

Clarksville

Building the LGBTQIA+ Community

COMMUNITY • ADVOCACY • EDUCATION • HEALTH • SUPPORT



LGBTQ+

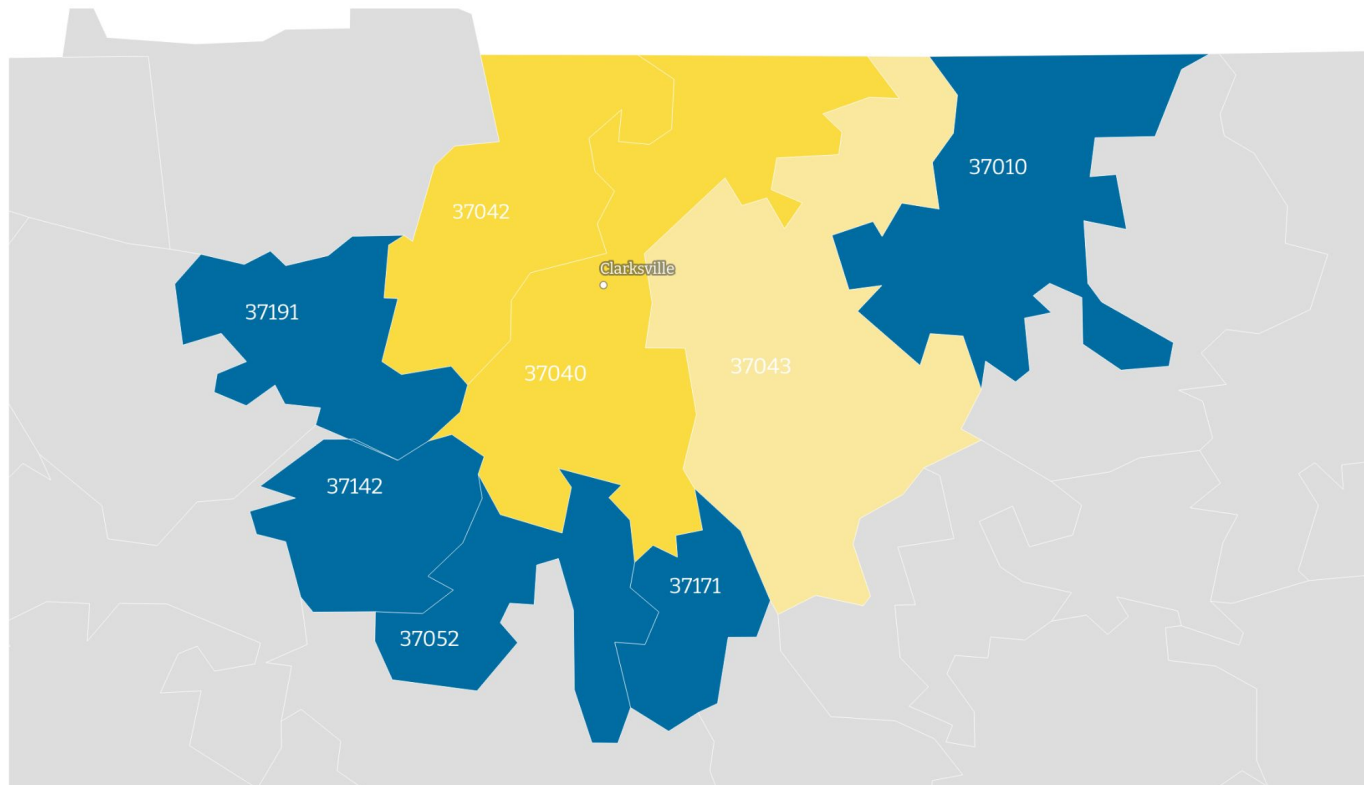
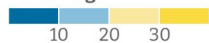
Assessment

July 2025

Percentage of People Who are LGBTQ+ or Parent of LGBTQ+ by Zip Code

EMBOLDresearch

Percentage



Embold Research surveyed 534 registered voters in Montgomery County, Tennessee from June 27 - July 2, 2025. These percentages are based on the weighted survey data, conducted in July. "LGBTQ+" refers to respondents who self-identified as LGBTQ+. "LGBTQ+ or parent" includes respondents who are either LGBTQ+ themselves or the parent of someone who is LGBTQ+.

Map data: © Esri, TomTom North America, Inc., United States Postal Service



About Embold Research

Fast. Accurate. Affordable.

Who We Are



Embold Research is the nonpartisan unit of Change Research, founded in 2017 with the mission of improving American democracy by making public opinion insights more accessible to forward-thinking leaders in all sectors of society. We are a team of pollsters, engineers, data scientists, and communications professionals. Our team brings expertise in methodological innovation, research design, public opinion, and strategic consulting.

Our Unique Approach



All of our surveys are completed online, but we do **not** use panels! We recruit new participants for every poll using targeted online advertisements on websites and social media platforms, and using SMS text-to-web.

Our Products



In addition to custom polling, we offer:

- **Magnify** AI targeting (custom modeling)
- **Voices** qualitative research (in-depth interviews and text-based chats)
- **ReSpark** Renewable energy project viability and tracking (standardized and cost-effective polling)

INTRO

WHAT WE DID: On behalf of, Embold Research conducted 10 interviews and a survey of 534 registered voters from June 27 - July 2, 2025.

The IDI's and survey's main priority include defining the local LGBTQ+ population, assessing existing resources, and engaging allies while addressing economic, housing, and social barriers such as geographic dispersal, limited queer spaces, and subtle policy discrimination.

METHODOLOGY

Project Phase

Goals

PHASE 1 In-depth Interviews

Conducted ten in-depth interviews with individuals who identified personally or their child identified as LGBTQ+

Understand the lived experiences, needs, and priorities of LGBTQ+ individuals and parents of queer youth in Montgomery County. They aimed to identify barriers to safety, belonging, and access to affirming services, while surfacing community-driven solutions and visions for structural support.

PHASE 2 Survey

534 registered voters in Montgomery County, Tennessee from June 27 - July 2, 2025.

Understand the experiences, priorities, and challenges of registered voters in Montgomery County, Tennessee, with a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion. It aims to measure perceptions of community inclusivity, access to resources, safety, and support for LGBTQ+ individuals—especially youth—while also identifying barriers to participation in community life.

