

Clarksville

Building the LGBTQIA+ Community

COMMUNITY • ADVOCACY • EDUCATION • HEALTH • SUPPORT



LGBTQ+

Assessment

Montgomery, TN

Link to longer presentation [here](#) and

Qualitative Report [here](#)

July 2025

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.

KEY FINDINGS

01

Heightened Vulnerability

LGBTQ+ youth are especially at risk, facing limited confidential and affirming spaces alongside restrictive school policies that make support harder to deliver

02

School Environment Barriers:

Schools, once safe havens, are increasingly constrained by legislation and policy. Adults have fewer opportunities to offer support, leaving peers as the primary source of affirmation for many youth

03

Lack of Critical Resources:

LGBTQ+ youth often lack access to essential supports, including mental health care, safe housing, supportive schools, community events, and gender-affirming care.

04

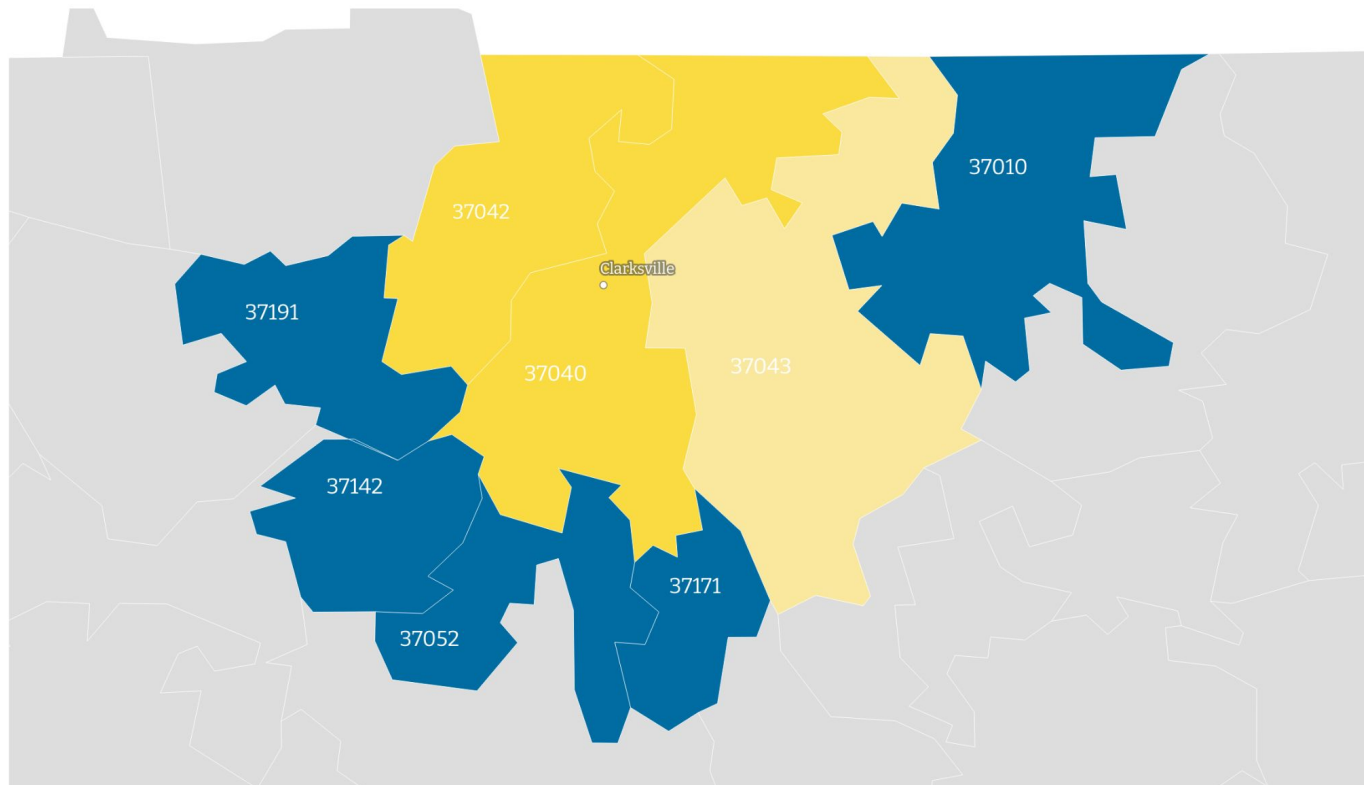
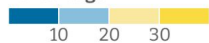
Urgent Need for Safe &

Inclusive Youth Spaces: Data finds a need for consistent, confidential, queer-affirming youth programs and free community activities. Residents also prioritize youth support through after-school programs, mentorship, and youth centers

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+.

