

June 8, 2024

LGBTQ+ Identification for U.S. Adults

Gallup first began surveying U.S. adults in 2012 for their identification with sexual and gender minority identities. Since they have been measuring this, the percentage of adults who identify with one or more LGBTQ+ identity has steadily risen. Just last year, 7.6% of respondents self-identified as part of the LGBTQ+ community; in 2020, 2021, and 2022 these rates were 5.6%, 7.1%, and 7.2% respectively.

Bisexual adults make up the largest proportion of the LGBTQ+ population -- 4.4% of U.S. adults and 57.3% of LGBTQ+ adults say they are bisexual. Gay and lesbian are the next-most-common identities, each representing slightly over 1% of U.S. adults and roughly one in six LGBTQ+ adults. Slightly less than 1% of U.S. adults and about one in eight LGBTQ+ adults are transgender. The most commonly volunteered LGBTQ+ identities are pansexual and asexual, mentioned by less than 2% of LGBTQ+ adults each.

Overall, each younger generation is about twice as likely as the generation that preceded it to identify as LGBTQ+. More than one in five Gen Z adults, ranging in age from 18 to 26 in 2023, identify as LGBTQ+, as do nearly one in 10 millennials (aged 27 to 42). The percentage drops to less than 5% of Generation X, 2% of baby boomers and 1% of the Silent Generation.

Local Resource: BlaqOut



Located just a few blocks away from the KUMC campus, [BlaqOut](#) is “a nonprofit and movement organization working to improve healthcare access and create a safe space for Kansas City’s Black LGBTQ+ community.” The organization was founded in 2017 and shortly after partnered with the Health Forward Foundation to conduct the first comprehensive health needs assessment of the Black queer community in Kansas City. In 2020, their team launched the “Let’s PrEP!” program to decrease barriers to accessing HIV prevention education and resources and became the first regional provider of free HIV home testing kits and telehealth PrEP services. Many initiatives have been created since then, and BlaqOut now also provides a multitude of no-cost healthcare services, including but not limited to STI screenings and treatment, lab screenings, health insurance navigation, and transportation. In addition to providing and advocating for accessible healthcare services, BlaqOut also works to create inclusive and uplifting spaces for queer Black folks through their LEAD Fellowship Program, BlaqOut Ball, annual BlaqOut Empowerment Summit, and frequent events with other local Black-led organizations and advocacy groups.

Christine Jorgensen

she/her



Christine Jorgensen (1926-1989) is often referred to as the first transgender celebrity, as she was the first American transgender woman to attain international fame for undergoing successful gender affirming surgery. Christine was born in the Bronx, New York, and recalled questioning her gender identity to her mother in one of her earliest memories: “Mom, why didn’t God make us alike?”

Christine graduated high school during WWII and was drafted by the Army where she served as a clerical worker before being honorably discharged in December 1946. She then attended photography school and worked as a dental assistant. After researching treatment options, she traveled to Denmark in 1950 for a series of gender affirming surgeries and hormonal treatments. She intended for her medical transition to remain private, but her story was leaked to the press in 1952, and she quickly became internationally known. When Christine returned to the US in 1953, she used her unintended fame to advocate for transgender visibility and acceptance. She became a nightclub performer and traveled the world giving interviews on college campuses and talk shows, even while facing frequent discrimination.

Despite being crowned “Woman of the Year” by the Scandinavian Society in New York, Christine was unable to marry her fiancé, Howard Knox, as she was listed as male on her birth certificate and gay marriage was illegal. Christine died from bladder and lung cancer at the age of 62. Before she passed, she said she gave the sexual revolution “a good swift kick in the pants.”

Local Resource: Queer Affirming Therapist Guild of Kansas City



The [Queer Affirming Therapist Guild of KC](#) is a “community-based, grassroots organization of licensed mental and medical healthcare professionals, as well as students-in-training.” The organization offers opportunities for professional growth and development for its members through CEU courses, monthly networking meetings, peer consultation sessions and presentations, and more events – all related to a wide variety of LGBTQ topics and issues. In addition to opportunities for its members, the Guild also serves as a resource for the queer community in Kansas City with their annually published directories of LGBTQ-Affirming Mental Health Therapists and Healthcare Practitioners. Additionally, they offer an extensive list of both local and national LGBTQ+ resources and encourage these to be shared with other healthcare providers and clients.

Harvey Milk

he/him



Harvey Milk (1930-1978) was an American politician and activist and the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California when he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Harvey was born in Woodmere, NY to parents of Lithuanian heritage. He came from a small Jewish family that founded a Jewish synagogue and was well known for civic engagement.

