



A Program of  LGBT  
TECH

# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



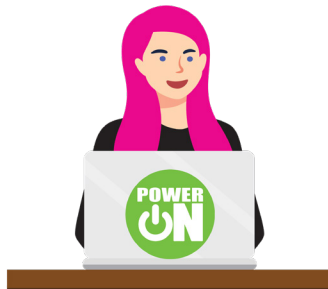
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# INTRODUCTION

PowerOn, a program of LGBT Tech, is a first-of-a-kind program that is tackling the digital divide for the LGBTQ+ community by distributing technology directly to LGBTQ+ community members and our national network of LGBTQ+ organizations that support them. LGBT Tech is a diverse team of experts that develops programs and resources that support LGBTQ+ communities and work to educate organizations and policy makers on the unique needs LGBTQ+ individuals face when it comes to tech.



*Over the past three months, the Individual Tech Grant has transformed my life in multiple ways. It's granted me access to essential technological tools and resources, greatly enhancing my daily routines. From streamlining my job search to remotely accessing vital healthcare services, the grant has eliminated barriers that once limited my access to these necessities. Moreover, it has alleviated financial constraints by providing access to technology I couldn't afford, allowing me to fully engage in the digital sphere. In essence, the grant has shattered access barriers, empowering me to lead a more connected and fulfilling life.*

— 2023 ITG Recipient





# OUR MISSION

PowerOn is built on the foundation that digital rights are human rights, and our mission is to bridge the digital gap in the LGBTQ+ community. We provide technology, resources for internet access, and connection to vital information, research, and advocacy to both LGBTQ+ organizations and individual community members. We empower the LGBTQ+ community to transform their lives through technology.

PowerOn was established to bridge the significant digital divide faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Since the program's inception, technology's role in daily life continues to grow immensely. Today it is a basic necessity for equitable participation in society. The program has continuously evolved to meet the ever-changing technological needs of the LGBTQ+ community. At the end of 2022, PowerOn surveyed our partner centers to better understand how their needs had evolved over time. Based on this participant input and feedback, in 2023 we introduced two new grant opportunities: the PowerOn Community Tech Grant and the PowerOn Individual Tech Grant. In 2023, we saw a major increase in demand for PowerOn grants as well as exponential growth in program reach and impact.





# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

2023 has been a transformative year for the PowerOn program and the communities we serve. At LGBT Tech, we have always believed that digital rights are human rights. This belief drives our commitment to bridging the digital divide within the LGBTQ+ community—a gap that remains a critical barrier to equity, access, and opportunity.

This year, through the PowerOn Community Tech Grant and the PowerOn Individual Tech Grant, we provided life-changing technology to thousands of LGBTQ+ individuals and over 40 community centers across the country. The results have been truly inspiring: from enabling access to vital healthcare services, mental health support, and emergency services, to helping LGBTQ+ youth and adults find employment and pursue their educational goals. The impact of having the right tools at the right time cannot be overstated.

Our journey in 2023 has also been marked by listening and adapting. We heard from our partner centers about their evolving needs, and with our supporters we responded with expanded grant opportunities to ensure that technology reaches those who need it most. This has allowed us to increase our reach significantly, serving over 262,000 LGBTQ+ individuals across the country and distributing over \$163,000 worth of technology.

However, the challenges of the digital divide continue to evolve, and so must we. As we celebrate the successes of this past year, we are more committed than ever to scaling our efforts. In 2023 we introduced LGBT Tech's Digital Navigator Program, which offers essential training and resources to help our community members understand and leverage digital tools safely. By addressing the core



# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONT.

components of digital access—connectivity, devices, infrastructure, and literacy—we are building a foundation for our communities long-term digital equity.

We are deeply grateful for the support from our sponsors, community partners, and the many individuals who have believed in our mission. It is because of you that we can continue to provide life-saving technology and create pathways for LGBTQ+ individuals to thrive in our increasingly digital world.

Together, let's continue to ensure that every member of our community can access the opportunities and resources they deserve. Thank you for standing with us in this journey toward a more connected and inclusive future.