Three Core Populations In the Quantitative Survey

Registered Voters

100% of the sample.
Survey was weighted to
reflect the demographic
makeup of Montgomery
County, Tennessee

LGBTQ+ Community

48% are LGBTQ+; Parent
of LGBTQ+; or someone
close to them is LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ or Parent

11% identify as LGBTQ+ or
are a parent of a child
who identifies as LGBTQ+

KEY FINDINGS

01

Gap Between Support for Inclusion and Real Action:

While many in Montgomery County say they value LGBTQ+ inclusion, there is a clear disconnect between this expressed support and actual follow-through. True inclusive practices remain unfinished business, with many LGBTQ+ residents still facing barriers to safety, resources, and community belonging

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Significant Accessibility Barriers:

LGBTQ+ residents struggle to access safe spaces, affordable housing, transportation, protection from discrimination, and mental health support. Youth are particularly vulnerable, with limited confidential, affirming spaces and restrictive school policies making support harder to deliver.

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Shared Priorities Create Opportunity for Coalition:

Building: LGBTQ+ community needs overlap strongly with broader voter priorities like infrastructure, growth management, economic development, homelessness services, crime reduction, and youth amenities. This alignment offers a clear chance to build unified, cross-cutting solutions that benefit everyone.

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04

Consumer and Community Behavior Is Influenced by Inclusion:

Residents are motivated to support businesses and organizations that demonstrate real, visible LGBTQ+ inclusion (like signage or welcoming policies). However, many feel limited by the lack of supportive options in Montgomery County. Authentic inclusion can impact purchasing choices and strengthen community ties.

Motivation

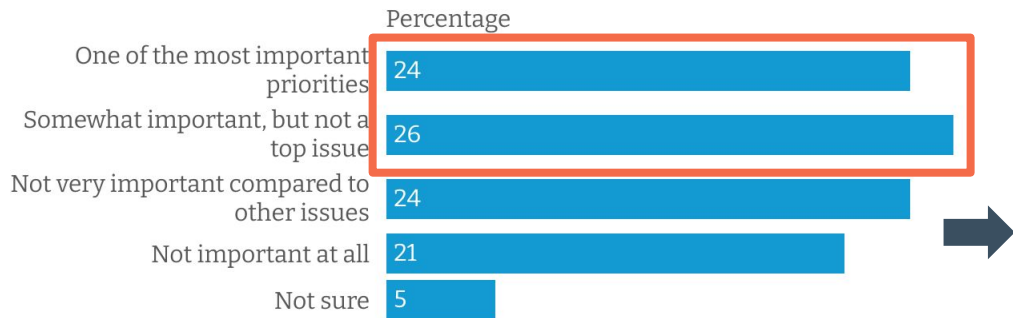
Our interviews and survey reveal a clear message: people in Montgomery County value inclusion—but making it happen remains unfinished business.

There is a Gap in Prioritization of Inclusion and Realization

More than Half of RV Feel it is Important LGBTQ+ Feel Included

EMBOLDresearch

In a community with many priorities, how important to you is it that all people, including LGBTQ+ people, feel included and respected?

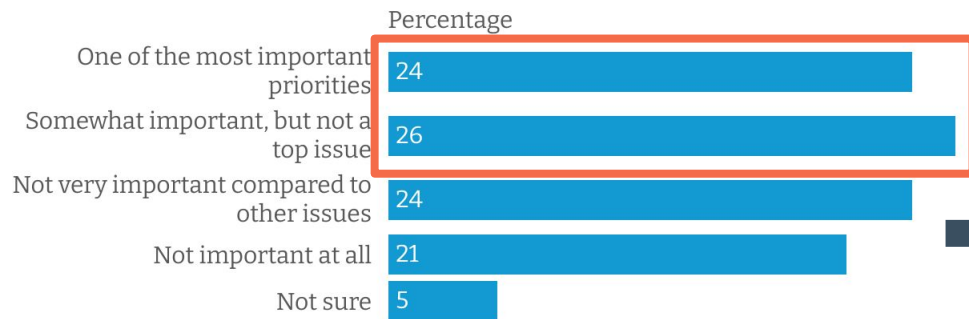


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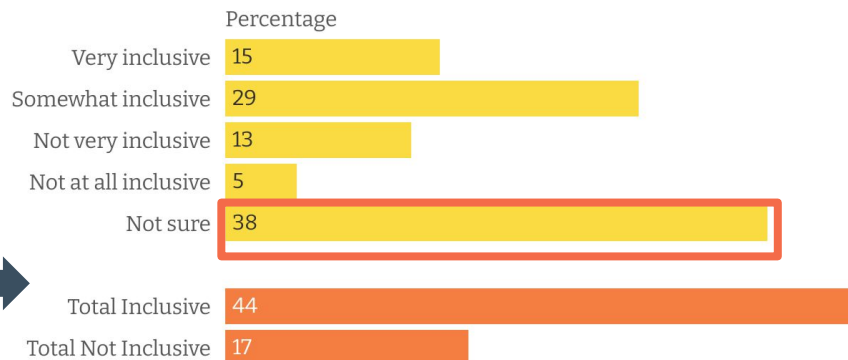
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But Less Than Half Feel It is Inclusive

EMBOLDresearch

How inclusive - meaning welcoming, respectful, and supportive - do you think Montgomery County is toward LGBTQ+ people?

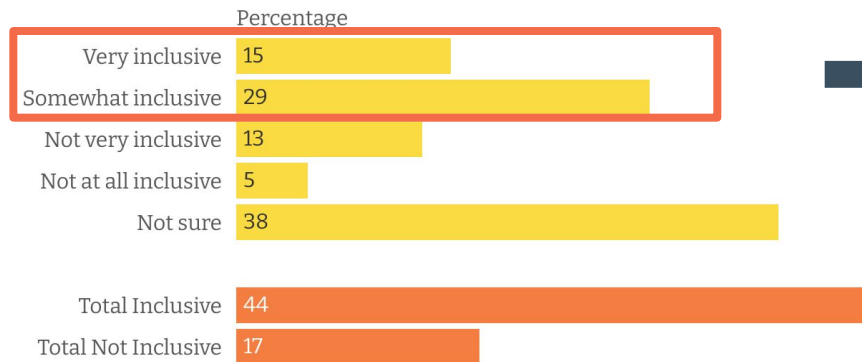


Voters Cited Visible Support and General Kindness as Evidence of Inclusion

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EMBOLDresearch

How inclusive - meaning welcoming, respectful, and supportive - do you think Montgomery County is toward LGBTQ+ people?



