

# Up to Us

**A Community-Led  
Needs Assessment of Transgender  
and Gender Non-Conforming  
Asians and Pacific Islanders  
in the Bay Area**



**2020**



## Committee Letter

Dear Reader,

This project is a love letter to trans, non-binary, gender expansive, and gender abundant Asians and Pacific Islanders. We know how hard it can be to be our full selves in this world. **We know how hard it can be to feel safe.** We are subject to violence in our homes and neighborhoods, silenced and invisibilized in society, and told time and time again that we simply don't exist.

In this report, you will find the voices of trans APIs speaking to their experiences with police, searching for safe homes, surviving everyday violence, and finding the care we deserve. Our team sees our own experiences mirrored in these findings. As heartbreaking as it has been, we know this research will **help us shape the future we deserve.**

Despite the pain we endure, trans, non-binary, gender-expansive Asians and Pacific Islanders have long organized to shape the world we deserve, and *we will continue to*. Along with action from our accomplices, we have the power and responsibility to create real solutions to our needs for safety, connection, and care that serve all people. **Now, it's up to us.**

*Our peoples have always existed. We have always belonged.*

With love and belief in our power,  
APIENC's Trans Justice Committee



▲ A crowd of transgender and non-binary Asians and Pacific Islanders and allies stand with fists raised. They hold banners that read "Police Out of Pride" and "we have always existed / we have always belonged".



▲ A large group of transgender and non-binary Asians and Pacific Islanders and allies smile at the camera.

## Who We Are

### APIENC:

APIENC is an organization building transgender, non-binary, and queer Asian and Pacific Islander (API) power in the San Francisco Bay Area. Through organizing, we inspire and train grassroots leaders, transform our communities' values from scarcity to abundance, and partner with organizations to sustain a vibrant movement ecosystem. Learn more at [www.apienc.org](http://www.apienc.org).

### Trans Justice Initiative:

While trans people have entered a new age of visibility, violence against trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people is on the rise. TGNC people are especially vulnerable to high rates of police violence, health discrimination, housing insecurity, isolation, and interpersonal harm. Moreover, when compounded with issues faced by Asian and Pacific Islander people, including xenophobia, racism, and economic injustice, TGNC API people are further isolated within our own API communities, without allies and institutions to support us.

APIENC's Trans Justice Initiative builds a community of TGNC API people and allies to respond to these needs and bring safety to all TGNC people. Together, we train members on community safety skills, conduct research to uplift our needs, and design curriculum on our histories to educate ourselves and our allies. We mobilize hundreds through our SF Trans March API Contingent each year, train spokespeople to shift narratives about trans people in Asian media, work with other TGNC communities to improve housing access, healthcare, safety, and more.

## Envisioning Resilience

We asked TGNC API artists from the Bay Area to create art in response to the question: *what helps YOU practice resilience?* You will find their reflections on this question throughout this report. As you visit their art, we want to ask you the same question: **what helps YOU practice resilience?** *What would it feel like to live safe, and free? What will it take for us to get there?*

# Acknowledgements

## **Trans Justice**

### **Authors & Researchers:**

Aloe Lai  
Dorothy Tang  
Huanvy Phan  
JoJo Ty  
Junior Claros  
Kyle Ching  
Lia Dun  
Luke Soon-Shiong  
mika hernandez  
Rai Dang  
Rowan Hunt  
Sammie Ablaza Wills  
Sen Lu  
T Adiseshan  
Theo Beltran  
Yuan Wang

## **Trans Justice**

### **Committee Members:**

Amaya Wooding  
Austin Lin-Truong  
Avery Nguyen  
Cameron Wu  
Jaden Young  
Jeffren Ramos  
Leo Hegde  
Phibi Tran  
Robin Jang  
Zoe Chen

## **Contributing Artists:**

Kai Song  
Shreya Basu  
Trời Tim Trần  
Yi-Yi Kung  
Zara Jamshed

## **Research Consultants:**

Audrey Kuo  
Debanuj DasGupta  
Kathleen Coll  
Nancy Truong

## **Roundtable Participants:**

Annie Chin  
Elias Chen  
Frank Peña  
Hieu Nguyen  
Jimmy Quach  
Joy Messinger  
Khudai Tanveer  
Leo Hegde  
Marcus Wang  
Maria Gerdyman  
mika hernandez  
Ryan-Li Dahlstrom  
Sydney Ji  
Willy Chang Wilkinson

## **Co-Sponsor Organizations:**

Asians4BlackLives (Bay Area)

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GAPA  
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LYRIC  
National Center for Trans Equality  
National Queer Asian Pacific  
Islander Alliance  
Parivar Bay Area  
Project Ohana in the Bay/  
HealthRight 360  
SF Community Health Center  
San Mateo Pride Center  
Spahr Center  
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Transgender Law Center  
Trans Lifeline  
UTOPIA SF  
VietUnity

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# Executive Summary

## Key Findings:

- 1. We need safe and sustainable housing.** TGNC APIs in the Bay Area are highly vulnerable to housing discrimination and insecurity. More than 1 in 5 respondents have experienced homelessness, including almost half of respondents (40%) who live in San Francisco and almost half of feminine respondents (41%). From frequent gender-based harassment by landlords, roommates, and given families to the difficulty of finding housing while transitioning gender identification, our respondents underline the need to find safe and affordable homes for TGNC APIs in the Bay Area.
- 2. We need affirming workplaces and abundant access to the resources that come with it.** Our participants face regular harassment in government agencies, in public spaces, and in their own workplaces. Almost one quarter (23%) of respondents were fired from a job, treated unfairly, or not hired because of their gender identities. This inability to find safe and sustainable places of work impacts our ability to find affordable housing, feel safety and security, access healthcare, afford basic necessities, and more.
- 3. We need strategies to address violence that rely on community, not police.** More than two-thirds of participants (68%) experienced verbal harassment, and one in every six (17%) were physically attacked. Unsurprisingly, more than 80% of participants alter their appearance regularly to avoid harassment. Nearly two-thirds (58%) of respondents experienced sexual assault, and more than 40% of respondents experienced domestic abuse. However, while we experience high levels of violence, police do not support our safety, and often make us *more* unsafe. A vast majority (79%) felt uncomfortable asking the police for help. More than half of respondents (52%) were at times or never treated with respect by police. Clearly, police do not address our fundamental needs for safety.
- 4. We need affordable healing resources that address our gender and cultural needs.** Almost half (43%) of respondents were uncomfortable going to the doctor. Almost one third (28%) needed to see a doctor, but could not afford to. Moreover, while more than 70% of respondents seriously considered suicide and almost a third (29%) attempted suicide, 74% of respondents face barriers accessing mental healthcare, and half (49%) reported mental healthcare is generally culturally inaccessible. This is unacceptable; TGNC API people deserve culturally competent, affordable, and holistic care.
- 5. We experience different needs along lines of ethnicity, gender, ability, and more.** When we disaggregate the data, we see specific groups within the TGNC API umbrella experience harm and violence disproportionately. For example, feminine respondents are more likely to experience verbal harassment than people of other genders. South Asians and Pacific Islanders are far less likely to be treated with respect by police than East and Southeast Asians. Disabled respondents, as well as those who have been unhoused, were more likely to experience unwanted sexual contact, verbal harassment, and domestic violence. Participants who have traded sex experience higher rates of housing discrimination, homelessness, suicidal ideation, and police interactions.

- 6. We need well-resourced spaces where we are seen and accepted in all of our identities.** Despite the breadth of violence we face, TGNC APIs are building the spaces we need to thrive. More than half (52%) of participants said community spaces allow them to feel most supported as both TGNC and API people. However, many still cannot access affirming spaces, with 14% of participants reporting *no* space allowed them to feel seen in both their TGNC and API identities. Building organizations that center genuine relationships and care allows us to confront violence and transform our lives.

## **APIENC's Action Plan:**

Through our organizing, APIENC will take these actions to meet our communities' needs. *You can find more details about APIENC's Action Plan and our Roadmap to Trans Justice strategy recommendations at the end of this report, before the conclusion.*

- 1. Invest in community-led healing and emotional skill-building.**
- 2. Train health providers to address TGNC API needs.**
- 3. Leverage our voices as TGNC APIs in campaigns for housing justice.**
- 4. Nurture TGNC API artists and invest in our storytelling.**
- 5. Create concrete community safety strategies led by TGNC APIs.**



- ▲ *Kai: "In trying to stay resilient in uncertainty and unfamiliarity, a new practice I've literally grown into is gardening. While I still have a lot to learn and someday hope to become as familiar with plants as my umma, seeing my own indoor plants grow—leaves leaning into the sunlight—has helped me practice my own resilience."*

*Description: two yellow-gloved hands, reaching for a small bunch of purple flowers.*

## Roadmap to Trans Justice for All of Us:

The road to safety, justice, and recognition for all TGNC people will take far more than APIENC. We developed recommendations for people and groups whose choices impact TGNC APIs. *Find more detailed recommendations for these groups at the end of this report.*

- **Close Circles** (*Families, Parents, Friends*): Educate yourselves on TGNC issues; start conversations with each other on how to support the TGNC API people in your lives. Speak up for us when we are not in the room, and make your care clear.
- **Public Spaces** (*Schools/Colleges, Workplaces, Local Businesses*): Make bathrooms gender inclusive; create spaces where TGNC APIs can receive care and mentorship; ask for and respect pronouns as an expected part of your culture; hire TGNC APIs and provide the training required to make spaces truly safe for us.
- **Community Spaces** (*API Groups, LGBTQIA+ Spaces, Religious Institutions*): Recognize that TGNC APIs are likely already part of your spaces; support TGNC API leadership and normalize advocating for TGNC and API issues; support the people who are organizing at the intersections of race, ability, class, religion, gender, and sexuality.
- **Health Providers** (*Doctors, Nurses, Mental Health Workers, Insurance Providers*): We need providers to receive training about caring for trans and API patients, make health information available in many languages, include gender-affirming care in insurance plans, and fight for the creation of alternatives to calling the police in crisis situations.
- **Funders** (*Progressive Funders & Donors*): We need you to fund abundantly, educate yourselves on the intersectional experiences of TGNC APIs, center healing, and prioritize the long-term perspective of our own people.
- **Media** (*Newspapers, Radio Stations, Media Sites*): Support us by respecting our names and gender identities, reporting on our joy, healing, and transformation, not just our pain, and amplify our stories in immigrant and monolingual API communities.



▲ *Two TGNC APIs smile at each other outside.*



# Background

The TGNC API Needs Assessment was initiated by APIENC's Trans Justice committee, a group providing space for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming Asians and Pacific Islanders to grow connections, heal from trauma, and organize for our own self-determination.

At the end of 2018, as the committee worked to set strategic goals for ourselves, **we recognized how little research exists to unearth, support, and uplift our needs.** We saw how the violence and transphobia TGNC APIs face is rarely recorded, much less addressed.

**At the same time, we KNOW our TGNC API community has needs.** We experience them firsthand. Given our lived experiences, we believe transgender and gender non-conforming APIs are the best equipped to connect, research, and uplift others like us.