With gratitude,

**LGBT** Christopher Wood  
 Executive Director  
**TECH** LGBT Tech





# MEET THE TEAM



**Christopher Wood**

(He/Him)

Executive Director & Co-Founder of LGBT Tech



**Kristen Kelley**

(She/They)

Director of Programs



**Samantha Sygier Cayax**

(She/Her)

Programs Coordinator



**Ellie Bessette**

(She/Her)

Director of Operations & Finance



**Arin Rook**

(They/Them)

Digital Inclusion Manager



**Tatyana Ithier**

(She/Her)

Communications & Marketing Coordinator



# 2023 POWERON DATA

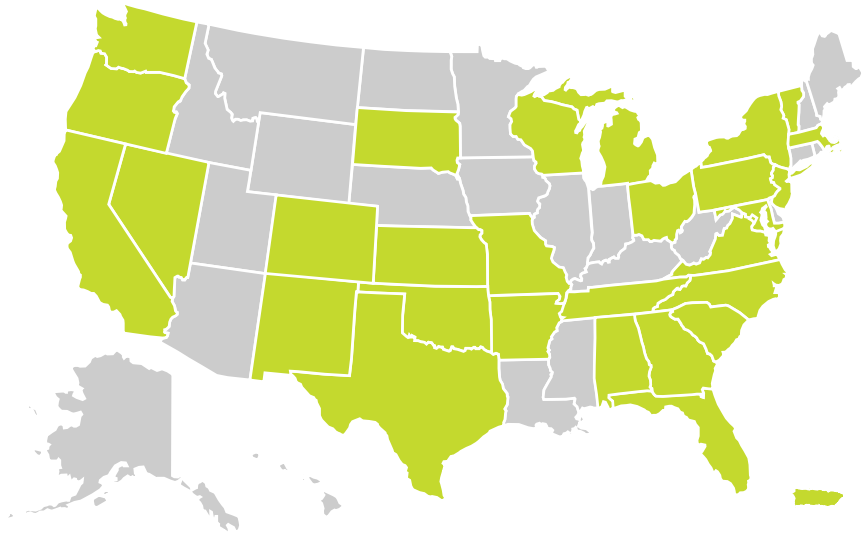
PowerOn  
distributed  
**\$163,416**

worth of technology  
in 2023

**262,342**  
LGBTQ+  
individuals

impacted by PowerOn  
technology in 2023

30 States and Territories Served  
by PowerOn in 2023



California, Florida, North Carolina, Oregon, Ohio, New York, New Mexico, Colorado, Puerto Rico, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington DC, South Carolina, Maryland, Missouri, Washington, Georgia, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Arkansas, Nevada, Oklahoma, Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Vermont, New, Jersey





# POWERON COMMUNITY TECH GRANT

The PowerOn Community Tech Grant was designed to meet the tech needs of our PowerOn Partner Centers. With a deeper understanding of the critical reliance on technology for center operations and client resources, this grant provides the technology necessary to support community centers and their staff in their work serving the LGBTQ+ community. Through the PowerOn Community Tech Grant (CTG), LGBTQ+ organizations applied for laptops, tablets, cell phones, desktop computers, and printers to support staff with day-to-day operations and provide in-center technology access points for their clients.

## In 2023...

**59% of PowerOn centers** used granted technology in a computer lab or other public space for client use.

**2037 social events/support groups** were held using the granted technology.

**3008 clients** used the granted technology to access mental healthcare services.

**1083 clients** used PowerOn technology to access primary/clinical healthcare.

PowerOn devices were used by **889 individuals** to access emergency services.

**669 community members** found employment after using the granted technology.

**3029 clients** used the granted technology to access food bank resources.

**877 people** attended technology classes using PowerOn devices.

**2448 individuals** engaged in leadership development using the granted technology.

PowerOn technology supported the work of **764 PowerOn center staff members**.