Visible Support & Representation: Pride flags, inclusive businesses, events, parades, university and library safe spaces *"Austin Peay University is in the center of town, and is inclusive. The public library is also inclusive and feels like a safe space for people."*

General Acceptance & Kindness: No overt discrimination, welcoming attitudes, Southern hospitality, treating everyone equally *"Everyone is loving and welcoming here. We respect each other for our differences and nothing's better than good old fashioned southern hospitality!"*

We Don't Single Out Groups" / Universal Inclusion: Belief that everyone is welcome without special treatment, resistance to focusing on one group *"Everyone is welcome to anything, I don't think we should solely focus on what group of people to make sure they feel welcome. It should be everyone as a whole"*

Personal Observation of No Problems: Haven't seen exclusion or hate, LGBTQ+ friends doing fine, unaware of any issues *"I haven't seen anything where they are not included"*

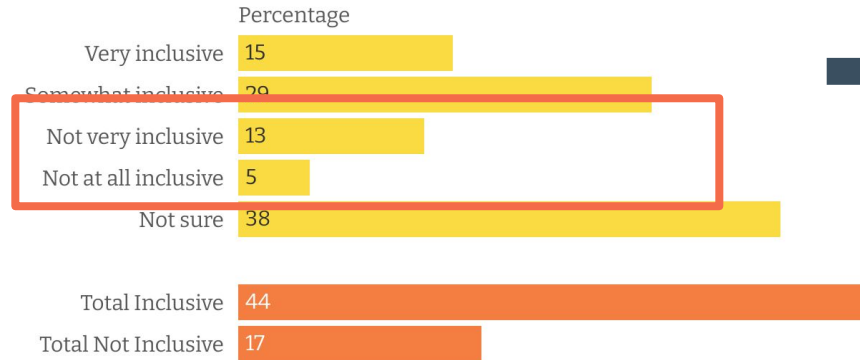


Voters Cited Conservatism, Religiosity, and Lack of Inclusive Spaces as Evidence of Exclusion

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Conservative Culture & Politics: Predominantly conservative values, Republican leadership, resistance to LGBTQ+ rights
"Because the leaders and elected officials are predominantly Republican and in this country the GOP party has made it clear they are attacking trans and LGBTQIA+ individuals."

Religious Influence & Moral Objections: Church teachings, Bible Belt culture, faith-based opposition to LGBTQ+ identities
"It's the Bible Belt and unfortunately most people of religion don't believe LGBTQ are following gods word"

Public Attitudes & Discrimination: Hostile comments, social media negativity, bullying, everyday exclusion
"The amount of hateful things I hear out in public or see on comments in community groups online"

Lack of Inclusive Spaces & Visibility: Few pride events, limited safe spaces, no visible support or cultural offerings
"No pride activities, parades, etc. Comments from notable members of the community."

Systemic & Institutional Barriers: Policies, local laws, leadership rhetoric, perceived indifference to rights
"There is a lot of accepted hate and discrimination towards the LGBTQ community by county level officials and locals."

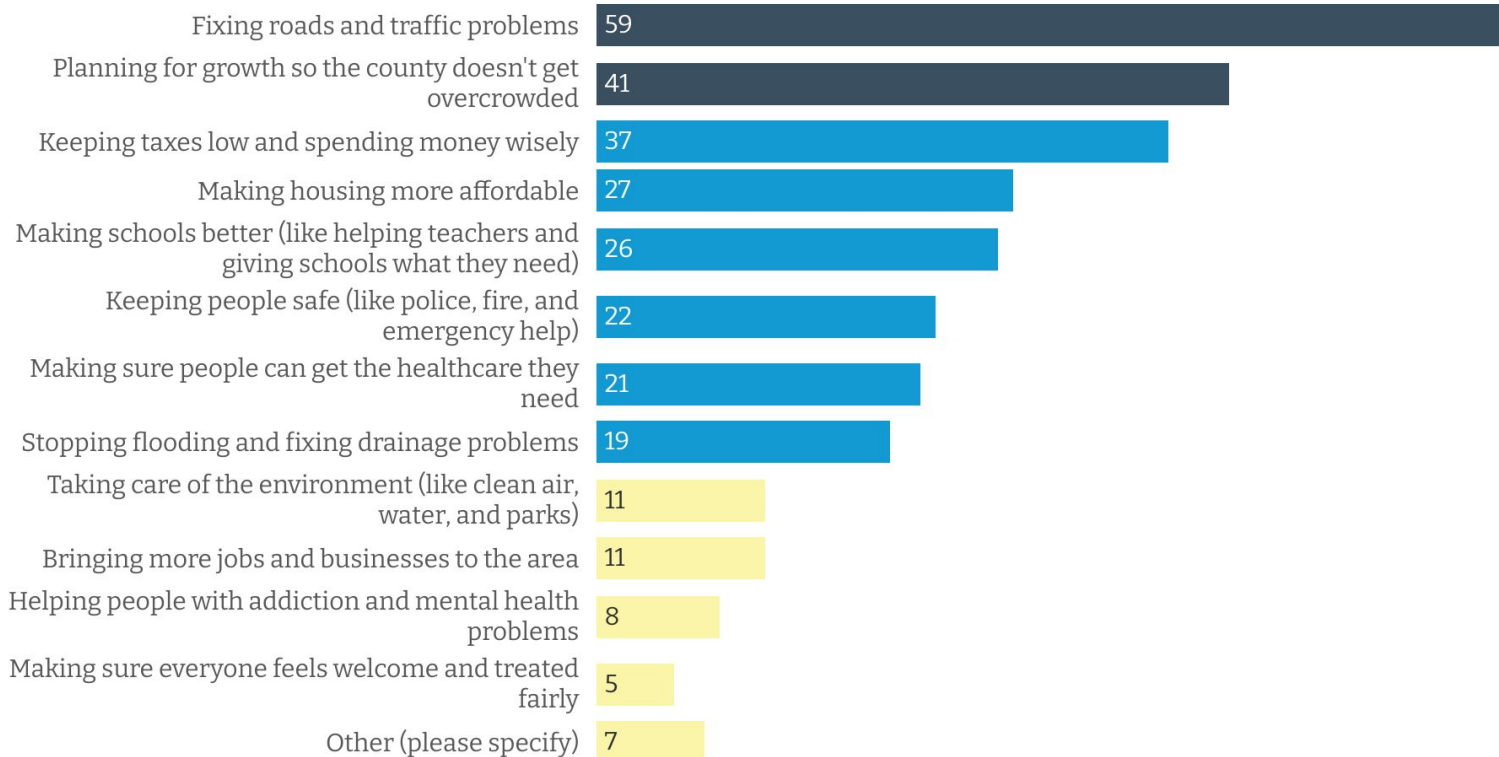


Top Issues

Infrastructure, growth management, economic development, homelessness, crime, and youth amenities are the highest priorities for local voters.

Infrastructure Tops the List of Voter Priorities

What are the top 3 issues you believe Montgomery County should prioritize?