We decided to carry out a community-led research project with the central question: **What are the experiences and needs of TGNC API people living in the Bay Area?** We knew success meant more than the number of respondents – every relationship deepened, experience documented, and skill practiced was a victory.

The majority of this research took place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We conducted outreach between June 2019 and December 2019. In the crisis of health systems and social connection that has begun since then, it has only been harder for many of us to have our needs met.

## Our Goals:

1. Identify the needs of TGNC APIs in the Bay Area by **conducting a peer-led needs assessment.** Reach 300 TGNC APIs and receive 100 responses.
2. **Understand the landscape of resources and gaps** to inform APIENC's strategies.
3. Grow the leadership and skills of TGNC APIs to build community-centered programs.



▲ A Zoom call of 16 APIENC Trans Justice Committee members smiling.

*“What are the experiences of TGNC API people living in the Bay Area?”*



▲ TGNC APIs around a table making stickers and buttons. One person helps a child with the button machine.

## Methods

Through our entire process, we asked ourselves: **how can this process empower both our survey-takers AND participant-researchers?**

In response, we turned to **Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)**. Inspired by groups like Chinese Progressive Association and Mujeres Unidas y Activas, we chose CBPAR as a political tool that challenges the roles of the researchers and participants.

CBPAR is an approach to research that involves the community members who are directly impacted throughout the process. It is a framework used to subvert the at-times predatory, voyeuristic methods of traditional research and address the practical concerns of people in a community.<sup>1</sup> Broken down, this is how CBPAR shaped our project:

- **Community-Based:** grounded in the needs, concerns, and strategies of TGNC APIs
- **Participatory:** led by and engages TGNC API people and our knowledge in the process
- **Action Research:** supports the development of APIENC and TGNC API peoples organizing skills and leadership, so we create transformation and social change

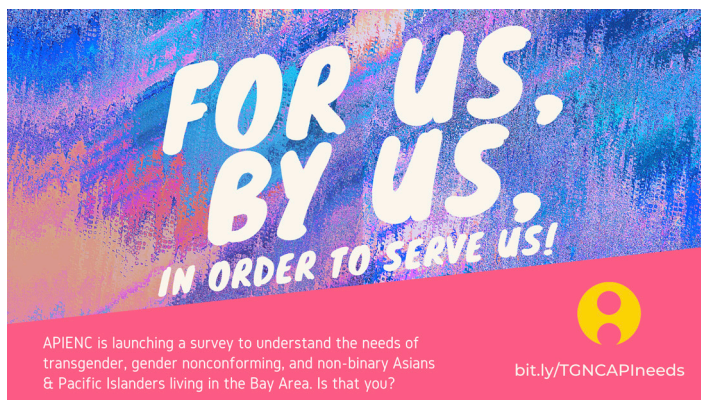
Using CBPAR as a model, we worked to **practice our values in our research.**

## Developing Research Skills

A crucial part of this project was developing the skills of the people who worked on it. The process was led by TGNC API members and APIENC staff. This involved writing the survey, outreaching to partners, leading trainings, analyzing data, writing the report, developing strategy, and even recruiting some survey takers to join our research team.

## Writing the Survey

Before we wrote the survey, we reflected on the ways TGNC communities are often asked about their experiences in voyeuristic, presumptuous ways. It was important to us to not replicate that dynamic. We wrote open-ended questions about gender identity, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, rather than providing a dropdown list or checkboxes. We gave content warnings before each section and asked for participants' consent to proceed. If respondents were not comfortable answering, they were able to skip to the next section. We included video introductions from the survey writers to visibilize that these questions were being asked by a group of other TGNC APIs, eager to learn more about our community. Lastly, we did not want to focus the survey just on harmful or difficult experiences, and included questions at the end that involved visioning for the future.



- ▲ A pink and blue flyer that reads "For Us, By Us, in order to serve us!" and advertises APIENC's needs assessment.

## Outreach & Participant Compensation

As an organization centered on trans and non-binary APIs, we held our first outreach among APIENC members and networks. From there, we partnered with community groups to ensure we could reach as many TGNC APIs in the Bay Area as possible. Nineteen partners serving TGNC API people signed on to review the survey, share it with their members, and support us in our research. Partners included the San Francisco Community Health Center, Trans Lifeline, Parivar Bay Area, Lyon-Martin Health Services, and others listed in our acknowledgements. To address geographic diversity, our team deepened connections with organizations in the North and South Bay, such as LGBTQ Connection in Napa and Sonoma Counties and the LGBTQ Youth Space in San Jose. Finally, we held in-person outreach, including at Ricebreakers, an intergenerational TGNC API gathering, and the 2019 San Francisco Trans March. We know a survey that asks about vulnerable experiences can feel hard; at in-person opportunities, we paired survey-takers with buddies to help navigate the internet and provide emotional support.

We know our community's time should be held with care, and wanted to honor participants' time by providing compensation. Through support from funders and grassroots fundraising, we provided \$25 Visa gift cards

to all survey-takers who requested them. We provided \$25 gift cards to TGNC APIs who participated in community roundtables to review our initial findings, as well as \$50 gift cards to TGNC API artists who contributed art to this written report.



▲ A group of roundtable participants smiling at the camera in a Zoom call.

## Roundtables

Once our initial outreach ended, we wanted to ensure our findings reflected the priorities of our community. In July 2020, we organized two roundtables: one for TGNC APIs in the Bay Area and a second for partners, including representatives from NQAPIA, the Fund for Trans Generations, Asians 4 Black Lives, Project Ohana in the Bay, and more. At these roundtables, participants gave feedback on our initial findings and asked questions to improve our analysis.

## Data Analysis

Although our community is constantly creating knowledge, none of us are traditionally-trained researchers. We spent time together learning about data analysis and making collective decisions about how to organize, sort, and code the data. Our first challenge was how to categorize the data. For example, questions about gender identities and ethnicities were open response, allowing respondents to self-determine (rather than choosing from limited options in a multiple choice menu). This meant we received more than a hundred different variations of gender identities. These gender identities included: “agender, nonbinary”, “male”, “non-binary woman”, “transfemme”, “fa’afafine”, people who refused to label their genders, and more. This is *significant*: when we are not asked to flatten ourselves, our complexities and cultures can emerge. However, this also meant **our team needed to spend ample time grouping participants’ identities in order to draw meaningful conclusions and trends.**

While some identities (such as region-of-residence) had clear definitions, others – such as gender and ethnicity – were more complex. With gender, our priority was to preserve the ways people self-identified. Thus, we decided on four groupings: **feminine, masculine, gender non-conforming**, and **other gender identities**. We chose these terms *not* to assign gender or presentation to respondents, but to reflect the language respondents used. Rather than limit each participant to a single group, we categorized them into whichever groups reflected the language they used. Someone who wrote: “non-binary” would be categorized *once* into the “gender non-conforming” category. Someone who wrote “non-binary transwoman” would be coded into *both* the “gender non-conforming” and “feminine” categories.

Similarly, our respondents named 26 different ethnicities. To explore findings where groupings of ethnicities would be meaningful, we settled on four categories: **East Asian** (incl. Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese people, and others); **South Asian** (incl. people who identified as Bengali, Tamil, Indian and others); **Pacific Islander** (incl. native Hawaiians, Chamorro people, Okinawans, and people who identified solely as Pacific Islanders), and **Southeast Asian** (which included Laotian, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Filipino, and others). A breakdown of each grouping can be found in the “Demographics” section of this report. Of course, these categories and definitions are limiting and impermanent, shaped by changing politics and histories. However, we hope they can provide meaningful, disaggregated insight when we do reference them.

*Ashkenazi Jewish, Asian, Bengal, Black, Chamorro, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Indian, Indonesia, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Latino, Malaysian, Mexican, Native American, Okinawan, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Spanish, Taiwanese, Tamil, Vietnamese, White*

## Community Artists

We want TGNC API readers to feel seen, held, and empowered while exploring our research, and we know so much of this information can be heartbreaking. To help center our healing and our visions for the future, we asked five TGNC API artists living in the Bay Area to contribute stunning pieces to this report. You can find their work throughout!



◀ *Trời: "I practice resilience by staying in connection with all parts of myself, the people, and the earth."*

*Description: three people, painted in yellow, gather to care for a potted plant.*

## Challenges & Limitations

Despite our efforts, **there are limitations to our research process** that are important to keep in mind. In terms of the experiences and voices represented in this research, there are far fewer responses from TGNC Pacific Islanders (11 in total, 6%) and South Asians (24 in total, 13%) than Southeast Asians (55 in total, 30%) and East Asians (95 in total, 52%). Among South Asian respondents, the majority who responded to the question “If you are South Asian and have an experience of caste, how would you describe your caste?” described themselves as having caste privilege. Moreover, there were few non-citizens who responded to this survey, with only four respondents identifying as refugees, holding DACA status, or as undocumented. Finally, though we partnered to share the assessment with a number of organizations based in the North Bay, we received no responses from TGNC APIs currently living in the North Bay.

There were also **limitations to the thoroughness of certain questions asked**. For example, while we asked people to self-identify their genders by writing them in, we did not ask for our respondents to describe their gender presentations, which may be significant information when considering respondents’ experiences with policing and profiling, with safety in the workplace, and more. While we asked participants to share their annual income, we did not ask folks to share whether or not their income is supplemented by family support, scholarships, or other sources, and by how much. While we shared some paper copies of the survey, the majority of surveys were administered online, which may lead our survey population to skew younger.

Moreover, because **very little research exists on TGNC API community needs in general**, much less specific to the Bay Area, we were often unable to compare our data to larger trends. This report will draw from the 2019 Horizons Foundation SF Bay Area LGBTQ+ Needs Assessment, as well as the 2016 National Center for Trans Equality U.S Transgender Survey.



▲ A TGNC API person chants into a megaphone held by a friend; behind them, TGNC APIs march holding a banner and a pink and blue trans flag.

**This process was challenging.** As community members learning how to research as we did it, we often had to pause and ask for help. We share our methods in the hopes they help others. We hope the lessons we've drawn from the gaps in our research, as well as the findings of this survey, can serve future projects which seek to uplift our needs, especially on topics including substance use, birth/given-family, and other topics this research could not cover in detail.

# Demographics

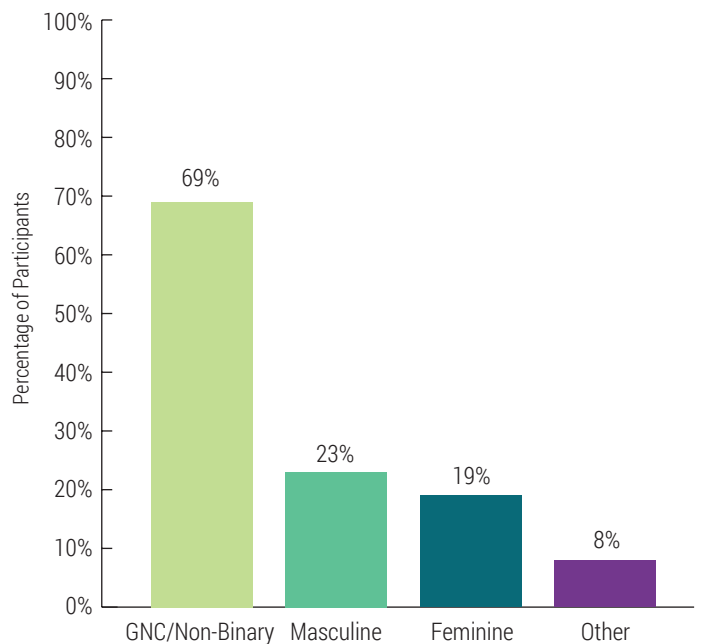
We received responses from people with a variety of racial, ethnic, caste, and gender identities. API and TGNC are both umbrella terms that include a vast range of experiences and histories. Responses we received, while diverse, do not cover the full range of identities represented by these terms. We share the demographics of our respondents to contextualize our findings. While we received over 200 responses, we decided to include in our research the findings from the sample of 181 respondents who responded to almost all of the introductory questions.