**72.32% of caseloads** were managed using the granted devices.

In 2023

**40** LGBTQ+ centers

received the PowerOn Community Tech Grant

**313** devices

were granted through the Community Tech Grant

**\$125,403**

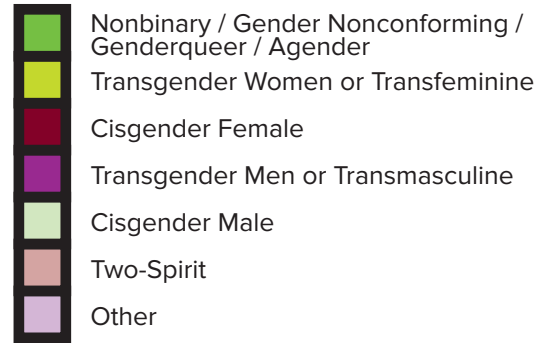
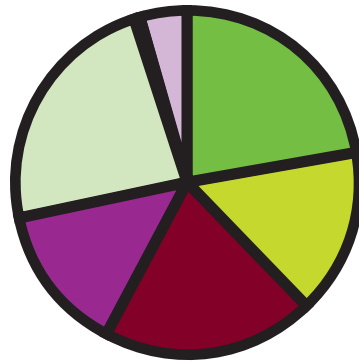
worth of technology was distributed to LGBTQ+ organizations



# DEMOGRAPHICS SERVED THROUGH THE 2023 POWERON COMMUNITY TECH GRANT



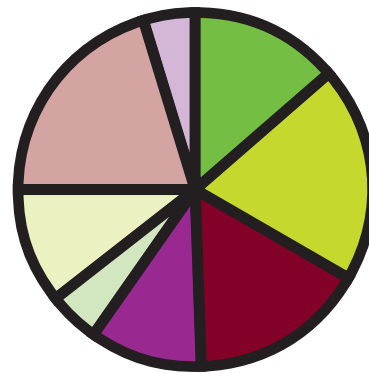
## Gender Identity



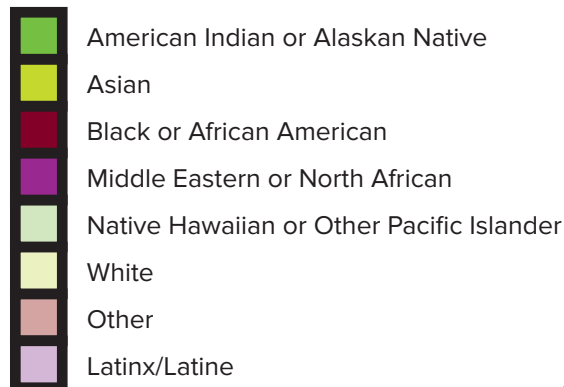
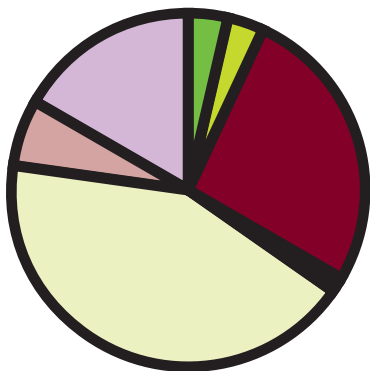
*Receiving this laptop has truly significantly improved my life and helped me get closer to my dream of breaking into the tech industry. While I may have been able to carry out other tasks such as checking my emails and doing research on my gender affirming health care needs on my phone, it was impossible for me to learn software development or cloud development as the courses require certain specs and functions (such as virtualization) that require a laptop.*

— 2023 ITG Recipient

## Sexual Orientation



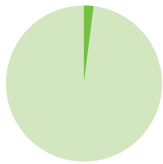
## Race







# DEMOGRAPHICS SERVED THROUGH THE 2023 POWERON COMMUNITY TECH GRANT, CONT.



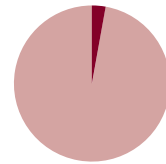
**2.01%**

of clients served identify as intersex  
(18% overrepresentation compared to the general population)



**20.10%**

of clients served identify as having a disability  
(compared to 13% of the general population)



**3.04%**

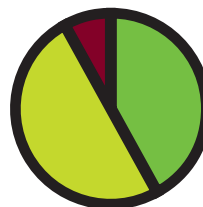
of clients served identify as veterans

## Location



- 22.76% Rural
- 46.16% Urban
- 29.17% Suburban

## Age



- 42% 25 and under
- 49.93% 25-65
- 8.33% 65+



# POWERON INDIVIDUAL TECH GRANT

Surviving, let alone thriving, in today’s society requires connection. A phone, tablet, or laptop is essential for completing schoolwork, applying for jobs, staying in touch with friends and family, and accessing vital online services like healthcare. While essential, these devices are often out of reach for many. PowerOn wants to provide the LGBTQ+ community with the technology it needs to survive and thrive. The PowerOn Individual Tech Grant (ITG) provides life-saving and life-changing technology (cell phones, tablets, and laptops) to LGBTQ+ individuals for personal use.