Top Issues Among Registered Voters in Montgomery County – Variation Across Groups

What are the top 3 issues you believe Montgomery County should prioritize?

	Full Sample	Women	Men	White	POC	Non-College	College
Fixing roads and traffic problems	59	58	61	66	48	59	60
Planning for growth so the county doesn't get overcrowded	41	39	44	44	35	37	47
Keeping taxes low and spending money wisely	37	34	40	41	27	39	33
Making housing more affordable	27	28	25	26	30	27	26
Making schools better (like helping teachers and giving schools what they need)	26	28	23	24	29	25	27
Keeping people safe (like police, fire, and emergency help)	22	23	22	24	19	24	19
Making sure people can get the healthcare they need	21	26	17	19	28	25	17
Stopping flooding and fixing drainage problems	19	20	18	18	20	20	19
Taking care of the environment (like clean air, water, and parks)	11	10	12	11	11	9	13
Bringing more jobs and businesses to the area	11	11	11	6	20	9	14
Helping people with addiction and mental health problems	8	10	5	7	9	8	6
Making sure everyone feels welcome and treated fairly	5	5	6	2	11	5	5
Other (please specify)	7	6	9	7	8	8	7

Key Insights From the 'Other' Field

Analysis of the open-ended option for other issues reveals core themes.

Infrastructure & Growth Management: Fix roads, stop overbuilding, plan for growth

Economic Development & Jobs: Attract businesses, white-collar jobs, higher pay

Homelessness & Social Services: Address downtown homelessness with support services

Crime & Safety: Reduce crime, improve enforcement, enhance neighborhood safety

Youth & Community Amenities: More parks, sports facilities, safe spaces for youth

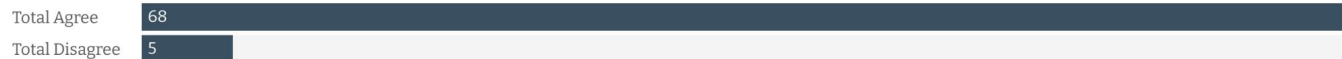


Accessibility of Key Resources

While access to vaccinations, insurance, and healthcare services is reported as easier, the findings highlight clear disparities that call for targeted efforts in the areas where need for access is most evident.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement for each item: "I can easily access this in Montgomery County."

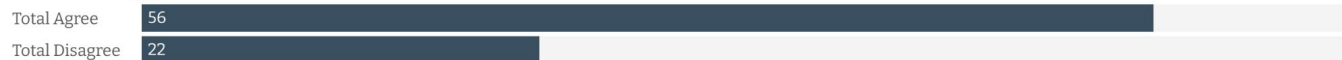
Vaccinations



Insurance (e.g., health, auto)



Safe community spaces



Healthcare services



Employment opportunities



Housing



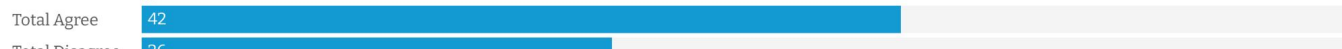
Reliable transportation



Protection from discrimination



Mental health support

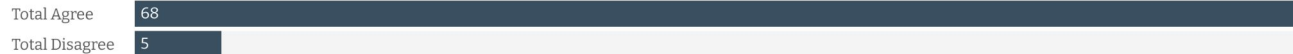


More than half of voters agree they can easily access vaccinations, insurance, safe community spaces, healthcare, and employment

Half or less say they can easily access housing, transportation, protection from discrimination, and mental health support

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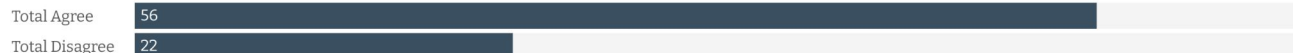
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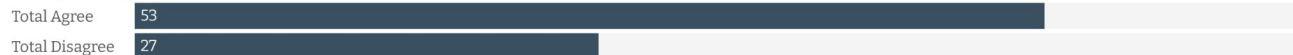
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More Vulnerable Groups are Less Likely to Say They Can Easily Access Key **EMBOLD** research Resources

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement for each item: “I can easily access this in Montgomery County.”

		Total	Women	Men	White	POC	Non-College	College	LGBTQ+
Vaccinations	Total Agree	68	71	64	65	77	63	77	86
Insurance (e.g., health, auto)	Total Agree	59	57	61	61	59	54	67	59
Safe community spaces	Total Agree	56	56	57	56	59	53	61	38
Healthcare services	Total Agree	55	50	60	54	59	54	57	40
Employment opportunities	Total Agree	53	50	57	57	47	52	56	41
Housing	Total Agree	50	47	53	50	50	47	54	30
Reliable transportation	Total Agree	47	46	49	46	51	50	43	44
Protection from discrimination	Total Agree	45	43	48	49	40	46	45	19
Mental health support	Total Agree	42	40	45	40	48	40	46	23

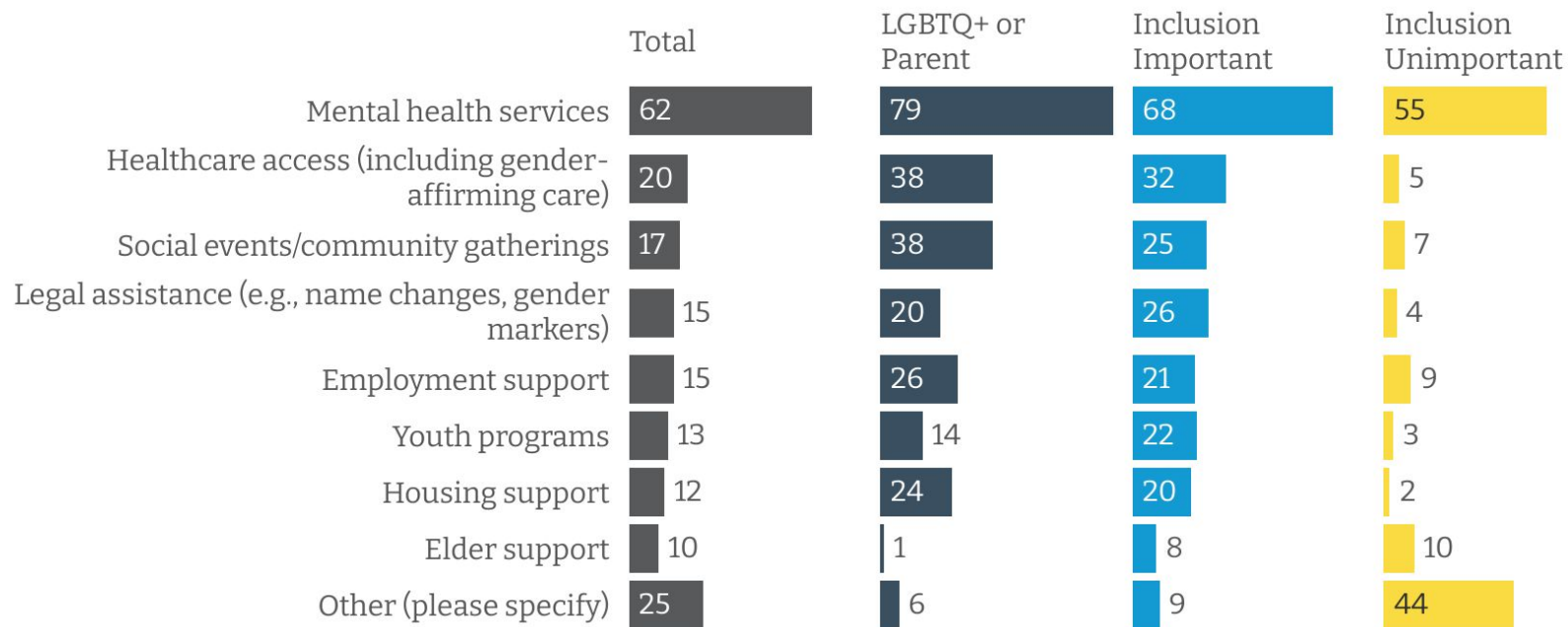
Accessibility of Key Resources for LGBTQ+ Community