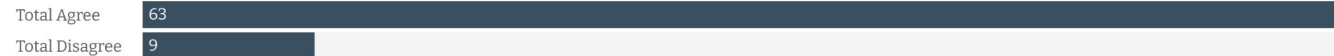
Map data: © Esri, TomTom North America, Inc., United States Postal Service

LGBTQ+ Lived Experience with Accessibility

LGBTQ+ persons state that struggle 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



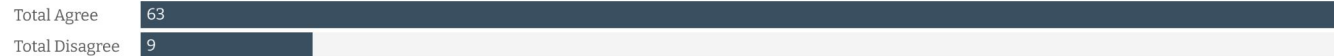
LGBTQ+ peoples can easily access vaccinations.

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.

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



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Employment opportunities



Healthcare services



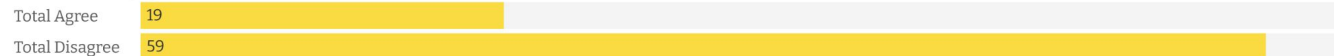
Housing



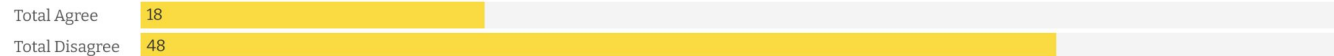
Reliable transportation



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.

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 |

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.

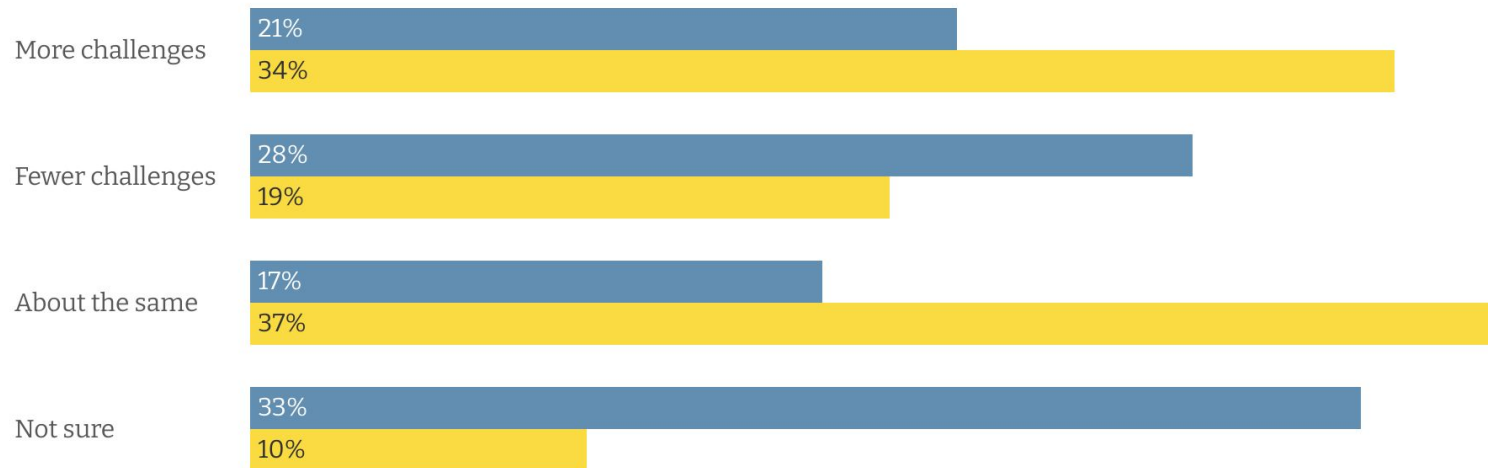
Perceived Challenges for LGBTQ+ Youth And Needed Resources