## Gender & Sexuality

The majority of our respondents (69%, or 125 respondents) identify as gender non-conforming or non-binary. 19% (35 respondents) used feminine gender identifiers. 23% or 41 respondents use masculine gender identifiers. Some participants use identifiers in multiple categories (i.e masculine and non-binary), and were counted in both. The majority of respondents (68%, 119 people) use "they/them" pronouns, while an equal number (18%, 32 people each) use "he/him" or "she/her" pronouns. More than 29% use a combination of multiple pronouns.

Respondents most often describe their sexual orientations as queer (45%, 82 respondents), followed by pansexual (19%). Other sexual orientations include bisexual (14%), gay (12%), straight (8%), lesbian (6%), and asexual (4%).

WHAT ARE YOUR GENDER IDENTITIES?



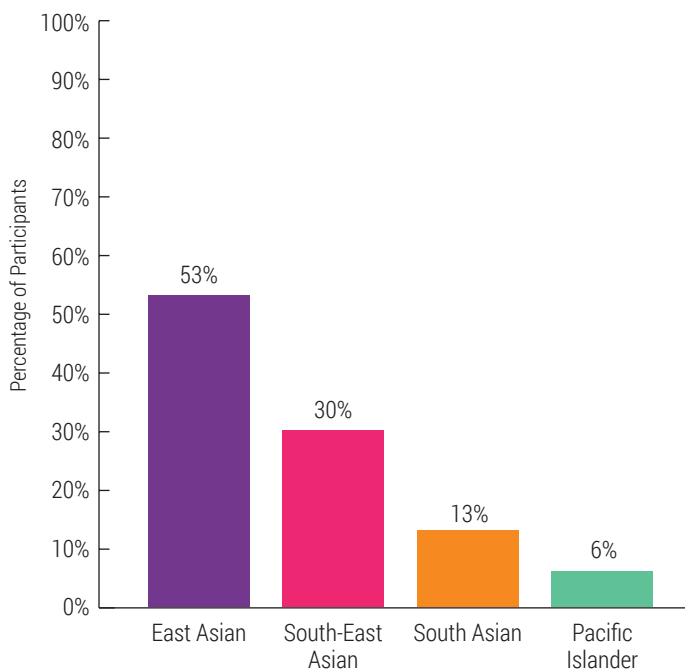
## Ethnicity & Immigration

Our respondents identify with 26 different ethnicities. When we grouped our respondents, the majority are East Asian (53%, 95 respondents), 30%, or 55 respondents, are Southeast Asian; 13%, or 24 respondents, are South

Asian; and 6%, or 11 respondents, are Pacific Islanders. 25% of participants identify as having a mixed ethnic or racial background. Of the 18 who shared a caste experience, almost all respondents are savarna, or caste-privileged.

Our respondents are mostly U.S. citizens, with 84% U.S. citizens by birth and another 9% naturalized U.S. citizens. About 5% identify as permanent residents or visa-holders, with 1 respondent identifying as undocumented resident, 2 respondents identifying as DACA recipients, and 1 respondent identifying as a refugee. Two of our respondents experienced immigration detention, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention.

## WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

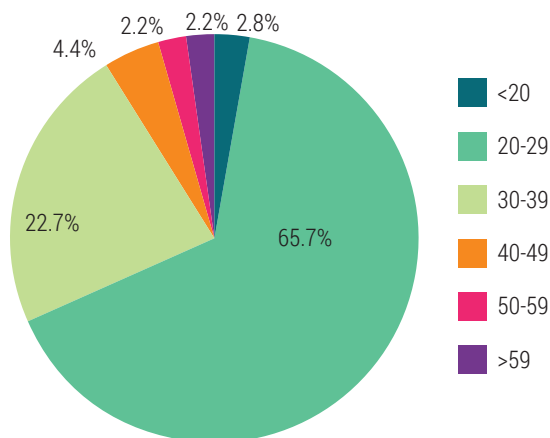


## Disability

31% (56) of our respondents are disabled. When invited to share more about their disabilities, respondents named autism, ADHD, scoliosis, neurodivergence, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, and other identities and experiences.

*31% of respondents are disabled*

## HOW OLD ARE YOU?



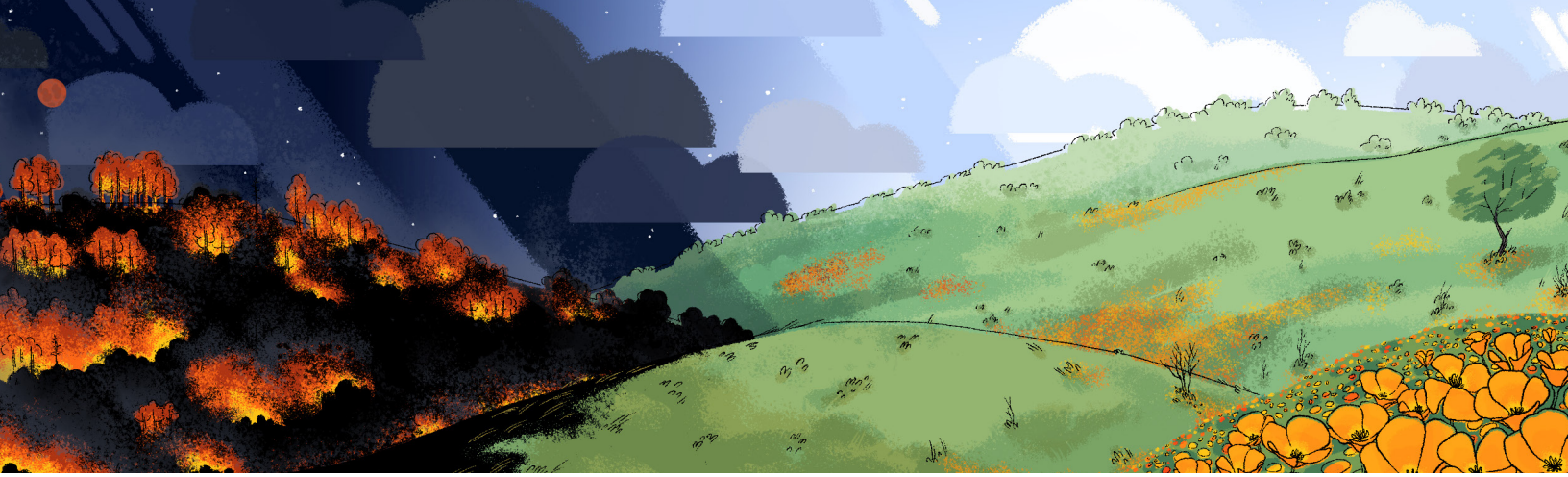
## Age

Two-thirds of respondents are between ages 20 and 29 (119 people), with 23% (41 people) between 30 and 39. Smaller groups are younger than 20 (3%, 5 people), between 40 and 49 (4%, 8 people), between ages 50 and 59 (2%, 4 people), and older than 60 (2%, 4 people).

## Income

Two-thirds of respondents have an annual income under \$50,000, while one-third have an income of under \$10,000. 16% have an income between \$50,000 and \$70,000, 7% have an income between \$70,000 and \$100,000, and 9% have an income above \$100,000. As we mentioned in, we did not ask participants about additional sources of financial support, so it's possible these statistics do not fully reflect the financial circumstances of respondents.





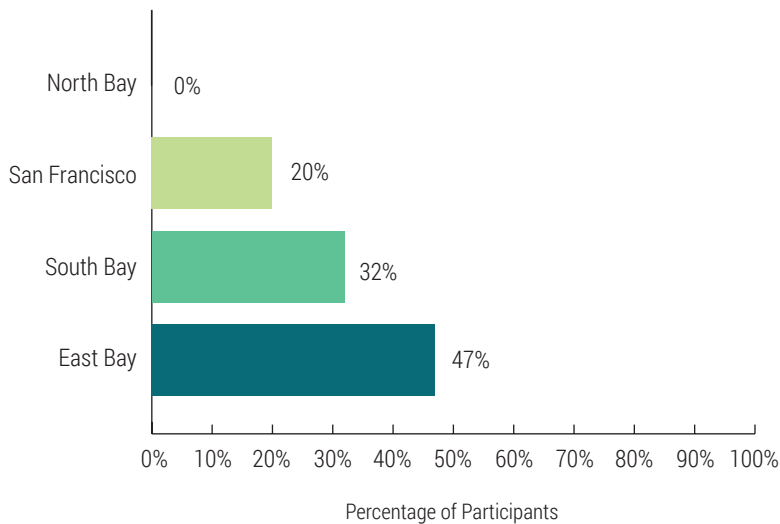
▲ Yi-Yi: "The seeds of wildflowers can lie dormant for years and then sprout by the millions in response to fire. The land is resilient, and so are we."

Description: a landscape, with wildfires burning on the left, transitioning to a grassy field, and an abundance of orange poppies on the right.

## Location

The highest percentage of respondents have lived in the SF Bay Area for more than 20 years (41%, 75), with the next highest group (31%, 56) living in the Bay less than 5 years. 11% have lived in the Bay Area between 6 and 10 years, and 17% have lived in the Bay Area for 11 to 20.

### WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



We outreached to individuals and groups across the Bay Area, including the 19 co-sponsors listed earlier, to ensure we could reach people in areas (such as the South and North Bay) where resources for TGNC APIs may be less common. While we received a balanced set of responses from San Francisco (20%, 37 respondents), counties south of San Francisco (32%, 57 respondents), and the East Bay (46%, 84 respondents), we did not receive a response from the North Bay. South Bay respondents included residents of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties; East Bay participants included residents of Contra Costa and Alameda counties; we considered North Bay respondents to reside in Marin, Sonoma, Napa, or Solano counties.

