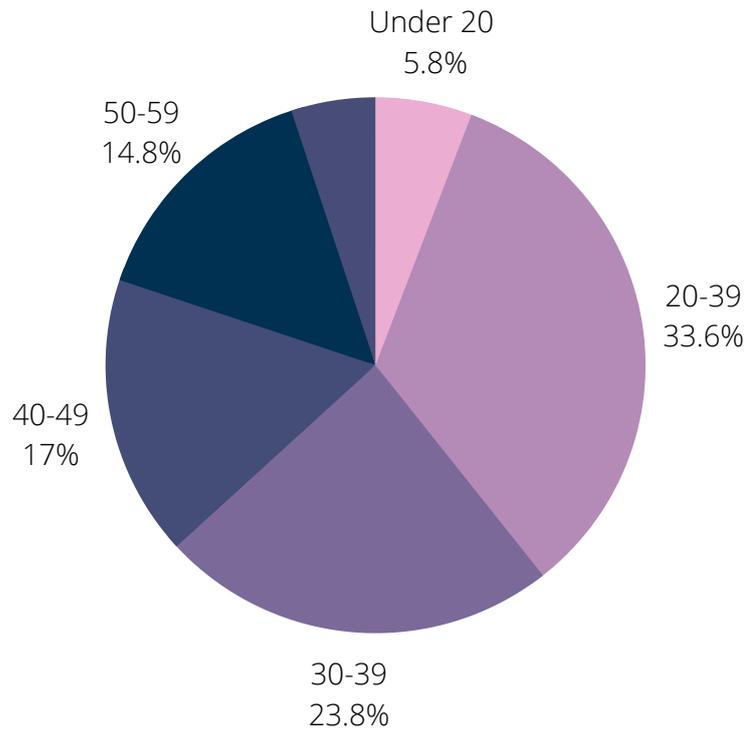
Respondents were asked to share what policy areas they found the most important or relevant to 2SLGBTQ+ youth living in Canada. Results for the top-ranked policy areas:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ health - 76.1% (216)
- Justice and legal reform - 64.4% (183)
- 2SLGBTQIA+ housing insecurity/homelessness, poverty, and lack of access to affordable housing - 53.5% (152)
- Comprehensive sex-education - 50% (142)
- 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming curricula in public education - 48.9% (139)