The most noted resource perceived to be needed
for the LGBTQ+ community in Montgomery
County is Mental Health Support

Mental Health Services Most Needed

EMBOLD research

Which of the following resources do you believe are most needed for LGBTQ+ individuals in Clarksville? (Please select up to 3)



Qualitative Data Insight

Interviews highlighted the additional stress that LGBTQ+ youth face and how parents can worsen mental health challenges, with one teacher in Montgomery County explaining that “I have had parents say to me that they would rather have a dead kid than a queer kid, in that joking way that they think is funny, like it's not a problem.”

Key insights from the 'Other' field

Analysis of the open-ended option for other issues reveals core themes.

Equality & Fairness: Same access for all, no special treatment, equal resources

Religious & Moral Objections: Faith-based values, conversion therapy, repentance

Hostile or Dismissive: Insults, slurs, rejection of LGBTQ support

Apathy & "Don't Know": *Indifferent, unsure, dismisses issue*

Critique of Question / Issue Deflection:
Rejects premise, prioritizes other concerns

Other / N/A: Blank, "None," unclear responses



LGBTQ+ Lived Experience with Accessibility

LGBTQ+ persons struggle to access most resources but in particular housing, transportation, and safe spaces

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement for each item: "I can easily access this in Montgomery County as an LGBTQ+ person."

Vaccinations



Insurance (e.g., health, auto)



Employment opportunities



Healthcare services



Housing



Reliable transportation



LGBTQ+ peoples can easily access vaccinations.

Qualitative Data Insight

Some participants did highlight positive experiences with healthcare workers: when it comes to like the healthcare industry, I've noticed people within the healthcare industry tend to be more accepting. ...I feel like doctor's offices somewhat cuz I feel like then and there people I feel like I feel like they tend to be more accepting like I said in the medical field.

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Vaccinations



Insurance (e.g., health, auto)



Employment opportunities



Healthcare services



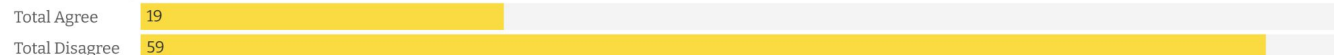
Housing



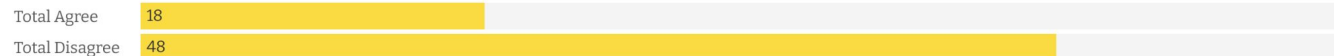
Reliable transportation



Safe community spaces



Mental health support



Protection from discrimination



LGBTQ+ peoples can easily access vaccinations.

Least accessible are safe community spaces, mental health support, protection from discrimination.

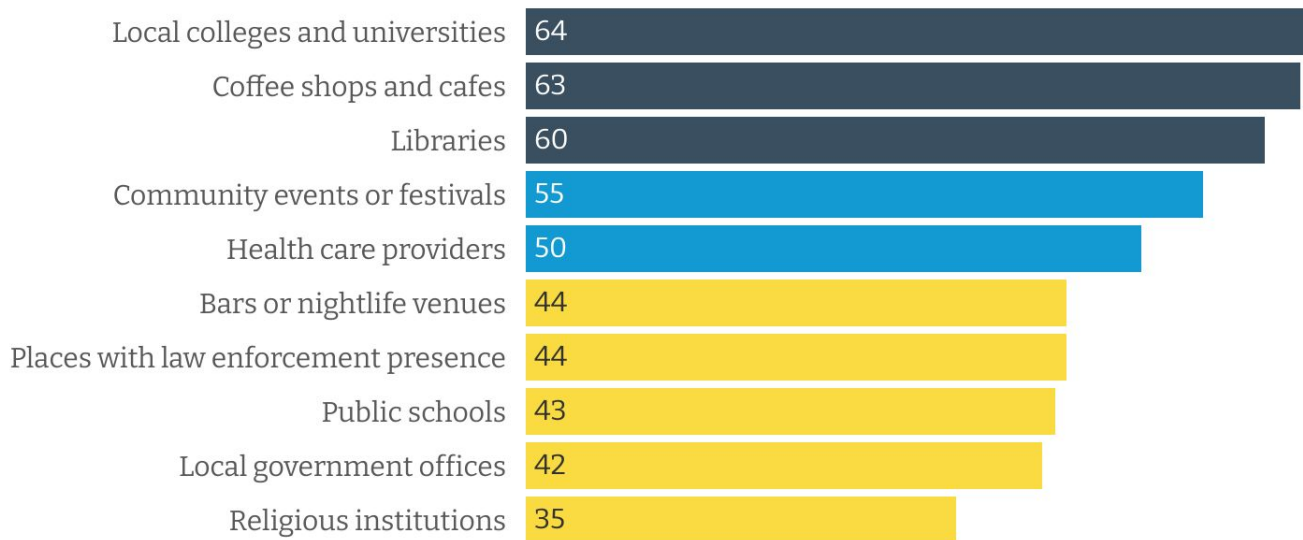
Perceived Safe Spaces

Colleges, Coffee Shops, and Libraries are perceived as safe spaces for LGBTQ+, whereas local government offices and religious institutions are not.