# Housing & Homelessness

The Bay Area is notorious for both high rent and high rates of homelessness. A 2017 study found that across the nine counties of the Bay Area, over 300,000 households qualified as “extremely low income”, and more than two-thirds of these households spend more than 50% of their annual income on housing, with San Francisco, Alameda, and Santa Clara counties particularly hard-hit.<sup>2</sup> **In these conditions, TGNC API people are especially vulnerable.**

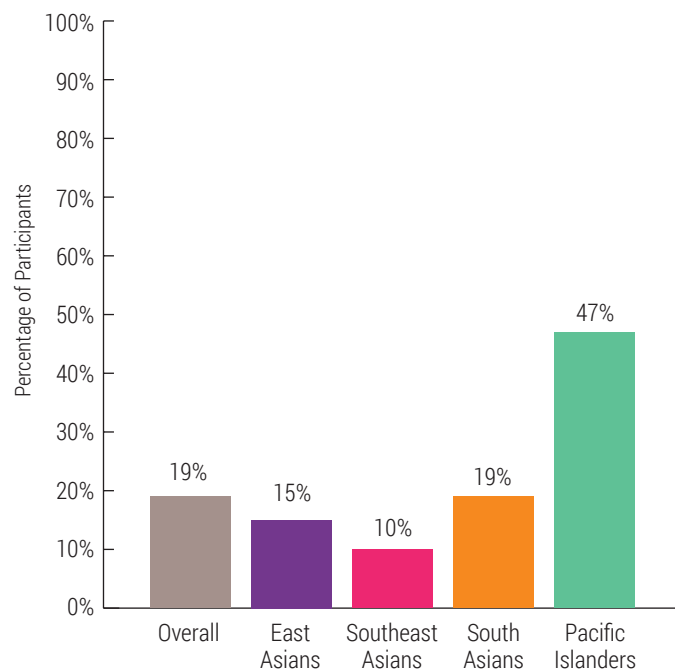
## Housing

### 1 in 5 (19%) respondents experienced

**housing discrimination.** Almost half (46%) of Pacific Islander respondents experienced housing discrimination, as well as 10% of Southeast Asian, 15% of East Asian, and 19% of South Asian respondents. Moreover, less than 7% of our respondents own homes. This rate is less than half the percentage of trans homeowners nationally (16%), and a fraction of the rate of homeowners in the Bay Area (52%).<sup>3</sup> The majority of our respondents (55%) rent, leaving them vulnerable to rising costs of housing and discrimination from landlords and cohabitants. Another 25% live with their families.

Participants shared experiences of being harassed by landlords, roommates, and their given families. Some shared the challenge of navigating housing when the names and gender identities on their legal and personal IDs clash. Many participants discussed how fear of facing violence, harassment, or discrimination prevents them from searching for safe, stable housing.

### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED HOUSING DISCRIMINATION?



**1 in 5 respondents experienced housing discrimination**

## Homelessness

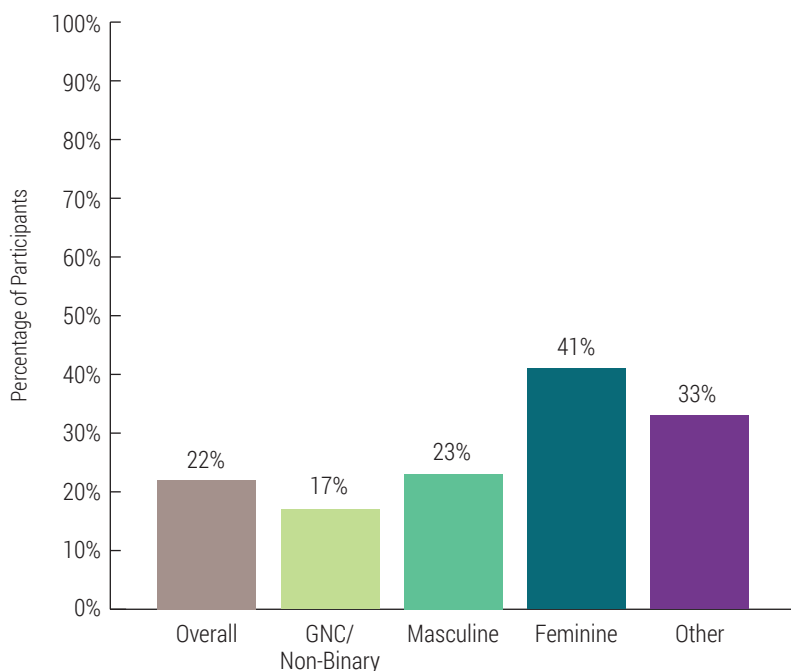
At the time of the survey, 5% of respondents were unhoused, or in unstable housing. **Nearly a quarter (22%, or 36 people) have experienced homelessness**, which may include a range of circumstances such as living in a public or private place that is not meant for living, living out of a car, living at a shelter or other temporary residence. This was a higher rate than LGBTQ+ people in the Bay area (17%).<sup>4</sup> This experience was most common for participants in San Francisco (40%) and in the East Bay (21%), and significantly lower for South Bay residents (12%). Moreover, **more than 40% of feminine-identified respondents have experienced homelessness**, almost twice the rate of the entire group.

*22% have been unhoused*

*“I have been refused housing because I disclosed that I was trans”*

— young, transmasculine Pacific Islander and Latinx person

### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS?



*“I’ve felt actively afraid while looking for housing that I would be discriminated against or harmed, which made finding housing and having honest conversations with co-tenants and landlords challenging.”*

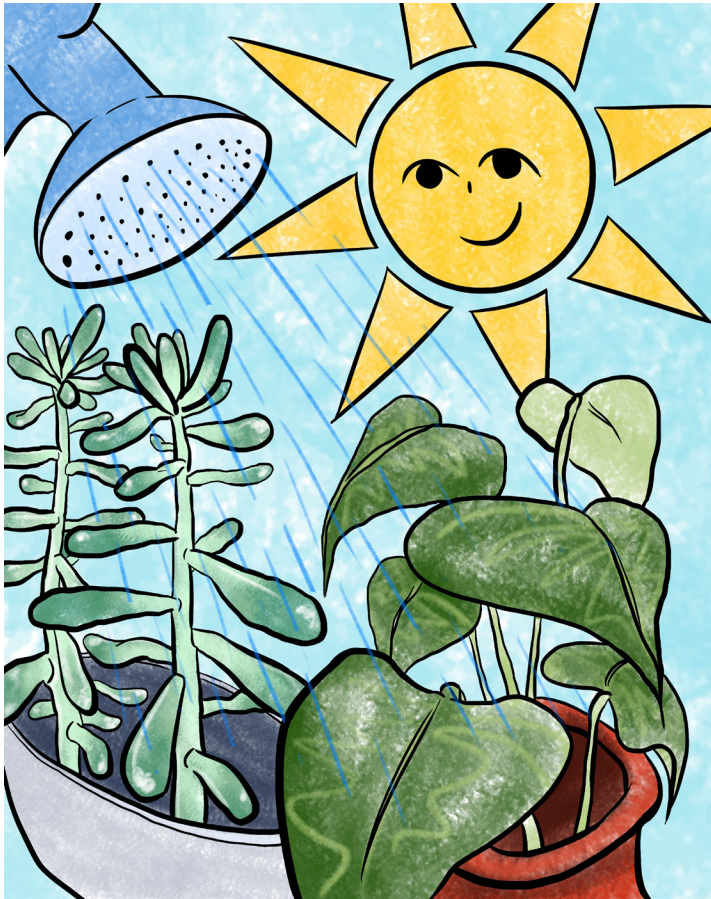
— young, non-binary Chinese American

# Employment

## Working Conditions

19% of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey, while 44% worked full-time and 28% worked part-time. 3% of respondents reported to currently work for pay from sex work, selling drugs, or other work that is part of an underground economy. The other 12% of respondents were primarily full-time students or retired respondents.

In their workspaces, not all of our respondents disclose their gender identities. A majority of respondents disclose their gender to only half of their colleagues. A quarter of respondents choose to disclose their gender identity to only 10% of colleagues.

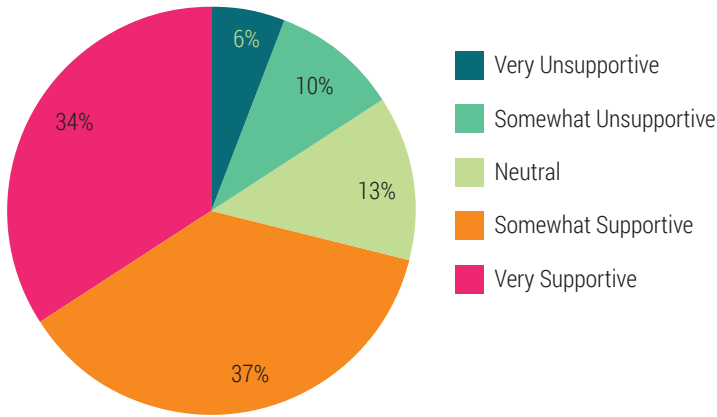


▲ *Description: a yellow sun smiles down on two potted plants as they are watered.*

Unfortunately, for those who do disclose their gender identities, welcome and support isn't guaranteed. **One in six respondents said coworkers do not support their gender identity**, while only a third said coworkers who know of their gender are very supportive.

In addition, more than one in five (23%) respondents have been fired from a job, treated unfairly at work, or not hired for a position because of the employer's attitude towards their gender identities. These experiences were especially common among South Asian respondents (32%) and Pacific Islander respondents (46%). Among a national population of trans people, one in six people surveyed have lost a job because of their gender identity or expression.<sup>5</sup>

## HOW SUPPORTIVE IS YOUR WORKPLACE?

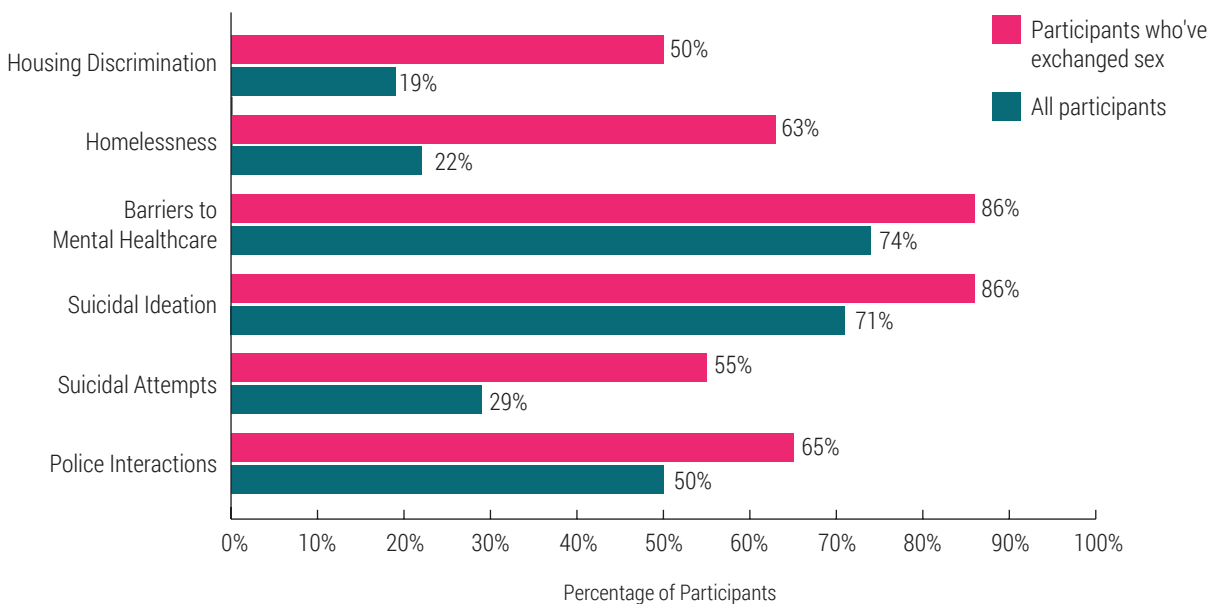


*1 in 5 have been fired or treated unfairly at work because of trans identity*

## Sex Work

**15% of respondents have exchanged sex for pay and other items of value.** Feminine respondents reported the highest rates of trading sex of any group, at more than a quarter of respondents. Almost half of Pacific Islander respondents have traded sex, a significantly larger percentage than other groups. Moreover, the 24 participants who exchanged sex experienced higher levels of housing discrimination (50%), homelessness (63%), barriers to mental health care (86%), suicidal ideation (86%), suicide attempts (55%) and interactions with police (65%) than others. This reflects national data on trans people who have exchanged sex, who are more likely to experience violence at the hands of police and systems than other trans people.<sup>6</sup>

## EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS WHO'VE EXCHANGED SEX VS ALL PARTICIPANTS



# Health & Mental Health

## General Healthcare

**TGNC APIs in the Bay Area face serious barriers to accessing the healthcare we need.** Many shared that doctors lack competency working with trans, gender nonconforming, and intersex patients, and a vast majority reported facing barriers to accessing mental healthcare, including financial inaccessibility and a lack of cultural competency among mental healthcare workers. At the same time, respondents reported high rates of mental illness and suicidality, suggesting a *dire* need for more culturally competent and affordable mental health care.

28% of respondents reported that, within the six months before taking the survey, there was a time they needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost. This rate was much higher for Pacific Islander participants (63%). Though 97% of respondents are covered by a health plan, less than half (39%) have plans that cover trans-related healthcare needs.

Participants shared a variety of experiences of being made to feel unsafe, and uncomfortable, with their doctors. **Almost half of respondents (43%) do not feel comfortable seeing their doctor**, largely due to a lack of competency around treating trans patients. This is significantly higher than a national population of trans people surveyed, in which 23% of participants were uncomfortable seeing a doctor.<sup>7</sup> Many participants reported being deadnamed by doctors, being referred to by the wrong

pronouns, and generally feeling disrespected by medical staff.

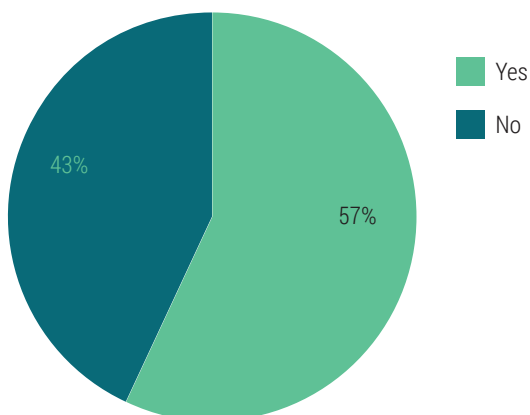
4% of respondents have HIV/AIDS. Though this is a small sample (with six HIV/AIDS “positive” respondents), this is more than ten times the rate of HIV positivity in the national US population (0.3%).<sup>8</sup> This rate may be higher, as only 62% of participants have had an HIV test.

*28% of participants cannot afford to see a doctor*

*43% of respondents do not feel comfortable seeing the doctor*

*Only 39% participants have health plans that cover trans related healthcare*

### ARE YOU COMFORTABLE SEEING THE DOCTOR?

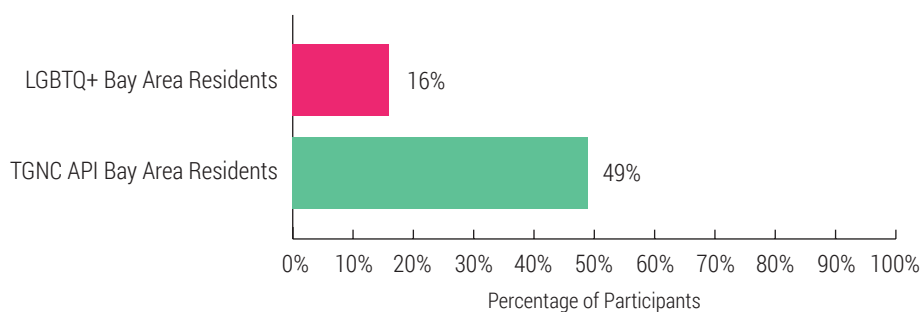


*“I never feel my experience of my body is the most important thing, but rather whatever makes it easier for the doctor to “treat” me. I don’t know what to wear, how to make my voice sound, or what name to use. It makes going to the doctor a scary experience.”*

## Mental Health

In addition to general discomfort with healthcare systems, participants faced serious difficulties with mental healthcare. 74% have faced barriers to accessing necessary mental healthcare. Cost is a large barrier, with 60% finding mental healthcare unaffordable. 69% of participants said finding resources or referrals for mental healthcare providers is a significant barrier. In addition, 49% find mental healthcare culturally inaccessible, a significantly higher rate than LGBTQ+ Bay Area residents more broadly concerned with cultural sensitivity (16%).<sup>9</sup>

### IS CULTURAL COMPETENCY A BARRIER TO MENTAL HEALTHCARE?



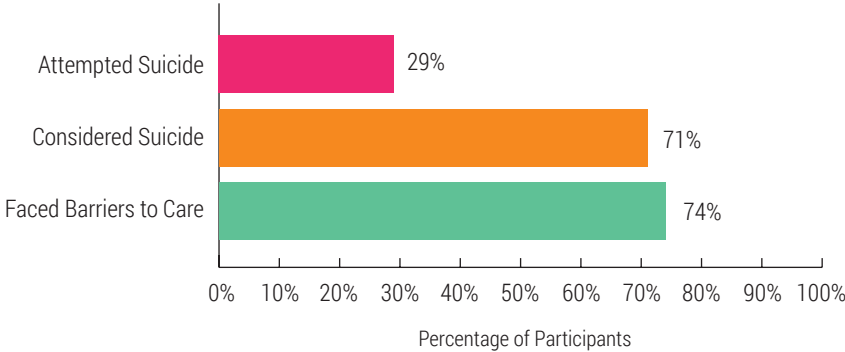
In the midst of facing serious barriers to accessing mental healthcare, respondents report high levels of mental illness and suicidal ideation. **71% of respondents seriously considered suicide.** These rates are highest for participants in their 40s (83%) and 20s (73%), and for Southeast Asians (74%) and East Asians (75%). Many regularly experience high levels of stress (75%), anxiety (85%), depression (75%), and gender dysphoria (71%).

*“I wish there is a list that shows therapists or doctors who are LGBTQIA, [because] I’m having to educate folks who are supposed to be educated. I’m not tryna pay \$50 to talk for an hour and spend the whole time explaining gender and cultural differences. Finding the right therapist is already a struggle, and when there isn’t a [match] it can feel really hopeless that this system isn’t built for us to get better.”*

— non-binary Filipinx respondent

**Moreover, 29% of respondents have attempted suicide**, more than six times the rate of the US population<sup>10</sup>. In the year before the survey, almost half of participants (45%) experienced severe emotional distress. A 2018 survey of LGBTQ+ Bay Area residents found 90% of respondents of color described mental health providers as insensitive to their perspectives as people of color.<sup>11</sup> These experiences suggest a serious need for both financially accessible and culturally competent mental healthcare for transgender and gender nonconforming APIs.

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THIS MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE?**





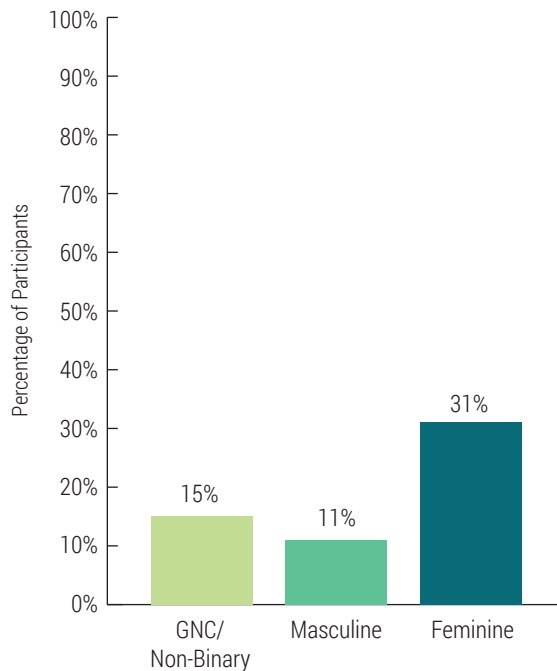
# Violence & Harassment

**Our research found TGNC API people face extreme violence**, both in public spaces such as businesses, bathrooms, and government facilities, and in their interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the violence TGNC APIs face varies across our identities in significant ways.

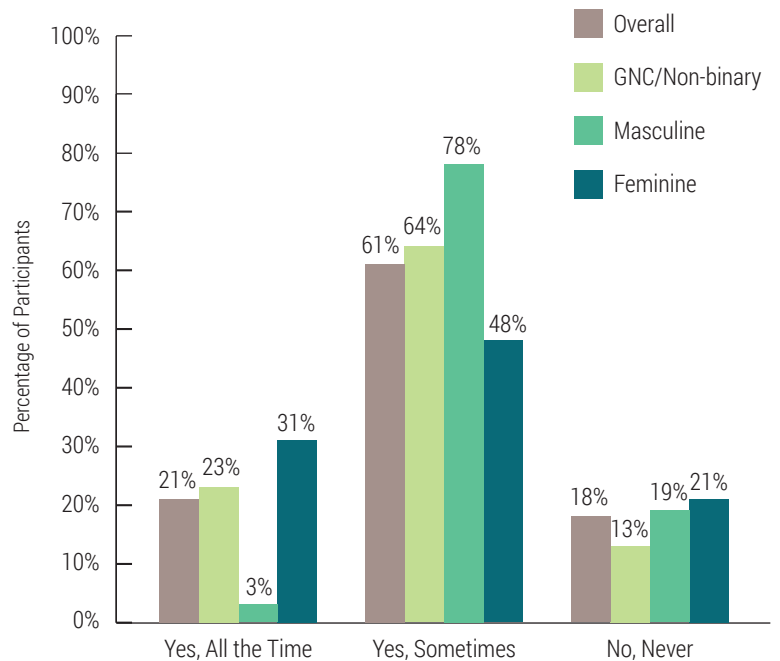
## Public Harassment

**18% of respondents were denied equal treatment in government agencies, businesses, and public spaces** in the year before the survey. These experiences were most common for feminine respondents (31%), South Asians (31%) and Pacific Islanders (36%). This mirrors experiences of trans people in the Bay Area broadly, who are overwhelmingly made to feel unsafe on public transit, in schools, in our neighborhoods, and in our own places of work.<sup>12</sup>

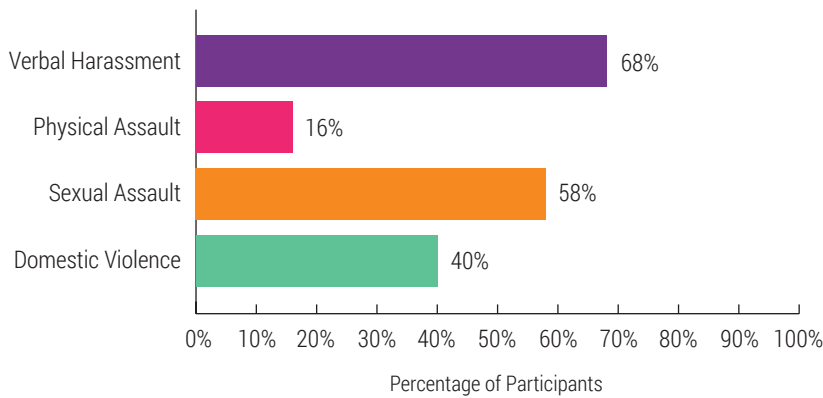
### HAVE YOU BEEN DENIED EQUAL TREATMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES?



