2016 LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER SURVEY REPORT:
DAVID BOHNETT CYBERCENTER PROGRAM

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CENTERLINK
THE COMMUNITY OF LGBT CENTERS

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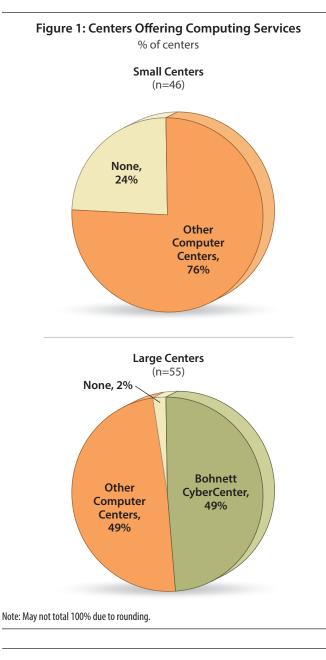info@lgbtmap.org
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INTRODUCTION

This is a companion report to the *2016 Community Center Survey Report*, coauthored by the Movement Advancement Project and CenterLink. The report is based on the responses from 146 participating centers, although all centers did not respond to all questions. When relevant, the report separately examines centers with budgets equal to or less than $150,000 per year ("small centers") and centers with budgets greater than $150,000 per year ("large centers"). The David Bohnett Foundation's CyberCenter program provides funding for computer equipment at 60 LGBT community centers and college campuses nationwide. The David Bohnett Foundation asked MAP and CenterLink to include survey questions specifically related to this program to help evaluate its impact on community center patrons.

OVERVIEW

One hundred and one centers answered questions about computer resources and whether they have centers or spaces where patrons can use computers. Of these responding centers, 88% provide computer resources for their patrons, for a total of 35 small centers and 54 large centers who reported they provide computer services to their clients.

As shown in *Figure 1*, the vast majority of large centers (98%) offer computer services; nearly half of these (27 centers, or 49% of large centers) do so through the Bohnett CyberCenter Program (referred to as "CyberCenters" for the rest of the report).[1] Seventy-six percent of small responding centers offer computer services; no small centers reported being part of the Bohnett CyberCenter program.

The next two sections examine centers' computer resources and compare CyberCenters to centers that are not part of the Bohnett CyberCenter program but that still provide computer resources (referred to as "other centers").

Figure 1: Centers Offering Computing Services
% of centers

Small Centers
(n=46)

None, 24%

Other Computer Centers, 76%

Large Centers
(n=55)

None, 2%

Other Computer Centers, 49%

Bohnett CyberCenter, 49%

Note: May not total 100% due to rounding.

[1] The David Bohnett Foundation's CyberCenter program provides funding for computer equipment at 68 LGBT community centers and college campuses nationwide. The foundation asked MAP and CenterLink to include survey questions specifically related to this program to help evaluate its impact on community center patrons.

Types of Computer Resources

As *Table 1* shows, CyberCenters have, on average, two more computers than other centers, and the computers at CyberCenters are, on average, three years newer. Both CyberCenters and other centers offer programs from the Microsoft Office software suite such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Several CyberCenters and other centers mentioned they also have Adobe programs such as Photoshop, browsers like Chrome and Firefox, and communication software like Skype. A few centers use freeware or shareware such as Linux or Ubuntu on their computers to reduce costs.

The majority of the 27 participating community centers with CyberCenters do not charge for use of their computers (three CyberCenters charge a nominal fee), while six of these centers charge for printing. Only five of the 62 other centers charge patrons for computer services and of those, only one charges a fee for something other than printing.

Computer resources at CyberCenters are used more frequently than computer resources at other centers (see *Figure 2*); 63% of CyberCenters reported their computers are being used more than 40% of the time; only 35% of other centers reported this level of computer use. Other centers reported less of a wait time to use their computers than CyberCenters despite CyberCenters having more computers, on average.

As *Figure 3* shows, CyberCenters are more likely to offer various computer training programs compared to other centers, including general software training, online job search training, and general Internet training. CyberCenters are far more likely to have someone on staff who is able to provide competent training and technical assistance to patrons using computer resources (see *Figure 4* on the next page). Few centers of either type offer graphic design or SAGEWorks training.[2]

Table 1: Numbers and Ages of Computer Equipment		
Averages for centers with computer centers	**CyberCenters n=27**	**Other Community Centers n=62**
No. of computers	8	6
Age of computers	1 year	4 years
No. of printers	2	2
Age of printers	2 years	3 years
Average # of monthly users	207	35

Figure 2: Computer Center Usage
Percent of Centers Reporting High Levels of Computer Use (n = 89)

Figure 3: Types of Computer Training Offered
Percent of Centers Offering...