Most Welcoming Places are Colleges, Coffee Shops, and Libraries

EMBOLD research

How welcoming do you think the following places or settings are for LGBTQ+ people in your community?



Qualitative Data Insight

According to interviews, spaces with more feminine and liberal cultural coding were often perceived as safe. Participants mentioned places like craft fairs with “spooky” themes and farmers markets as inclusive environments where they felt more comfortable expressing themselves.

Women Most Likely to Feel Colleges, Coffee Shops, and Libraries as Welcoming

EMBOLD research

How welcoming do you think the following places or settings are for LGBTQ+ people in your community?

Questions	Total	Women	Men	White	POC	Non-College	College
Local colleges and universities	64	67	60	61	71	61	68
Coffee shops and cafes	63	70	54	63	64	60	67
Libraries	60	66	53	60	61	59	63
Community events or festivals	55	62	46	54	56	53	58
Health care providers	50	53	47	49	53	48	55
Bars or nightlife venues	44	50	36	42	46	41	47
Places with law enforcement presence	44	44	44	47	37	45	43
Public schools	43	45	41	45	40	43	44
Local government offices	42	43	40	45	35	44	38
Religious institutions	35	34	37	35	36	38	31

Perceived Challenges for LGBTQ+ Youth And Needed Resources

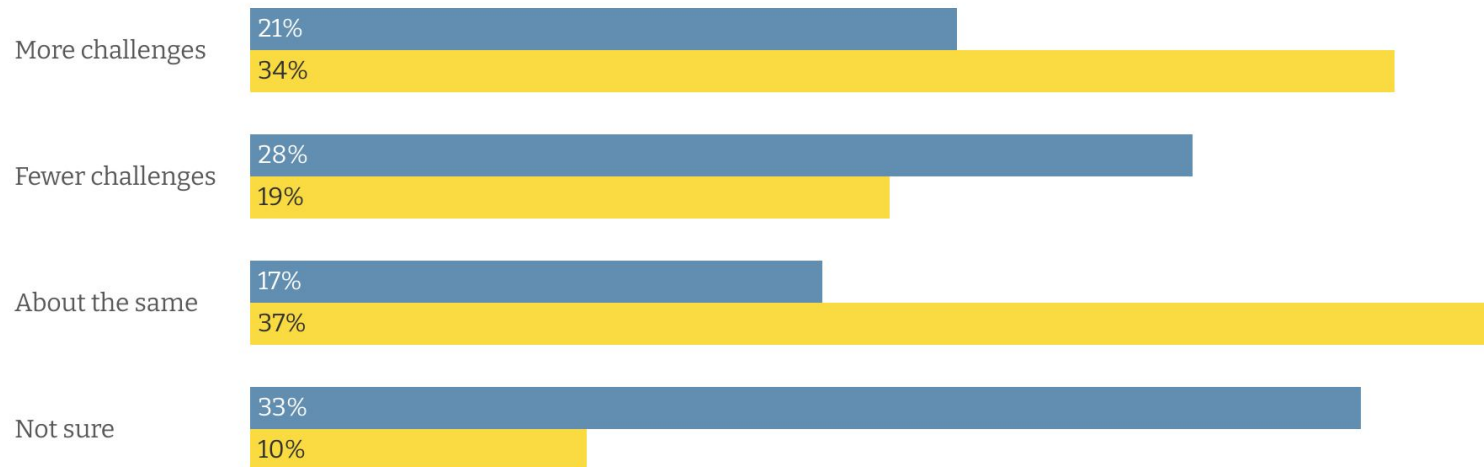
Those closest to young peoples have growing concerns about the lack of youth spaces and changing support from adults in school systems

Those Closest to LGBTQ+ Youth Are More Likely to Express **Greater Challenges**

EMBOLD research

Do you believe younger LGBTQ+ individuals in Clarksville face more, fewer, or the same challenges today as young people did 10 years ago?

● Total ● LGBTQ+ or Parent



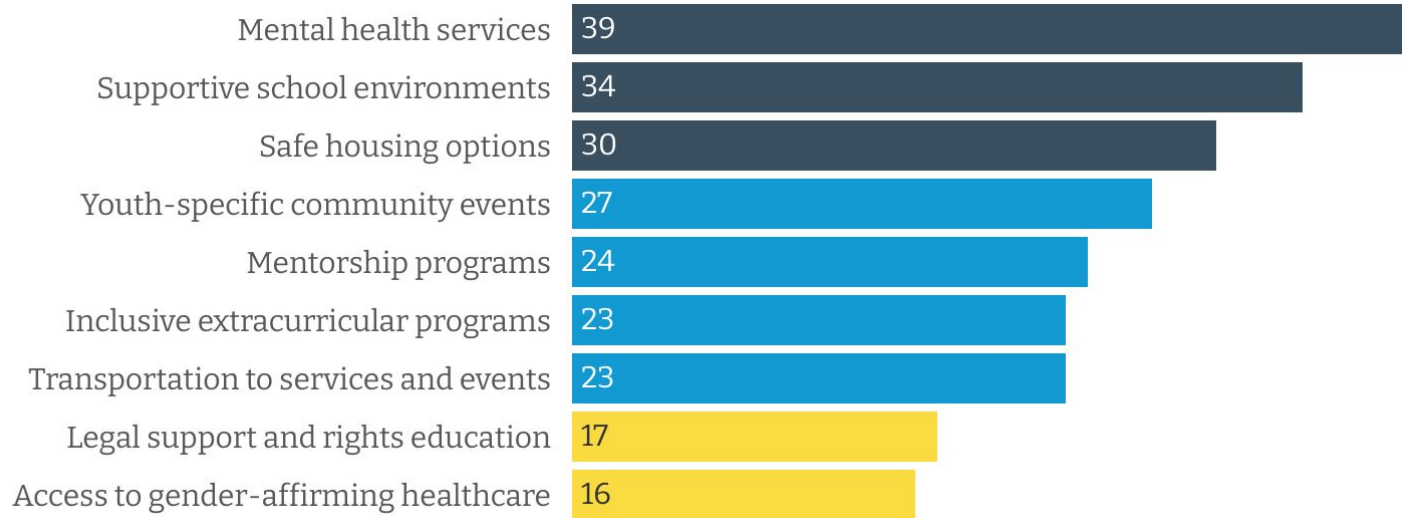
Qualitative Data Insight

Participants—particularly parents of LGBTQ youth—voiced increasing concern over school policies that exacerbate the isolation of vulnerable students. The interviews reveal a clear divide between youth with supportive, resource-rich home environments and those lacking such support. Policies are also limiting the ability of community actors to reach and assist the most

Less Than Half of Voters Believe Any of These Resources are Available to Youths

EMBOLD research

For the items you rated as important, how available do you think these resources are for LGBTQ+ youth in Montgomery County?