## IN 2023...

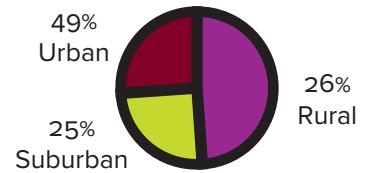
**\$38,012**

worth of technology was distributed through the PowerOn Individual Tech Grant

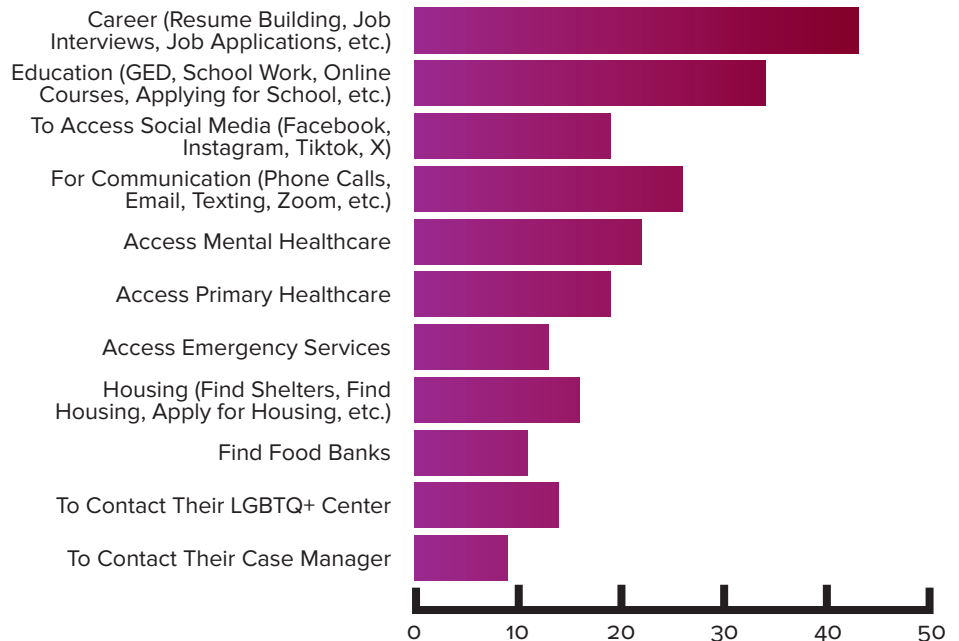
**81** LGBTQ+ community members

received a device through the Individual Tech Grant

### Communities Served by ITG



## Individual Tech Grant recipients used PowerOn granted technology in the following ways





# DEMOGRAPHICS SERVED THROUGH THE 2023 POWERON INDIVIDUAL TECH GRANT

**72%**

of grantees identified as trans

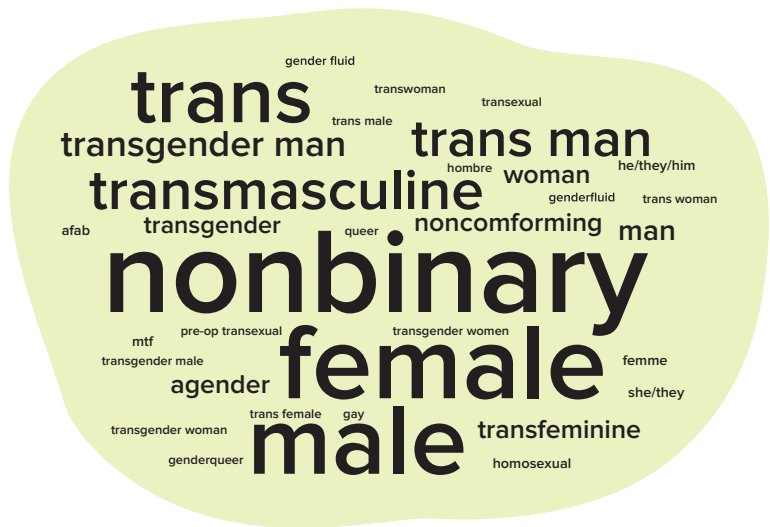
**93%**

of ITG grantees reported to have found LGBTQ+ resources and information online that they would not have found in person