■ Bohnett CyberCenters (n=20) ■ Other Centers (n=27)

2 SAGEWorks is a national employment support program for LGBT people age 40 and older that expands participants' job hunting skills and career options, and connects employers to diverse high-caliber candidates.

Use of Computer Centers

The average CyberCenter serves 207 patrons each month compared to an average of 35 patrons served by other centers (see *Figure 5*). Centers with computer resources report that their patrons use these resources for a variety of reasons. Conducting job searches, keeping in touch with family and friends, and entertainment were the top three activities of computer center users at both CyberCenters and other centers.

The majority of patrons (73%) at both CyberCenters and other centers have an annual income under $30,000. Patrons of CyberCenters are more likely to have a very low income of under $15,000 annually (51%) compared to patrons of other centers (25%). While both types of centers estimate that a majority of patrons have access to a smartphone with Internet, only 51% of patrons of CyberCenters had access to the internet through a smartphone, compared to 83% of patrons of other centers.

Fifty-six percent of CyberCenters and 34% of other centers report that demand for computer resources has increased moderately to greatly in the past year (see *Figure 6*). As demand for computer resources increases, LGBT community centers report challenges in providing adequate services. When asked to identify their top three challenges, CyberCenters ranked the lack of a dedicated staff member or volunteers to manage or oversee computer resources as their number-one challenge, followed by the lack of staff or volunteer expertise. Other centers also ranked lack of dedicated staff among their top three challenges, but the biggest challenge faced by other centers is a lack of financial resources to afford equipment and high-speed Internet access. Other centers also listed the following as challenges: outdated hardware (such as printers and computers) and outdated software (such as operating systems and browsers).

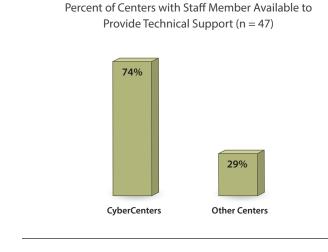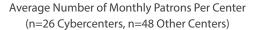**Figure 4: Staff Member Available to Provide Training and Technical Assistance**
Percent of Centers with Staff Member Available to Provide Technical Support (n = 47)

74% CyberCenters
29% Other Centers

Figure 5: Average Number of Patrons Served Each Month
Average Number of Monthly Patrons Per Center
(n=26 Cybercenters, n=48 Other Centers)
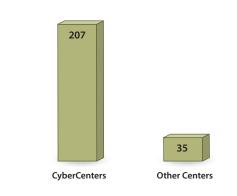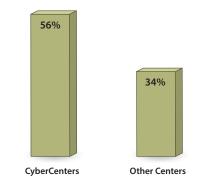

207 CyberCenters
35 Other Centers

Figure 6: Demand for Computer Center Resources
Percent of Centers Reporting that Demand for Computer Resources has Increased Moderately to Greatly in the Past Year
(n=23 Cybercenters, n=44 Other Centers)

56% CyberCenters
34% Other Centers

OVERVIEW

SPOTLIGHT

CyberCenter Connects Equality Center to LGBT Youth Experiencing Homelessness
Dennis R. Neill Equality Center

The Dennis R. Neill Equality Center opened its doors in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1993, making it the first LGBT community center in the entire region. In its first decade, the Equality Center moved in and out of five different locations, each as a result of anti-LGBT vandalism or eviction.

The center finally found its home in an abandoned torpedo factory in the undeveloped factory district, far from its former downtown neighborhood. The distance had its advantages as it deterred vandals, but it also made it difficult to reach the LGBT community it served. In 2002, Dennis Neil reached out to Bohnett Foundation to establish a CyberCenter in the new center.

With 6 donated computers, the Equality Center soon opened its doors to those in need of computer services. It was through these services that the center began reaching one of the most vulnerable communities: LGBT youth experiencing homelessness. It turned out that the new center location was uniquely positioned to serve youth experiencing homelessness as it was situated between the city's most populated shelters and food banks. LGBT youth began trickling in to use the computers, and as their relationships with center staff and volunteers were formed, they started staying to receive vital services.

Today, the Dennis R. Neill Equality Center is open 14 hours a day, providing a safe space and support for LGBT youth, and they are a leading advocate for LGBT youth experiencing homelessness in the broader community. Opening their doors to a CyberCenter opened their doors to informed advocacy.

CYBERCENTER PATRONS

CyberCenters were asked to provide the demographics of patrons who use their computer resources. Fourteen centers collect this data through surveys, intake forms, or staff or volunteer observation. In general, CyberCenters reported that their computer users were disproportionately likely to be young, male, transgender, people of color, and low-income, compared to the general population.

Gender and Transgender Status. On average, 56% of CyberCenter patrons were men, 32% women, and 11% identified as genderqueer/other (see *Figure 7*). At 21% of CyberCenters, three-quarters of patrons were men. CyberCenters reported that an average of 12% of their patrons were transgender.