Qualitative Data Insight

The need for consistent, confidential, and queer-affirming spaces for youth—both physical and emotional—was clear across interviews. One participant said: Ever since I moved here, I have heard people... say there is nothing for kids to do that doesn't cost them money here."

Men More Likely to View Supportive Schools and Transportation Available to Youths Whereas Very Few POC Believe they Have Access to Gender Affirming Care

EMBOLD research

For the items you rated as important, how available do you think these resources are for LGBTQ+ youth in Montgomery County?

	Total	Women	Men	White	POC	Non-College	College
Mental health services	39	38	41	37	40	45	31
Safe housing options	30	28	35	33	26	38	20
Supportive school environments	34	29	45	29	39	34	34
Youth-specific community events	27	27	28	26	28	34	21
Mentorship programs	24	23	25	22	25	25	22
Access to gender-affirming healthcare	16	14	21	23	8	20	12
Legal support and rights education	17	16	19	16	15	19	15
Inclusive extracurricular programs	23	23	24	28	17	31	15
Transportation to services and events	23	20	31	22	25	28	18

Qualitative Data Insight

Interviews highlight that schools, which were once safe spaces where youth experiencing challenges with their identity at home could find support from adults, are increasingly constrained by policies that make such support more difficult. Alternatively, peers are now often described as more supportive.

Among Those That Feel Inclusion is Important, Businesses Stances on LGBTQ+ Can Impact Purchasing

EMBOLD research

Are you more or less likely to make a purchase from a business that:

Total More Likely

Supports equal rights for transgender adults

Respondents

26%

Inclusion Important

44%

Inclusion Unimportant

5%

Supports equal rights for gay, lesbian, and
bisexual adults

31%

49%

10%

Believes there should be limitations on what gay,
lesbian, and bisexual adults can do

11%

2%

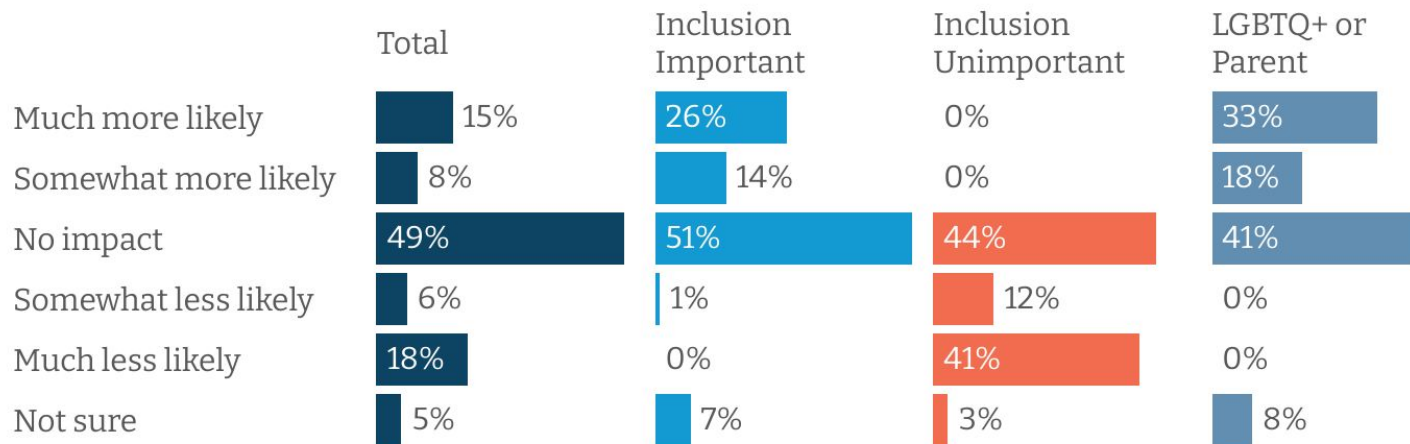
21%

Qualitative Data Insight

Many interviewees said they want to shop only at supportive businesses but feel limited by the options available in Montgomery County. Those who are more economically marginalized also expressed frustration about being unable to shop at more inclusive places and about being excluded from community events due to cost.

Majority are not Impacted by the Visibility of Support but it Depends on the Audience **EMBOLD** research

Would you be more or less likely to shop at a business that visibly supports LGBTQ+ people?



Qualitative Data Insight

During interviews, participants indicated that they rely on markers such as stickers or familiarity with the owner's identity to determine whether a place is safe, particularly for trans individuals. One individual mentioned: "We have a couple [businesses] that will have like you know those cheesy stickers. 'Everyone is welcome here,' which... it's great to know that people will treat me good and I would appreciate seeing more of that."



What do you want to know?

Are Voters more or less likely to make a purchase from a business that support LGBTQ+

Search

 Perceptions of the economy

 What people want in news

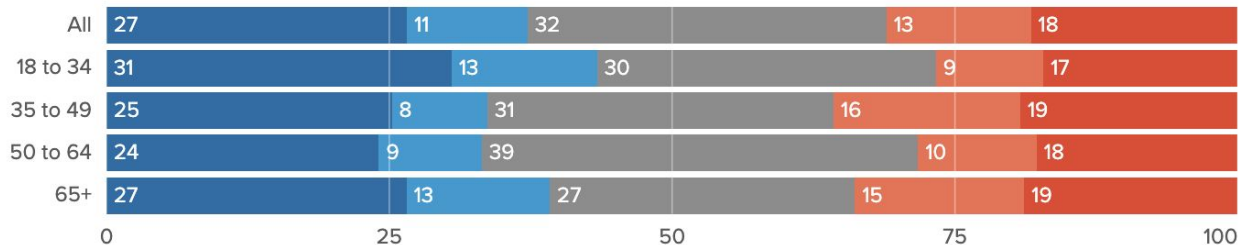
 Wind v. solar popularity

 Young men news consumption

Benefits of Siding With Transgender Rights

Q: Are you more or less likely to make a purchase from a business that supports equal rights for transgender adults?

● Much more likely ● Somewhat more likely ● No Impact ● Somewhat less likely ● Much less likely



Embold Research Data Portal

Millions of data points at your fingertips—giving you instant access to your complete polling archive, a massive dataset of survey responses on policy and politics, and an AI-powered search tool that surfaces insights and trends in seconds.