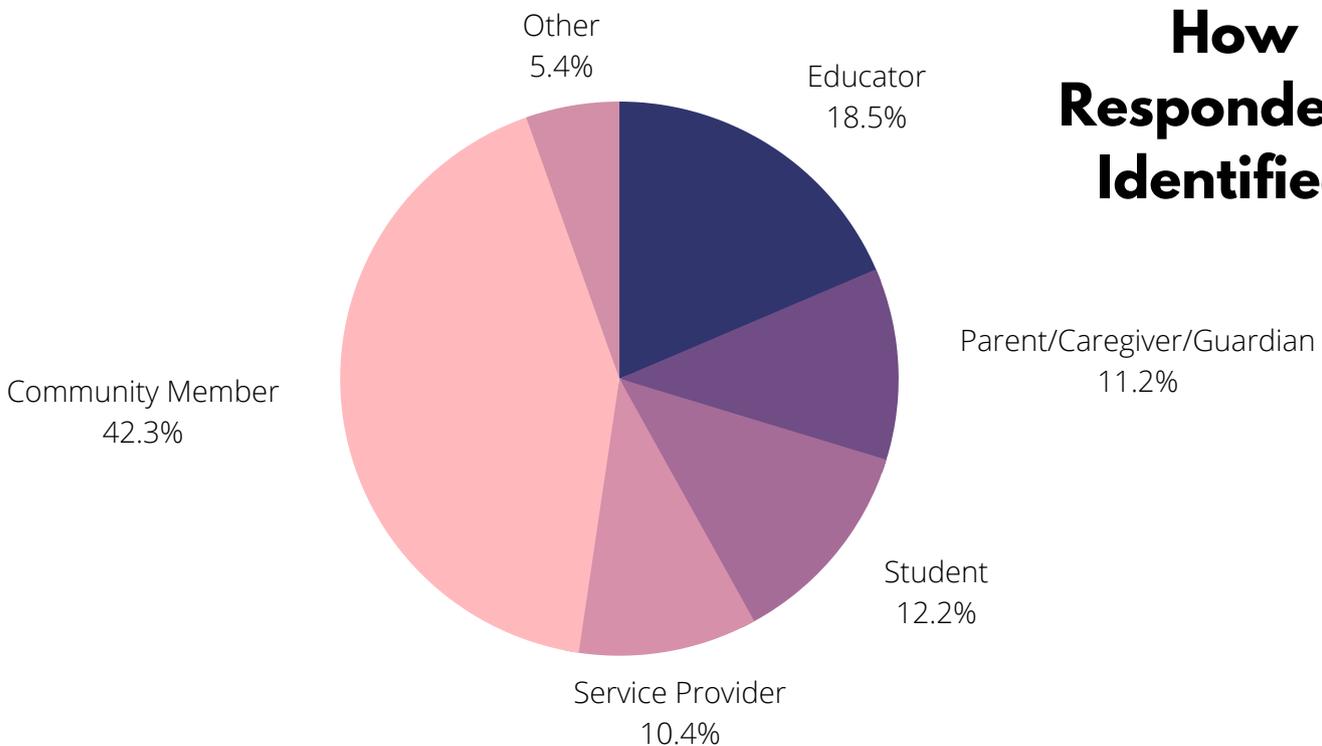


Survey Results: Demographics

Respondent Ages



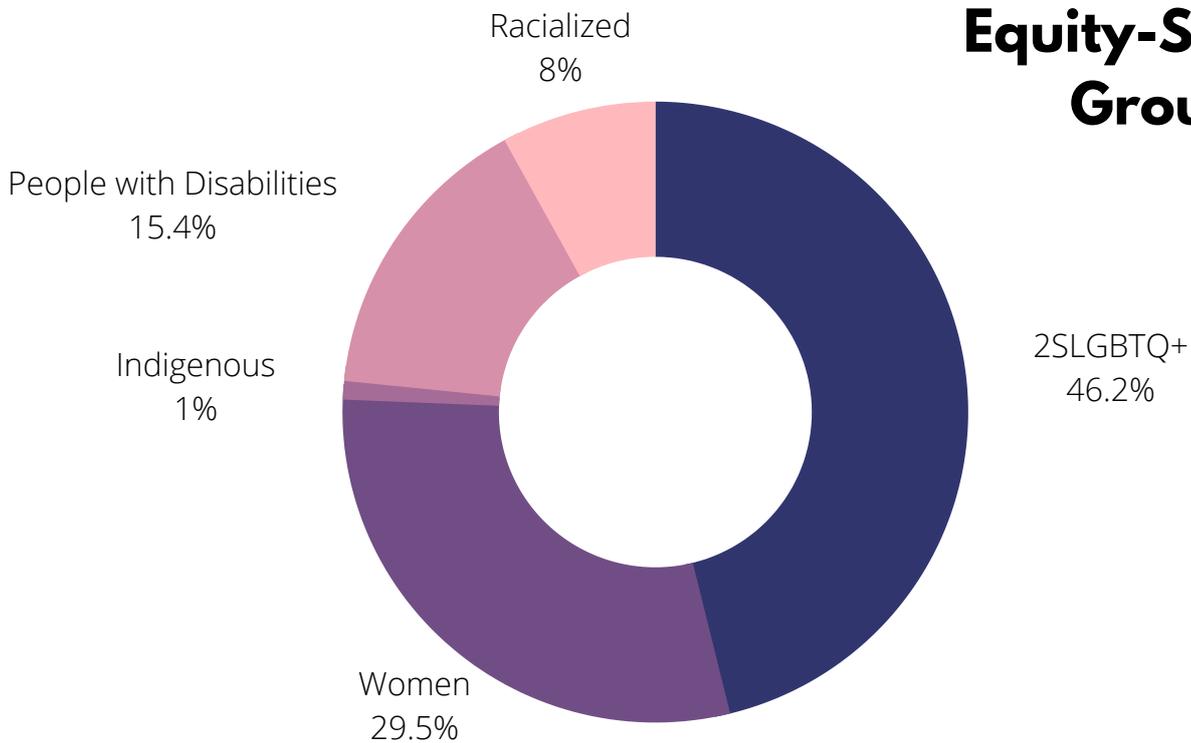
How Respondents Identified



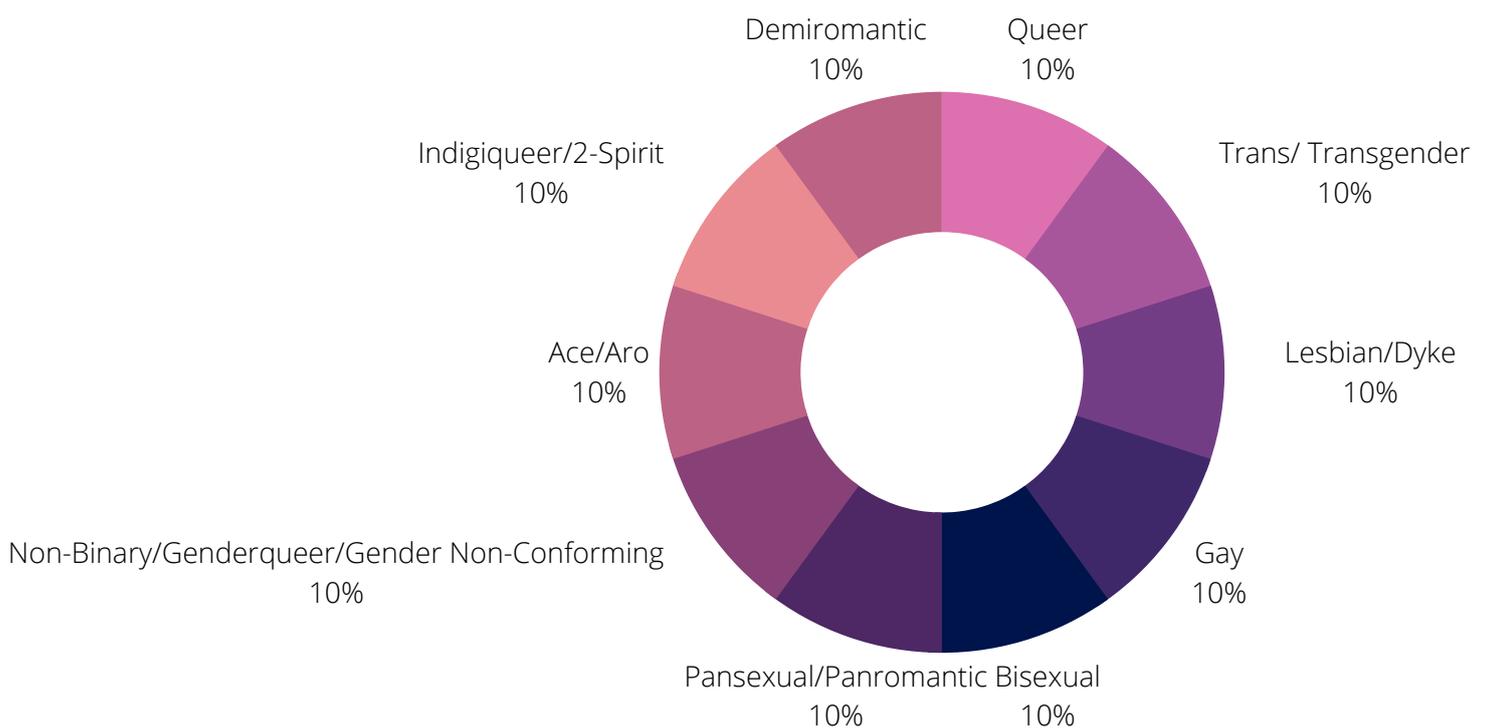
*Total Percentage is higher than 100 as respondents were able to select multiple identifiers

Survey Results: Demographics

Equity-Seeking Groups



Breakdown of 2SLGBTQ+ Identities



Survey Results: Quotes

Respondents, when asked what policy areas were the most important to 2SLGBTQ+ youth, were able to submit written answers. Some results included:

Health Care

“Better access to doctors/health professionals who are aware of the unique health challenges we face. Many current doctors/health professionals are not aware/supportive and are clueless to the resources/medication/preventative measures available today... There need to be more access points for health services especially in rural Ontario.”

Justice & Legal Reform

“I would suggest queer sensitivity training and perceptiveness within the justice and legal systems so that decision-makers and public officials are aware of the cultural and other factors affecting our community.”

Housing Insecurity, Poverty, and Homelessness

“Hire queer folks and pay them a living wage! And make it “normal” to see people living a good fulfilling life as a 2SLGBTQIA person. Youth need to see that they have a good future ahead of them.”

Education & Comprehensive Sex Education

“Creating an informative, accepting educational environment for students to learn and explore themselves, while also having their identity and expression validated.”

“learning about the community in health class during school! in sex ed, you usually only learn about heterosexual relationships and sexual activity. we need to learn about much more than this in schools!!!”

“I am going to add the sex-education piece under the affirming education piece. We have a decent sex-ed program in Ontario, but a lack of conversations around Queer identities. As well, we currently have policies that allow families to exempt students from learning about the existence of Queer identities in Phys Ed. and which has also served to silence teachers from including it elsewhere.”

For more information on the CCGSD's submission to the LGBTQ2 Action Plan and advocacy initiatives, contact:

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