### DO YOU CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE TO AVOID HARASSMENT?



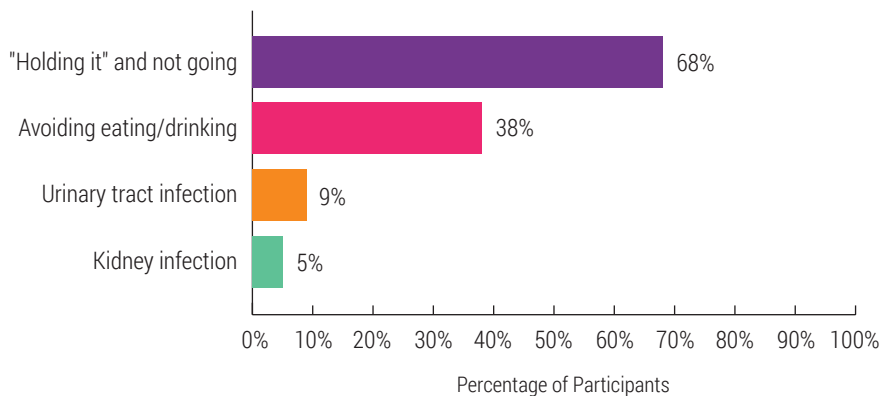
## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THIS TYPE OF VIOLENCE?



*Almost 7 in 10 participants experienced verbal harassment*

*"[There] are various disabilities that require more frequent bathroom use. It is also difficult for disabled people to travel extra distance to get to a gender neutral bathroom."*

## WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF AVOIDING THE BATHROOM?



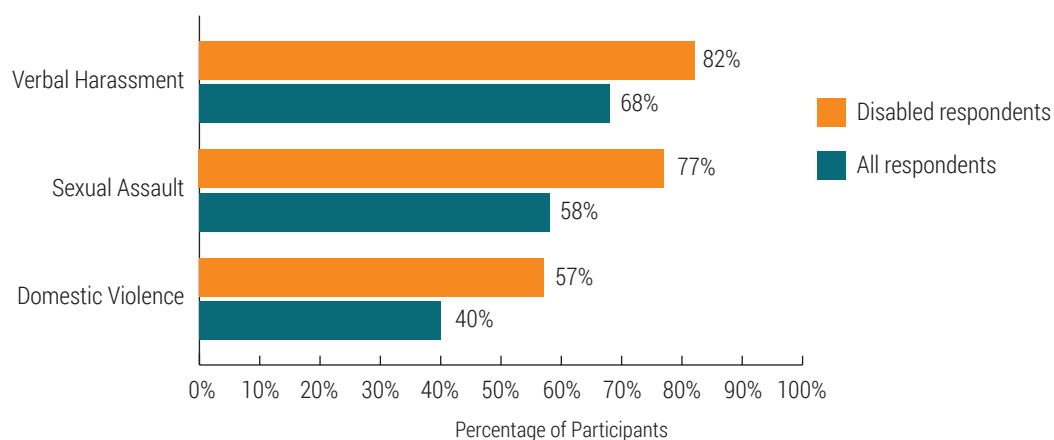
Almost 7 of 10 participants (68%) were verbally harassed in the year before the survey. This is much higher than the 46% of trans people nationwide who experienced verbal harassment in a 2015 study.<sup>13</sup> Verbal harassment is especially common for non-binary participants (73%), South Asians (79%) and Pacific Islander respondents (82%). To avoid harassment based on gender identity and expression, **more than 80% of participants regularly alter their appearance.** More than 1 in 5 participants (21%) alter their appearance *all* of the time in order to avoid harassment. This is much lower for masculine-identified respondents, at 3% of respondents.

Public bathrooms are often a site of gender-based violence for all trans people, including APIs. **Over 40% of our respondents were told or asked they were using the wrong bathroom** in the year before the survey. Again, this is also significantly higher than the 12% of trans people nationwide who experienced bathroom harassment, from a 2015 study.<sup>14</sup> 58% of respondents avoided using a public bathroom in the past year because of fear of harassment. **Masculine respondents were much more likely than any other group to avoid using the bathroom**, at 78%. The fear of abuse when using the restroom leads TGNC APIs to severe consequences. **More than a third of respondents (38%) avoided eating and drinking in public due to this fear**, and 14% of respondents experienced urinary infections and kidney issues due to the stress of “holding it” when unable to go to the bathroom.

## Physical, Sexual, & Domestic Violence

Participants also shared experiences confronting physical and emotional violence in public and private spaces. 16% of respondents were physically attacked in the year before the survey, including being grabbed, punched, and targeted with weapons. **58% experienced unwanted sexual contact in their lives**, and **more than 40% of respondents experienced domestic violence**. Disabled respondents, who represented 31% of total respondents, were much more likely to experience unwanted sexual contact (77%), verbal harassment (82%), and domestic violence (57%), Similarly, respondents who have experienced homelessness were more likely to experience sexual violence (76%), verbal harassment (80%), and domestic violence (76.7%).

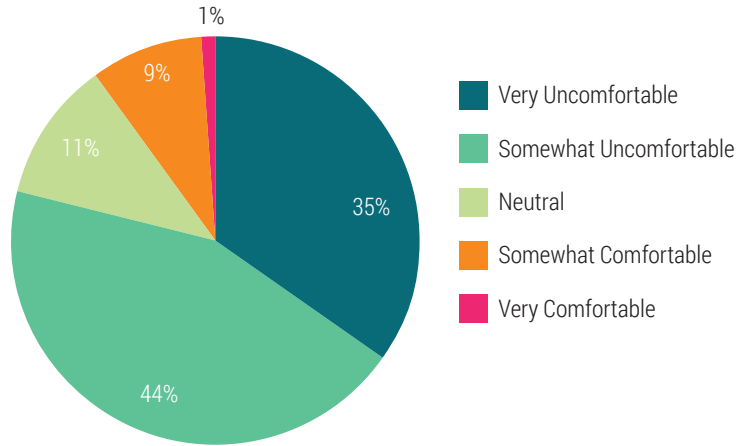
### EXPERIENCES OF DISABLED RESPONDENTS VS ALL RESPONDENTS



# Policing & Safety

**In the midst of so much violence, police rarely make our participants feel safe.** Instead, participants often experience intimidation, racism, and harassment at the hands of police. These experiences make it challenging for almost all respondents to feel comfortable with the police, much less to call on them for help. Moreover, our participants' experiences varied, especially across gender and cultural identities. This research lends credit to calls from Black, trans, and poor communities across the Bay Area and the United States to consider radical transformations to the ways we practice safety. It affirms the frightening knowledge that police do not address our fundamental needs for safety, and instead often bring violence and fear to already marginalized communities.

## ARE YOU COMFORTABLE ASKING POLICE FOR HELP?



## DO POLICE TREAT YOU WITH RESPECT?



Overall, **the vast majority of participants (79%) are uncomfortable interacting with police and asking them for help**, with a large group (35%) extremely uncomfortable. This reflects a 2016 finding in the US Transgender Survey, where over 57% of participants felt uncomfortable asking the police for help.<sup>15</sup> However, only 28% of LGBTQ+ residents of the Bay Area broadly felt uncomfortable interacting with police; compared to our participants, this data is striking.<sup>16</sup> Out of 161 who answered, **only a single respondent felt “very comfortable” with the police.**

**More than half of respondents (63%) were only sometimes treated with respect by police, and an additional 11% of respondents were never treated with respect.** Only a quarter (26%) of respondents were always treated with respect. Masculine respondents were always treated with respect by police at much higher rates (31%) than feminine (13%) and non-binary respondents (17%).

***“My friends and I do not feel comfortable going to the police for help. We feel like police do not take our reports seriously, nor do they have any interest in keeping us safe.”***

— young non-binary Filipinx American

While 55% of non-binary and masculine-identified respondents interacted with police in the last year, only 23% of our feminine-identified respondents did. In addition, our East Asian (27%) and Southeast Asian (31%) respondents were always treated with respect at much higher rates than Pacific Islander (12%) and South Asian respondents (11%).

When asked to share about experiences with law enforcement, participants largely shared:

1. Experiencing and/or witnessing **police intimidation, harassment, and assault**
2. Experiencing and/or witnessing **racism and anti-Blackness**

A younger, Hawaiian-Japanese respondent shared an experience of surviving sexual assault by a police officer as a child while living in a largely white neighborhood. They were also among a number of respondents who called the police for support during a domestic violence incident, yet felt talked down to and intimidated by the police who arrived to “support” them.

Overall, the data and experiences shared by respondents tell us our communities are deeply uncomfortable, unsupported, and made to feel unsafe by the police. This may be especially true for TGNC South Asians and Pacific Islanders, and TGNC people who do not identify with masculine gender identities. We need to **invest in systems and skills that make us and our communities feel truly safe**, when responding to moments of crisis and otherwise.

***“I’ve called law enforcement for my own protection [...] Each time, I felt like law enforcement did not hear my voice [...] and did not see me as human.”***

— young non-binary Indian respondent



▲ A circle of TGNC API and allied community safety volunteers wearing green vests, with a sign that says "Community Security".