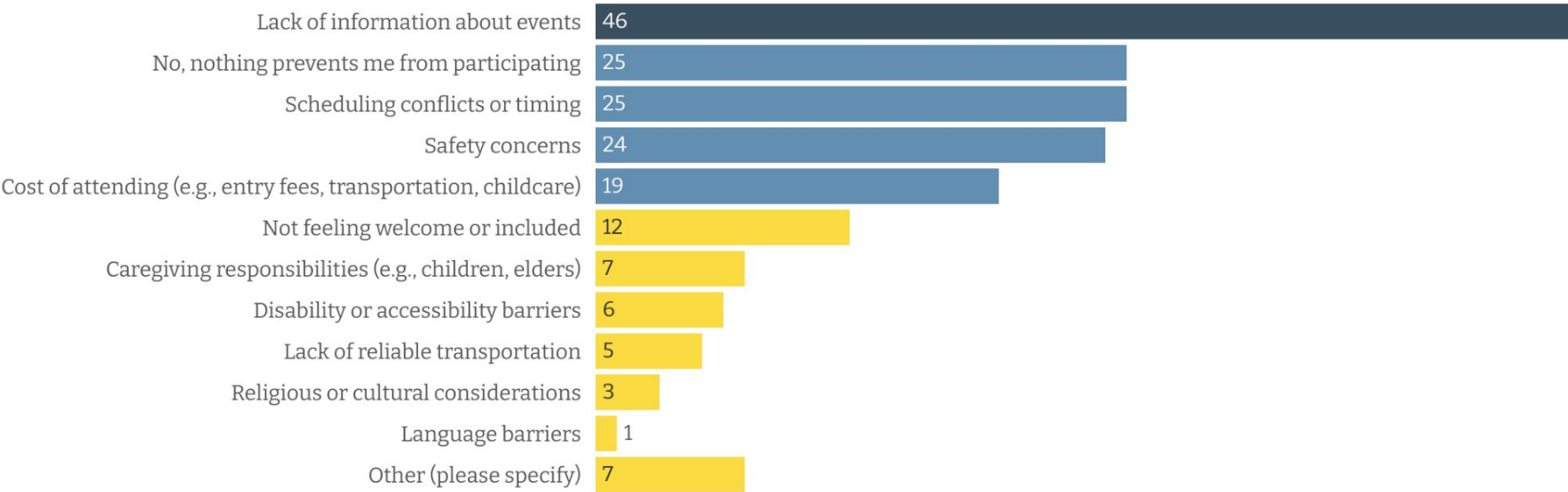
Path Forward:

Better Communication about Community Events Hosted
in Spaces Perceived as Welcoming.

The Biggest Barrier to Attending Events: Lack of Information

EMBOLDresearch

Are there any factors that prevent you from participating in community events or activities in Montgomery County that you would like to attend? Select all that apply.



Qualitative Data Insight

Lack of information was frequently underscored in interviews with one participant highlighting: “It really is a lot of it word of mouth. ... You really have to be in the know to even like expect that to be a thing you could find. ...”

POC Voters are More Likely to Express Not Feeling Welcomed

EMBOLD research

Are there any factors that prevent you from participating in community events or activities in Montgomery County that you would like to attend? Select all that apply.

Answer	Total	Women	Men	White	POC	Non-College	College
Lack of information about events	46	51	40	41	57	44	50
No, nothing prevents me from participating	25	19	32	28	20	24	28
Scheduling conflicts or timing	25	29	20	22	32	22	29
Safety concerns	24	27	21	24	23	26	20
Cost of attending (e.g., entry fees, transportation, childcare)	19	21	16	20	16	20	17
Not feeling welcome or included	12	13	11	7	21	12	11
Caregiving responsibilities (e.g., children, elders)	7	7	8	7	9	9	5
Disability or accessibility barriers	6	6	6	7	5	8	4
Lack of reliable transportation	5	5	5	4	8	7	3
Religious or cultural considerations	3	3	4	3	4	4	2
Language barriers	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Other (please specify)	7	9	5	8	4	8	5

Qualitative Data Insight

Interviews noted barriers within community spaces for people with multiple marginalized identities. One participant said: “even if you're openly okay with gay people, you might not be okay with black people or vice versa.”

If you were given \$1 million to invest, what would you do..?

Infrastructure & Traffic: Road repairs, congestion relief, drainage improvements, sidewalks, better planning

Youth & Education Support: After-school programs, mentorship, youth centers, school funding, alternative education pathways

Housing & Homelessness: Affordable housing, shelters, tiny home villages, support for veterans, addressing homelessness

Mental & Physical Health Services: Mental health access, healthcare facilities, crisis support, addiction treatment, gender-affirming care

Community Spaces & Recreation: Parks, playgrounds, sports facilities, community centers, beautification projects, art programs



RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusive, Whole-Community Youth Events: Develop free, accessible youth programs—like art nights, sports leagues, or volunteer opportunities—led by inclusion-trained adults to ensure all youth feel welcome and safe without needing to label themselves.

Strengthen Communication Channels: Invest in clear, centralized, and multilingual event promotion that doesn't rely solely on social media or word-of-mouth, ensuring even newcomers or those without online access know what's available.

Make All Community Events and Spaces More Accessible: Require event planners to consider physical, sensory, financial, and language accessibility from the start, offering sliding-scale admission and low-sensory zones to remove barriers for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a Dedicated LGBTQ+ Community Center: Prioritize creating a fully accessible, centrally located community center that offers 24-hour safe space, mental health support, crisis response, and cultural programming designed by and for LGBTQ+ residents.

Expand Alternative Safe Spaces for Youth Support: Recognizing that schools are increasingly constrained by legislation, invest in community centers, libraries, and other public venues to host inclusive, confidential, and affirming programs where LGBTQ+ youth can safely connect with peers and trusted adults.

Center Intersectional Inclusion in All Efforts:

Recognize and address the differences in experience between LGBTQ+ individuals who can “pass” and those whose queerness intersects with other marginalized identities like race, disability, or immigration status, ensuring programs and spaces are intentionally designed to be inclusive and affirming for all.

Request for Proposals

Clarksville Q disburses roughly \$80,000 a year to support queer programming in the Clarksville area. We are constantly seeking new partners and we ideas to move our community forward. .

This needs assessment was commissioned to inform our programming and yours. Moving forward Clarksville Q will prioritize requests that aim to address these needs.

Clarksville Q is seeking proposals for a queer and/ or intersectional community center that would operate year round and serve as a space for queer, minority, women led, and civic groups. These proposal could potentially be funded as early as January.

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?



ABOUT US

Embold Research

Lead with data. Get things done.

Embold Research is a team of data scientists and communications professionals with deep experience helping leaders translate data into actionable insights.