Race/Ethnicity. Thirty-six percent of CyberCenters reported that at least half of their patrons were people of color. On average, half of CyberCenter patrons are people of color (see *Figure 8*). Two centers (14%) reported that half or more of their patrons were African American.

Age. CyberCenters reported that over half (average of 49%) of their patrons were under 30 (see *Figure 9*). This is likely because of the strong youth programs that many centers with CyberCenters offer. On average, CyberCenters reported that 19% of their patrons were over 50.
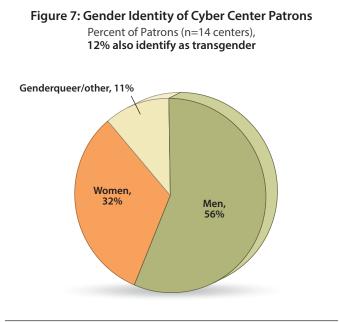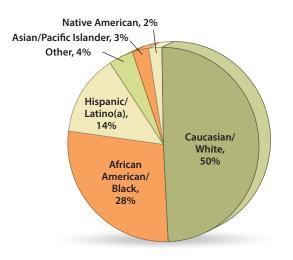
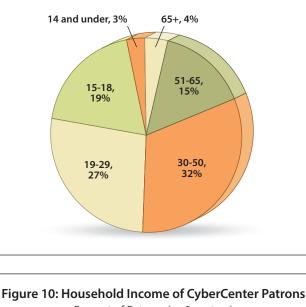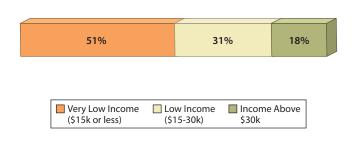**Figure 7: Gender Identity of Cyber Center Patrons**
Percent of Patrons (n=14 centers),
12% also identify as transgender

Genderqueer/other, 11%
Women, 32%
Men, 56%

Figure 8: Race/Ethnicity of CyberCenter Patrons
Percent of Patrons (n=14 centers)

Native American, 2%
Asian/Pacific Islander, 3%
Other, 4%
Hispanic/Latino(a), 14%
Caucasian/White, 50%
African American/Black, 28%

Figure 9: Age of CyberCenter Patrons
Percent of Patrons (n=13 centers)

14 and under, 3%
65+, 4%
51-65, 15%
15-18, 19%
30-50, 32%
19-29, 27%

Figure 10: Household Income of CyberCenter Patrons
Percent of Patrons (n=9 centers)

51% 31% 18%

Very Low Income ($15k or less)   Low Income ($15-30k)   Income Above $30k

Household Income and Access to Computers at Home. CyberCenters reported that an average of 51% of their patrons had a household income of less than $15,000, and on average, an additional 31% of patrons having an income between $15,000 and $30,000 (see *Figure 10* on the previous page). Over half the CyberCenters reporting this data indicated that 70% or more of their patrons had a household income below $30,000. Unsurprisingly, on average, only 26% of patrons have access to a computer at home, however, 51% have access to a smartphone that connects to the internet (see *Figure 11*).

Educational Attainment. On average, CyberCenters reported that three-fifths (62%) of their patrons had attended some high school or had a high school diploma or equivalent (see *Figure 12*). Twenty-seven percent of reporting CyberCenters said that the majority of their patrons had only attended some high school.

CONCLUSION

Bohnett CyberCenters help LGBT Community Centers serve their patrons along a number of spectrums: technology competence, job hunting and training, and staying in touch with family and community. Offering free computer services allows centers to serve a deep need in their patrons' lives: connection with others. Community computer services are especially important to those who do not have access to these tools elsewhere, include people with low income and people experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, centers are already stretched thin with few resources and few trained staff, and many lack the funds to update aging technology. The David Bohnett CyberCenter program can help fill those gaps by providing hardware and technical assistance to centers and thus to LGBT Community Centers visitors around the country.
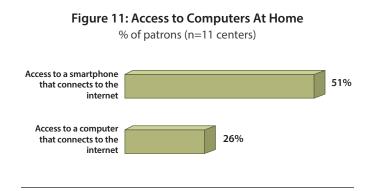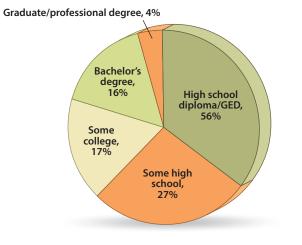
Figure 11: Access to Computers At Home
% of patrons (n=11 centers)

Access to a smartphone that connects to the internet — 51%

Access to a computer that connects to the internet — 26%

Figure 12: Educational Attainment of CyberCenter Patrons
% of patrons (n=6 centers)

Graduate/professional degree, 4%
Bachelor's degree, 16%
Some college, 17%
High school diploma/GED, 56%
Some high school, 27%

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