**90%**

of ITG grantees reported that lack of access to technology has been a barrier in achieving goals or obtaining important resources.

## Gender Identity



\*PowerOn grant recipients self identify gender identity so as to authentically reflect the wide range of gender identities that exist within the LGBTQ+ community.

*Having the laptop has given me peace of mind and a better quality of life. I no longer have to find the time to go use a public computer. I do longer have to worry about having my data stolen in public spaces. If a friend was a video call I can have the comfort of the laptop to do so and not hold my phone for hours.*

— 2023 ITG Recipient

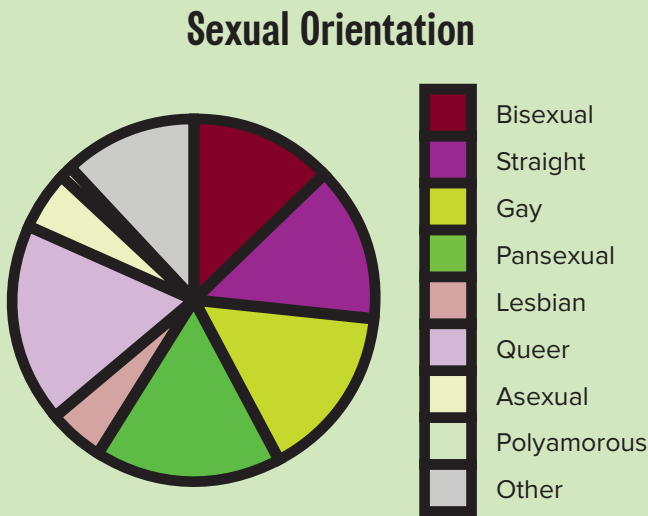
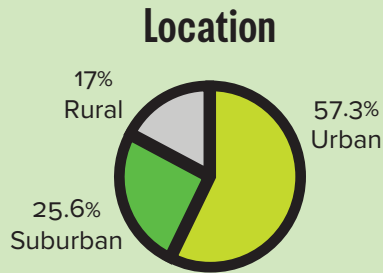
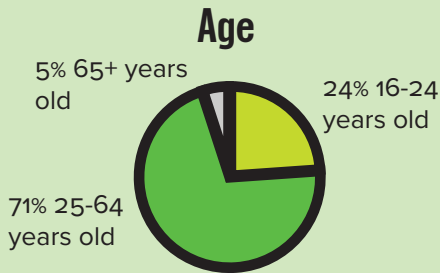
## Race



- Black or African American
- White
- Latinx or Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Asian
- Other



# DEMOGRAPHICS SERVED THROUGH THE 2023 POWERON INDIVIDUAL TECH GRANT, CONT.



**51%**  
of ITG grantees identify as having a disability

**10%**  
of ITG grantees identify as intersex

**100%**  
of ITG grantees reported that “as an LGBTQ+ person, technology is a vital resource in my life”

**64%**  
of ITG grantees reported that access to technology has limited their educational and/or professional journey

**91%**  
of ITG grantees reported that they have found LGBTQ+ community online



# TESTIMONIALS

*It has changed my life for the better. Without this [laptop] I would probably be on the streets helpless. It helped me better myself*

— 2023 ITG Recipient



*This technology has been extremely helpful for our IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) Program, with use of the [tablets]. We had a client experiencing domestic violence that utilized the technology for intake in office and was able to finish the process while temporarily housing them in a hotel before going to a shelter. Being able to take this technology off site and assist those that are experiencing trauma has been a game changer. This particular client is now housed and receiving services in another city and we cannot thank you enough for making this process easier for staff and especially for those we serve that are in a state of crisis.*