Harvey attended college at New York State College for Teachers and enlisted in the Navy in 1951 after graduation. He resigned in 1955 after being officially questioned about his sexual orientation. After the Navy, Harvey worked as a teacher, stock analyst, and production associate for Broadway musicals before becoming more actively involved in politics and advocacy in the 1960s and 70s.

Harvey moved to San Francisco in 1972 and opened a camera shop, which became a center for community activism for a wide range of human rights, environmental labor, and neighborhood issues. He found his voice as a leader and activist, and in 1973, declared his candidacy for a position on the city's Board of Supervisors. He lost this and a subsequent election for the same seat 2 years later. In 1977, he won a seat on the Board, and his campaign incorporated gay rights, childcare, housing, and a civilian police review board. Harvey Milk was assassinated on November 27, 1978 along with the city's mayor, George Moscone. Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.

June 13 ,2024

Kendall Martinez-Wright
she/her/ella



Kendall Martinez-Wright is an Afro-Puerto Rican transgender woman and the first openly trans candidate to run for any Missouri statewide political office. Kendall was born in Chicago, IL and raised in Palmyra, MO. She attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, where she began her involvement in policy and legislative action. She then continued her service within approximately 36 civic organizations supporting a wide range of issues from racial justice, access to education, diversity, and healthcare.

Amidst nationwide transphobic legislation in 2021, Kendall ran a historic campaign as the first openly trans person to run for Missouri's House of Representatives. She eventually suspended her campaign, but remained an important voice in regional and political arenas. Martinez-Wright now lives in Washington DC and works a government relations and policy associate with the Treatment Action Group, taking her representation to a broader stage.

June 14, 2024

Trans Joy KC



Founded by Kipp Ellis (they/them), Trans Joy KC is an organization that connects and supports transgender people from all walks of life in the KC area. The organization developed in 2023 in response to anti-trans legislation coinciding with Transgender Day of Visibility, which eventually led to the first Trans Joy in the Park event (pictured here). Over 100 people attended the first event, and the organization has since expanded its mission to improving the quality of life for trans and gender-nonconforming individuals of all ages living in the KC area.

Trans Joy KC hosts many events in the community designed to nurture meaningful relationships, including Trans Joy Camp, an all-ages summer camp for folks of transgender experience. Learn more about this local organization [here](#).

June 15, 2024

Cecilia Gentili

she/her



Cecilia Gentili was a beloved actress, author, and activist who spent her life advocating for the rights of transgender people, sex workers, and undocumented immigrants. Originally from Argentina, she moved to New York City as an asylum seeker and was well-known as a significant force in LGBTQ+ advocacy spaces. Gentili was a pillar in New York for her work on two state bills that helped provide trafficking victims with relief and ended the “walking while trans” ban—an anti-loitering law that police used to harass trans people. Most recently, Cecilia was the director of policy at the GMHC (formerly Gay Men's Health Crisis), a NYC-based AIDS service organization. She was also the founder of Trans Equity Consulting, a consulting firm that sought to center trans women of color, immigrants, sex workers, and incarcerated people. In 2023, she founded Transmission Fest, an all-trans music festival in NYC with proceeds benefitting LGBTQ+ charities. She was known for bringing “explosive trans joy to every project she touched.” In addition to her activism work, Cecilia played Ms. Orlando on the groundbreaking drama *Pose* about the experiences of trans women of color in 1980s New York. She has performed several off-Broadway shows, including *Red Ink* and *The Knife Cuts Both Ways*. In 2022, Cecilia released her debut book and memoir: *Faltas: Letters to Everyone in my Hometown Who Isn't My Rapist*.

Cecilia passed away in February of 2024 at age 52. Her funeral was held at the famed St. Patrick's Cathedral in NYC - the first trans woman to have a funeral service in this church. Attendees dressed in pearls, tulle, and lace, bringing red carnations and roses to honor her “fabulous” legacy. Throughout intervals during the service, chants of “Cecilia!” echo inside the 87,120-square-foot cathedral. “Santa Cecilia! (Saint Cecilia!),” people yell. “Madre de todas las p*tas! (Mother of all the wh*res!)”

“To be around Cecilia [is] to feel like you were going to experience the most hilarious moment of your life, but in the process also figure out all of the ways to care for community and map out strategies of community care,” Chase Strangio, Deputy Director for Transgender Justice with the ACLU, says.