# Community & Power

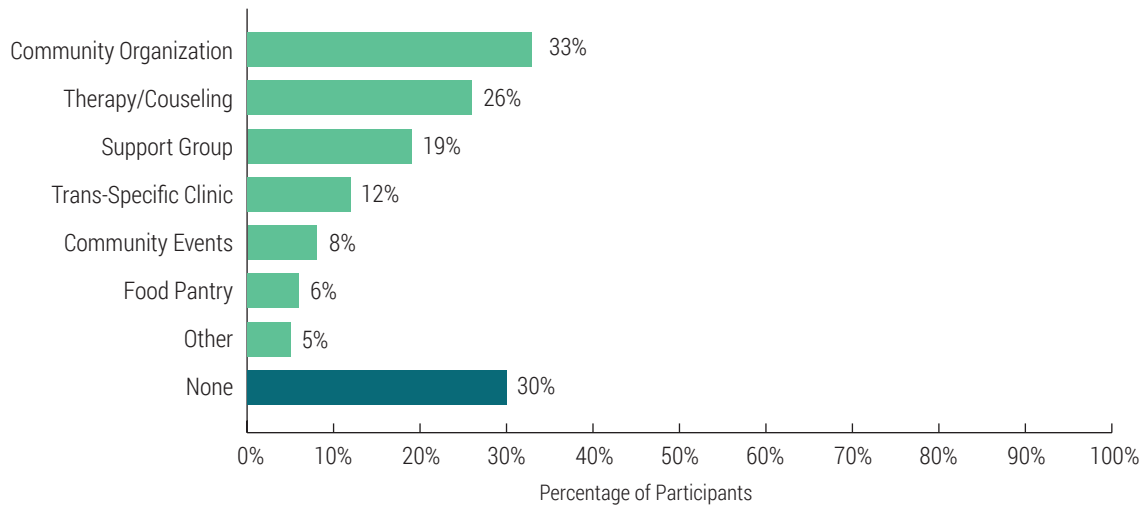
## Community Spaces

At APIENC, **we have learned that community building is a survival skill**, and participants' experiences reflect the importance of this learning. A needs assessment of LGBTQ+ people in the SF Bay Area found 96% of respondents described community spaces as critical to their wellbeing and health.<sup>17</sup> Our participants specifically shared a desire for culturally competent resources that address all of their needs and the intersections of their identities.

Of resources that make our participants feel seen as both TGNC and API, community groups are the most highly relied on, with 33% having participated in them. East Asians were more likely to participate in community organizations (at 39%) than Pacific Islanders (20%), South Asians (29%), and Southeast Asians (33%). Therapy and counseling (26%) and support groups (19%) were also highly utilized. 30% of respondents had never utilized any resources. Feminine-identifying people were three times more likely than non-binary and masculine people to have accessed resources, while Pacific Islanders and South Asians were least likely to have accessed resources, at approximately 40% for both groups.

However, 14% of participants also shared that **no spaces allows them to feel seen in the fullness of their gender and cultural identities**. For those who never accessed resources, themes of lack of awareness and imposter syndrome emerged. Some stated they did not know what kind of resources were available or had not

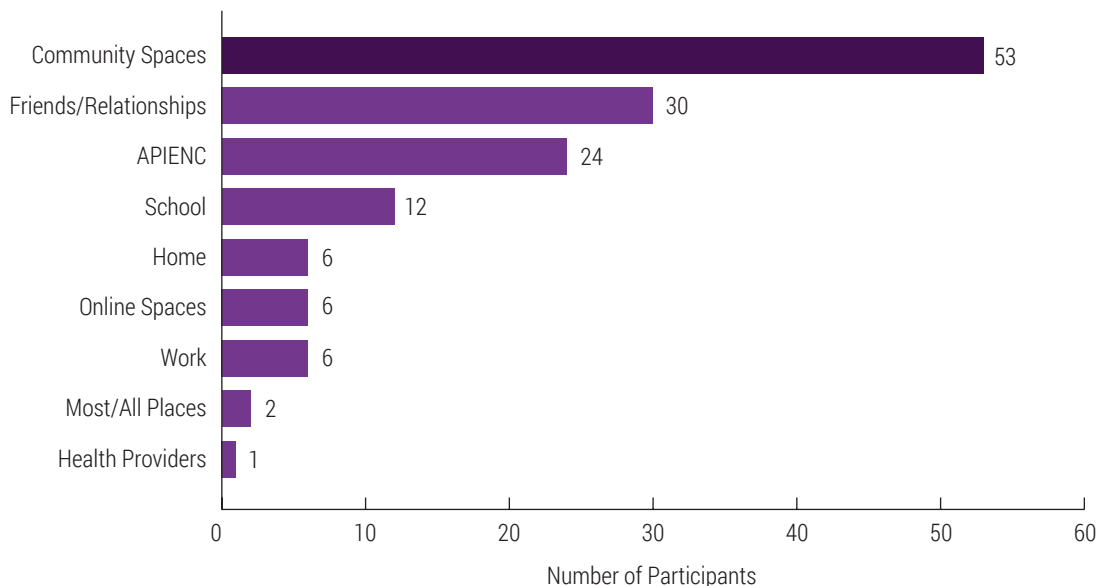
## WHAT RESOURCES FOR TGNC APIS HAVE YOU ACCESSED?



realized accessing resources was an option. Others believed they had too much privilege to access resources, with the belief that others needed the resources more. In particular, many respondents expressed a sense of not being “trans enough” or having too much passing privilege to seek out spaces.

Participants voiced concern over a lack of cultural competency within existing resources. Many also wrote of resources being concentrated in San Francisco and, to a lesser extent, in the East Bay, while scarce in other parts of the Bay. Some noted a lack of familiarity with trans people of color as a weakness of therapists and direct service groups who seek to support TGNC APIs. Participants also shared failures of API-specific resources to meet the needs of certain groups, especially trans and queer people, as well as South Asians and Pacific Islanders.

## WHERE DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED AS BOTH TGNC AND API?



*“A lot of the resources I’ve found are catered for Asian Americans. Immigrants like myself, while we can relate to some similar experiences [may] not face the same issues or challenges. I’ve been to API events here and found it difficult to connect to others [and] have often felt left out...”*

— Malay, Indian, Chinese transmasculine person

## Religion

In addition to community groups and direct service organizations, places of worship are spaces where many members of our community need to feel supported. A third of respondents hold a religious and spiritual identity, including Buddhist (12%, 16 people), Muslim (2%, 3 people), and non-religious spirituality (20%, 28 people). 53% have been a part of a religious community in the past. For those who have been a part of a religious community, **more than half (52%) left because they were rejected, or anticipated rejection, due to their gender.** This is much higher than rates of leaving a spiritual community among the national trans population (19%).<sup>18</sup>

*“It can be difficult to find help that can address all of my needs (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, age, finances, etc), so I usually have to pick an area that I want to address through a specific resource and focus on it.”*

— Chinese-Filipino transman

## Focusing Our Power

Though we believe TGNC APIs have great power to confront and transform our challenges, not all our participants feel the same way. **Half (48%) believe TGNC APIs cannot influence government decisions.** However, when asked to rank the issues APIENC should focus our collective power on, our participants responded. Across many groups of ethnicities and genders, housing justice, health access, and immigration justice stood out as the highest priorities for our participants. Our disaggregated results are as follows.



## Overall:

1. Housing justice
2. Health access & healthcare
3. Immigrant rights & justice
4. Supporting sex workers
5. Disability rights & justice

## By Ethnicities:

### East Asians:

1. Housing justice
2. Health access & healthcare
3. Immigrant rights & justice

### Pacific Islanders:

1. Immigrant rights & justice
2. Addressing interpersonal violence
3. Building API community support

### Southeast Asians:

1. Housing justice
2. Health access & healthcare
3. Immigrant rights & justice

### South Asians:

1. Health access & healthcare
2. Housing justice
3. Immigrant rights & justice

## By Gender:

### Feminine respondents:

1. Housing justice
2. Immigrant rights & justice
3. Supporting sex workers

### Masculine respondents:

1. Housing justice
2. Disability rights & justice
3. Health access & healthcare

### Gender Non-Conforming respondents:

1. Housing justice
2. Immigrant rights & justice
3. Health access & healthcare

## By Region:

### East Bay:

1. Housing justice
2. Health access & healthcare
3. Immigrant rights & justice

### South Bay:

1. Health access & healthcare
2. Housing justice
3. Immigrant rights & justice

### San Francisco:

1. Immigrant rights & justice
2. Housing justice
3. Supporting sex workers

# Recommendations

## APIENC's Action Plan:

Through our organizing, APIENC will take these actions to meet our communities' needs:

- 1. Invest in community-led healing and emotional skill-building.** Many respondents felt most cared for in spaces with other TGNC APIs and people of color. There is an abundance of healing wisdom in our community—from herbalists, to bodyworkers, to TGNC API therapists, and more. We want to invest in supporting these healers, connecting them to others, and growing all of our skills to provide peer-support.
- 2. Train health providers to address TGNC API needs.** Many respondents feel othered, intimidated, and rejected by professional health providers. We want to equip TGNC APIs with the skills to train care providers in the Bay Area, to ensure we feel safe visiting health professionals and that our needs are met when we do. Ultimately, we hope to foster a network of vetted care providers accountable to our community.
- 3. Leverage our voices as TGNC APIs in campaigns for housing justice.** In the Bay Area, an abundance of organizations are fighting for affordable housing, rent control, and renter power. As TGNC APIs, we can speak to experiences of transphobia, racism, and xenophobia in housing. We want to ensure TGNC API experiences with housing are uplifted, and that housing justice is a priority in APIENC's work.
- 4. Nurture TGNC API artists and invest in our storytelling.** When we cannot see others like us, it becomes so much harder to imagine a future for ourselves. Many respondents have never met another TGNC API person; even more shared they have never been asked about their experiences with both identities. We want to invest in the artists and storytellers in our community who represent our complex experiences and support our communities to reclaim our voices through craft and expression.
- 5. Create concrete community safety strategies led by TGNC APIs.** Clearly, existing institutions—such as police and prisons—do not meet our needs. These findings underscore the importance of continuing what many trans communities of color have done for generations—create safety for each other and ourselves. We want to continue growing spaces for TGNC APIs to deepen our relationships; to train safety teams during events and actions; to provide support to incarcerated and previously incarcerated TGNC APIs; to create pods and emergency plans; and convene spaces where our members can envision alternatives to policing and prisons on a local level.

## Roadmap to Trans Justice for All of Us:

- **Close Circles** (*Families, Parents, Friends*): For many TGNC APIs, navigating different cultural expectations, language barriers, and our complex histories of migration can make finding comfort and safety as trans people in our homes even harder. We need the concrete and ongoing support of people around us. We want to ask families (both chosen and given), parents, and friends of TGNC APIs to educate yourselves on TGNC issues, and start conversations with each other on how to respect and support the TGNC API people in your



- ▲ *Shreya: "The first time I saw fireflies was with a queer API bud. It was getting dark, and we got kind of lost in a forest. Despite that, I remember laughing, feeling a lot of joy and warmth, and not alone. Luckily, we eventually found our way out with the help of the fireflies."*

*Description: a group of people in a forest at night; some sit in a circle, surrounded by orange flowers and fireflies, while others chase after fireflies in the background. A zoomed-in portion shows a glowing firefly, and reads: "trust in your light."*

lives. Speak up for us when we are not in the room, make it clear to us that you love and appreciate us, and be willing to learn so we can feel safe.