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



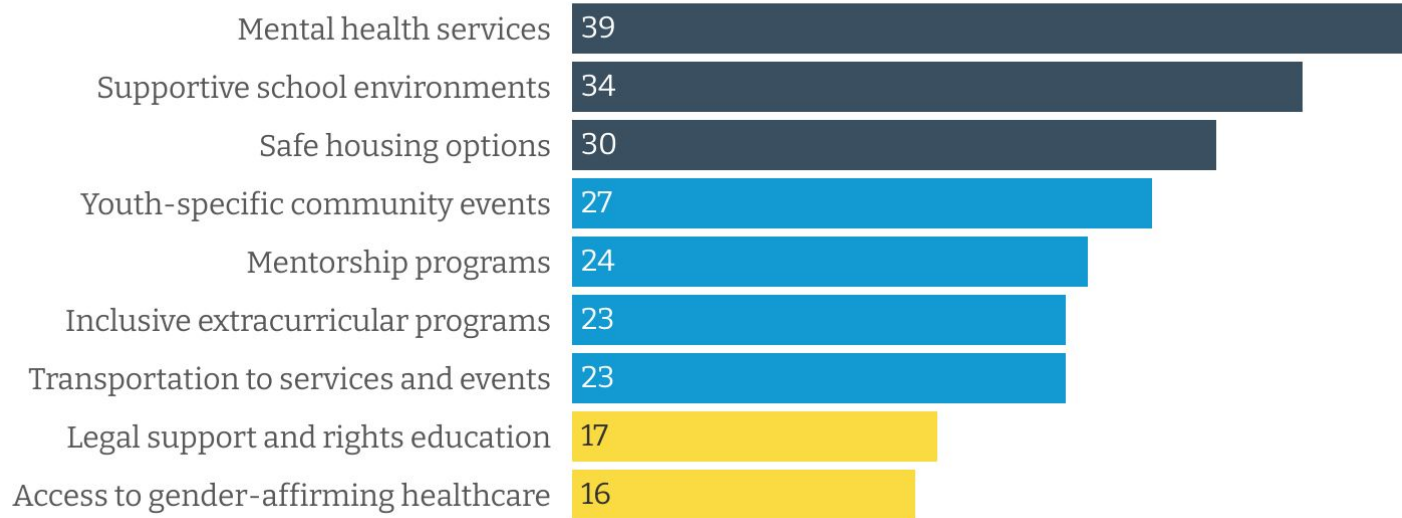
Qualitative Data Insight

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.

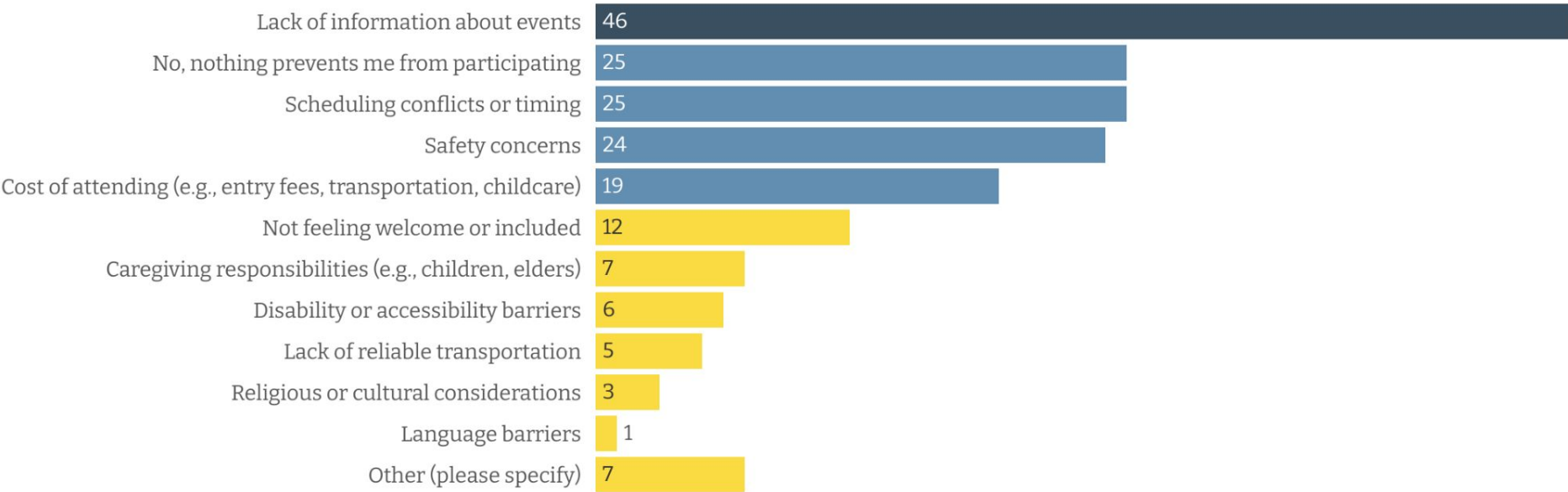
Path Forward:

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

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.

| 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

Create Free, Inclusive Youth Programs

Develop accessible, affirming activities—such as art nights, sports leagues, and volunteer opportunities—led by adults trained in inclusion, so all youth feel safe and welcome.

Expand Safe, Confidential Youth Spaces

Since schools are increasingly constrained, invest in alternative venues like community centers, libraries, and other public spaces to provide consistent, queer-affirming support for youth.

Strengthen Mental Health and Mentorship Supports

Prioritize confidential, affordable, and affirming mental health services, alongside mentorship programs and after-school opportunities that connect youth with supportive peers and adults.

Improve Communication and Accessibility

Promote youth-focused events and resources through clear, centralized, and widely accessible channels—not just word-of-mouth or social media—and ensure all programs are financially and physically accessible.

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.

Follow Up

Clarksville Q Town Hall: September 6th 6:00 PM, Clarksville
Montgomery County Library