— Diversity Center of Oklahoma

*We are so happy to have these computers available for clients! One of our more senior clients came to the center because his home laptop was broken and he was moving and needed help finding a new residence. He was able to access his emails, search for housing, and get housing assistance all from the Pride Center's new tech lab with computers provided by the Power On Grant!*

— Coastal Bend Pride Center

*This technology has allowed us to fully equip our client computer lab, which has regular users. Recently a client that regularly visits the computer lab was able to obtain their first apartment! They achieved this by using the computer lab to search apartments, find financial assistance, and complete paperwork/applications.*

— Guilford Green Foundation & LGBTQ Center



*The device made it much easier to manage schoolwork and find ways to increase my study time no matter where I was at.*

— 2023 ITG Recipient

*I have ADHD, and although I have access to a cell phone, it can prove cumbersome for most administrative tasks, distracts me with social media, and has limited storage and memory. With this PC, I've been able to put down my phone and work without distraction, and can complete larger and more complex editing tasks, faster, and with more accuracy. I've been entering the performing arts scene in the Bay Area, and having this technology gave me the capability to improve the visuals I use in my performances. I've gotten paid gigs, and have found work and community through editing videos for other performers.*

— 2023 ITG Recipient





# POWERON AWARDS CEREMONY

The 2023 PowerOn Awards Ceremony was held on October 26th, 2023 in Washington, DC. generously hosted by Hogan Lovells. This Awards Ceremony brought together program supporters, advocates, and members of the community to celebrate the accomplishments of the PowerOn program and its participants over the past year as well as continue to amplify the need for the LGBTQ+ community's access to technology.

## 2023 PowerOn Award Winners:

**The Change Agent Award**, honoring an individual in public service or social justice whose significant contributions to connectivity have helped support underserved populations, including the LGBTQ+ community, was presented to **Carl Nassib, Founder & CEO, Rayze.**

**The Visionary Award**, honoring an individual or company whose work has empowered LGBTQ+ individuals to achieve success through technology and the internet, was presented to **Comcast NBCUniversal** and accepted by **Sean Mickens, Associate Vice President of External Affairs** and **Dan Kamins, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships and Community Impact.**

**The Superstar Center Award**, honoring a PowerOn partner center or organization that has made outstanding contributions to the program and to the community the organization serves, was presented to **The McKenzie Project Inc. of Miami & Dania Beach, Florida.**

**The Trailblazer Award**, honoring an adult who has taken full advantage of the opportunities provided by access to technology, was presented to **Tamara Thomas from Arkansas Black Gay Men's Forum.**

**The Role Model Award**, honoring a youth or young adult who set the bar for themselves and their peers while participating in the PowerOn Program, was presented to **Kayona Avalo-Bradley of Our Spot KC in Kansas City, KS.**



# THE LGBTQ+ DIGITAL DIVIDE

## What is the Digital Divide?

The digital divide refers to the gap between those with access to modern communication technologies and those without, disproportionately impacting LGBTQ+ individuals who face additional barriers to equity.

This divide is defined by unequal access to **connectivity, devices, infrastructure,** and **digital literacy.** **Connectivity** provides access to the internet, crucial for LGBTQ+ individuals to reach supportive resources and communities. However, high costs and limited availability often restrict this access. **Devices**, such as smartphones and computers, enable people to participate in the digital world, yet cost barriers prevent many low-income LGBTQ+ individuals from acquiring them. Robust **infrastructure**, including cell towers and high-speed networks, is essential for delivering reliable internet, but inadequate investment in underserved areas, particularly rural regions, leaves many with poor access. Finally, **digital literacy** — the skills needed to navigate online spaces effectively — is vital for safe and informed digital participation.

These elements are interconnected, requiring a holistic approach to digital equity. Addressing one without the others leaves gaps that perpetuate the divide.

## How Does the Divide Impact the LGBTQ+ Community?

LGBTQ+ individuals, often facing worsened socioeconomic outcomes, are particularly vulnerable to the digital divide, limiting access to supportive communities, resources, and opportunities.