- **Public Spaces** (*Schools/Colleges, Workplaces, Local Businesses*): TGNC APIs face challenges in public spaces—from heavy harassment when using the bathroom, to verbal assault and abuse, to workplace discrimination—that make us unsafe and deepen mental and physical distress. *All of these spaces can help.* Start by making your bathrooms gender inclusive, while being explicit about why and educating patrons and staff. Create spaces where TGNC API people can receive care and mentorship, such as a support group in schools. Make it easy for all people to choose the names and pronouns they want to use by asking for and respecting pronouns as an expected part of your culture. Hire TGNC API people, and make workplaces safe for them by training staff on respecting gender identity and providing active mentorship and support.
- **Community Spaces** (*API Groups, LGBTQIA+ Spaces, Religious Institutions*): TGNC APIs are members of all these spaces, yet our needs are often ignored. Many shared experiences of being rejected from API, LGBTQIA, and TGNC spaces they wanted to call home. We need API groups to recognize trans people are likely already part of your spaces, and may not feel safe sharing their identities. We need you to support trans leaders of all ages; to normalize advocating for trans issues; and to include gender trainings for staff and members. We need LGBTQIA+ groups to create space in multiple languages and for specific communities, such as non-binary people, Pacific Islanders, South Asians, and more. We need trans spaces

to understand the experiences of API people, including our histories of trauma and oppression, beyond the model minority myth. We need religious institutions to listen to the needs of TGNC people, actively affirm and trans and queer people as part of your communities, and support the people who are already organizing at the intersections of religion, gender, and sexuality.

- **Health Providers** (*Doctors, Nurses, Mental Health Workers, Insurance Providers*): An overwhelming amount of respondents are unable to afford the care they need, matched with non-affirming providers, or barred from learning about available resources. To ensure TGNC APIs receive the care we need and deserve, we need doctors, nurses, and mental health providers to receive training specifically about caring for trans and API patients, ideally by paying trans API people to provide this education. We also need providers to make health information and care available in many languages, so TGNC APIs and our communities feel empowered to communicate our needs. We need more insurance programs to include gender-affirming care for trans people, so that the life-saving medical attention we need is easily accessible. We need to fight for the creation of alternatives to calling the police in crisis situations, such as the Mental Health First program piloted in Oakland and Sacramento, and support campaigns, such as Medicare for All, that seek to make healthcare easy to access for all people.
- **Funders** (*Progressive Funders & Donors*): Community spaces are life-saving, and building relationships is a survival skill for TGNC APIs. At the same time, we are often forced to compete for limited resources and shape our work to be more understandable to funders who are not members of our communities. Instead, we need progressive funders to resource relationship building as a fundamental tool of organizing. We need you to fund abundantly, educate yourselves on the intersectional experiences of TGNC APIs, center healing, and prioritize the long-term perspective of our own people.
- **Media** (*Newspapers, Radio Stations, Media Sites*): Diverse stories of TGNC APIs are invisibilized in the media. When we are highlighted, the focus is our trauma and pain, and the wrong pronouns and names are used to define us. Publishing sources can empower TGNC API peoples' self-determination by asking us to tell our own stories and supporting us to do so. Embrace our complexities and do not pick single people to represent us. Ask for people's names and pronouns and use them. Report a variety of our stories, including joy, healing, and transformation. For API media in particular— amplify our stories among immigrant and monolingual API people, to help initiate education that makes us safer in our homes, neighborhoods, and cultures.

# Conclusion

For too long, TGNC API people have been told that our identities are too complicated, and that our experiences are too specific to matter. **More than 200 TGNC API voices in this report tell us otherwise.** They confirm that TGNC APIs in the Bay Area live at the intersections of housing instability, mental and emotional distress, workplace insecurity, and violence in our homes and society. They remind us that institutions like police, schools, and workplaces fail us, harm us, and neglect our needs. And they emphasize that the resources meant to serve us, such as care providers and community groups, often fall short of embracing all of who we are, and leave us to choose between our genders, sexualities, and ethnicities.

The experiences in this report should not only matter to us, because ultimately, **the systems that target us hurt everybody.** The findings in this report result from centuries of xenophobia, colonization, war, and attempts to erase transgender people from Pacific Islander and Asian histories. Decades of the Model Minority Myth have justified violence against Black and indigenous people, and made the challenges APIs face imperceptible to the world around us. Constant disinvestment from schools and healthcare—critical parts of our social fabric—has made it easier and easier for TGNC APIs and others at the margins of our communities to fall into patterns of systemic neglect and violence.

**Yet, all of this harm is a chance to transform our lives.** When we can see clearly the ways systems fail us, we can respond. We can invest in our relationships to counter isolation; we can grow leadership skills to determine our own futures; we can create real solutions for our needs. At APIENC, we will continue to root in healing, culturally competent care, housing justice, and community safety. We will continue organizing to develop an abundance of trans API leaders.

**We cannot do this alone.** We will need everyone—families, friends, workplaces, organizations, healthcare providers, schools, faith communities, and more—to do this work alongside us. Learn from TGNC API people; examine your own relationships to gender; resource our self-determination; and support us to not only meet our basic needs, but to thrive.

Another world is possible. A world of belonging and interdependence, where we are all seen, respected, and cared for is possible. **Now, it's up to us.**

# Glossary of Terms

**Caste** – a system of social codification established in Hindu scripture, which provides the foundation for caste apartheid, a framework of oppression and exclusion.<sup>19</sup>

**Cisgender** – refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth in other words, someone who is not trans.

**Deadname** – using a transgender person’s legal or former name without their consent, instead of using the name they choose.

**Disabled** – this report uses the term “disabled people”, rather than “people with disabilities”, to emphasize the ways our world is often not equipped to allow disabled people to flourish.<sup>20</sup>

**Gender Binary** – the idea that there are only two genders (male/female or man/woman) and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

**Gender Expression** – how a person expresses their gender identities. Ways of expressing gender can include clothing, voice, body hair, posture, and more.

**Gender Fluid** – refers to a person who experiences a range in gender identity and expression.

**Gender Identity** – is how a person views and identifies themselves. Gender identity does not always match the sex people are assigned at birth.

**Gender Non-Conforming** – refers to a person who does not follow other people’s ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Genderqueer** – refers to a person whose gender identity is neither cis-man or cis-woman, is in between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders.

**Gender Questioning** – refers to a person who is questioning their gender identity and might be wondering whether they identify as a man, a woman, another gender, or none.

**Intersex** – a term used for a variety of experiences in which a person is born with anatomy that doesn’t match biological definitions of female or male.

**Non-Binary** - a spectrum of gender identities that exist beyond the man/woman gender binary.

**Queer** - encompasses identities such as transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, asexual, and other LGBTQIA+ identities. Often used to self-identity; can be used as a derogatory slur.

**Sex Assigned at Birth** – the category doctors assign to people when they are born. The sex assigned to individuals usually results in an assigned gender and added expectations.

**Transgender** – an umbrella term that refers to a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transphobia** – a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have/express towards transgender individuals. Transphobia can come from within the queer community as well as cisgender/heterosexual society.

## We Love Like Black Holes

Zara Jamshed

In April 2019, a supermassive black hole was captured  
on film for the first time      the close-up from a wide span x-ray  
                                 revealing an amber crown      swirling in worship against the darkest nothing  
like water spiraling down a drain      a copper iris cradling its pupil

it wasn't just that we could see what we held  
                                 at the event horizon of our understanding      or fully view the depth of its gravity  
but also the global chorus of scientists that pieced the sky of it together:  
                                 their fields of telescopes blanketing the horizon  
                                 a collective weaving of witness      actualization harvested

my gender holds itself in exactly the right place in the universe  
                                 my stretch of sky      is a warm the color of turmeric  
                                 I am at my most free when I am held      in the lenses of understanding  
                                 my love pulling with the deepest gravity

# Our Partners



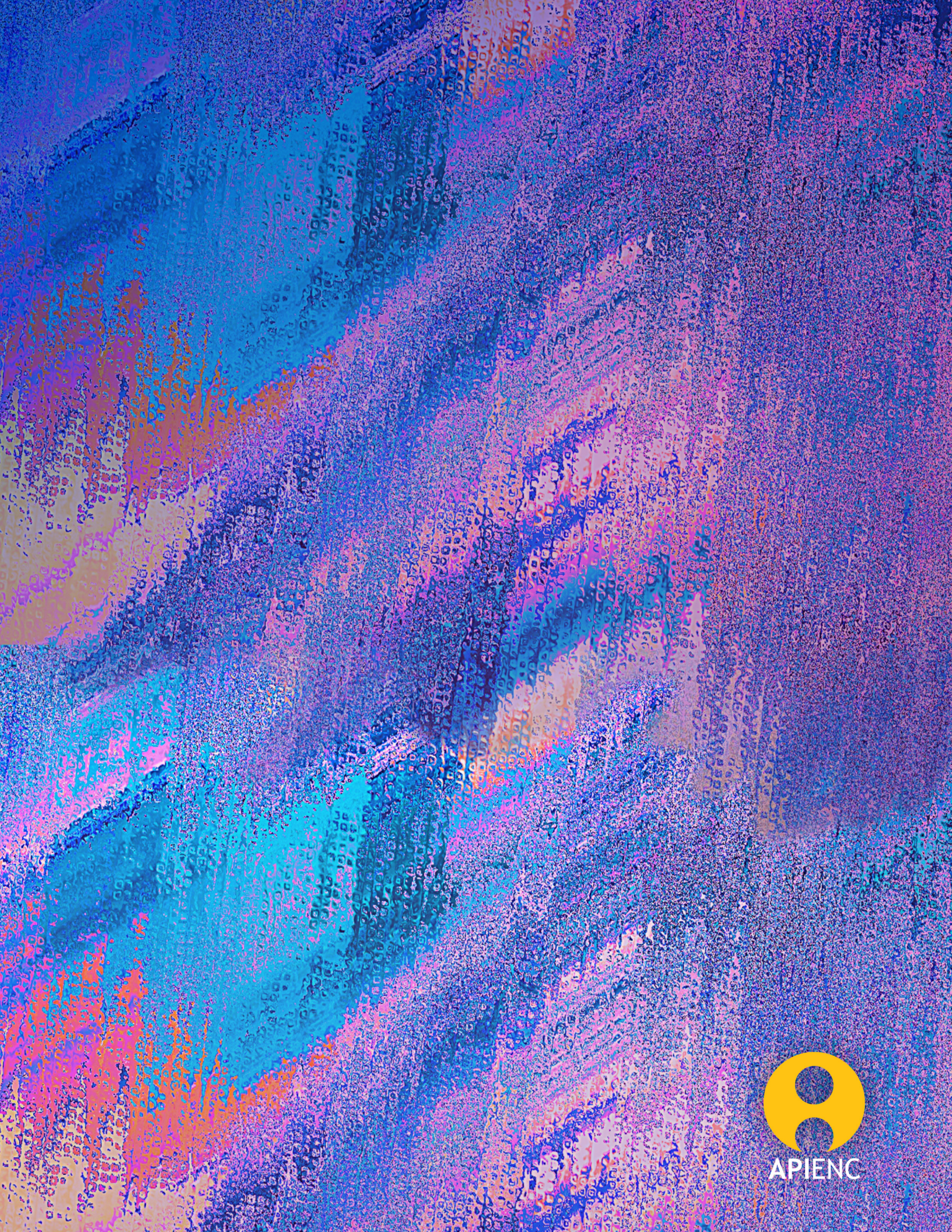
TRANS LIFELINE





## Endnotes

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