73%

of LGBTQ+ adults use the internet to access courses or learning platforms

### Educational Outcomes:

Without reliable internet or devices, LGBTQ+ students struggle with lower academic engagement, motivation, and success, missing out on resources that foster belonging and personal growth.



# THE LGBTQ+ DIGITAL DIVIDE



**41%**

of LGBTQ+ adults and 68% of transgender adults use the internet to find LGBTQ+-friendly employment opportunities

## Employment Outcomes:

Lack of digital access restricts LGBTQ+ individuals from remote work, networking, and skill-building, which exacerbates economic instability and limits job opportunities.



**44%**

of LGBTQ+ adults and 70% of transgender adults use the internet to find LGBTQ+-friendly employment opportunities

## Healthcare Outcomes:

Digital access often serves as the only means for LGBTQ+ individuals to access telemedicine, mental health support, and specialized care, especially when traditional healthcare options are inaccessible or discriminatory.



**69%**

of LGBTQ+ adults are open to all or most in their online communities, compared to 57% to their family and 47% in their workplaces

## Social Connections:

Digital platforms provide LGBTQ+ individuals with essential connections to supportive communities, fostering belonging and emotional support, particularly where local acceptance may be limited.



**74%**

of LGBTQ+ adults and 90% of transgender adults say online spaces had an impact on discovering & learning about their identity

## Access to Information:

Reliable internet is crucial for LGBTQ+ individuals to access accurate information about their rights, services, and resources, which impacts their safety, well-being, and community engagement.

For a deeper look at our policy work, read our recent report [The LGBTQ+ Digital Divide](#) and our [national polling of LGBTQ+ adults](#) on their digital needs and experiences.





# MORE FROM LGBT TECH



In 2023 LGBT Tech introduced our trailblazing Digital Navigator Program. The program was designed from our years of experience working closely with LGBTQ+ organizations and community members to understand their

needs, and takes our approach to bridging the digital divide for the LGBTQ+ community to the next level. In addition to providing crucial access to devices through PowerOn, our Digital Navigator program provides the education and resources necessary to ensure community members stay connected and engage in digital safety best practices.



## Affordable Connection

- Recognizing the urgency of providing the LGBTQ+ community with affordable, consistent internet service, we initially launched our new Digital Navigator Program focused on providing resources and training about the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to the LGBTQ+ community. Through our research we found that over 8 million LGBTQ+ households in the US may be struggling to access affordable internet.
- To support LGBTQ+ community enrollment in the ACP, through our Digital Navigator program we trained 12 LGBTQ+ organizations, spanning across 12 states and territories, and held 6 training events about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), with a total combined potential reach of 513,113 LGBTQ+ individuals.

## Digital Literacy and Online Safety

- Cyber Safety Guidebook: A free cyber safety guidebook designed for LGBTQ+ centers and organizations to safeguard their organizations, clients, and communities online. The guidebook includes templates and worksheets to help LGBTQ+ centers of all sizes and budgets develop basic cybersecurity related policies and procedures.
- Digital Skills Online Resource Hub: An online resource library with tools, information, and activities related to digital skills development for LGBTQ+ individuals of all ages, including pre-made curriculum and activities that LGBTQ+ organizations can use to promote digital literacy skills for their clients.

Learn more about LGBT Tech's Digital Navigator program at [www.digitalnavlgbtq.org](http://www.digitalnavlgbtq.org)



# MORE FROM LGBT TECH



**PATHS**

PATHS is a program to inspire and empower LGBTQ+ youth and young adults interested in careers in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) fields through storytelling by current LGBTQ+ STEAM professionals, and connection to the resources needed to pursue STEAM careers. LGBT Tech’s PATHS program offers grant and mentorship opportunities for students, and a web series featuring interviews with current LGBTQ+ STEAM professionals.

Learn more about LGBT Tech’s PATHS program at [www.pathslgbtq.org](http://www.pathslgbtq.org).



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## Acknowledgments

Our achievements in 2023 would not be possible without the support of our generous sponsors who continually invest in our work and program outreach.



computer:)care

## Contact Us

[www.poweronlgbt.org](http://www.poweronlgbt.org)

We thank you for your continued support of our efforts to close the digital divide for the LGBTQ+ community.

