



# LGBTQ+ SOUTH SIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BY PRIDE ACTION TANK

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2021

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In late 2019, Howard Brown Health partnered with Pride Action Tank to develop and conduct a community input process to inform decision making regarding attributes, programs, services and other concerns for the health care and LGBTQ+-affirming social services facility it will be building on the South Side of Chicago. This multi-phase project was made possible through the combined efforts of State Rep. Lamont Robinson, Governor JB Pritzker, Majority Leader Gregory Harris and other supporters in the Illinois General Assembly.

Pride Action Tank's engagement included: developing and managing a steering committee made up of South Side leaders, leading community engagement and input activities and presenting a report of findings to Howard Brown. All but a few of the meetings and activities associated with this project took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring a shift to online meetings and outreach.

The 15 community members who formed the Steering Committee met five times from mid-February through the end of September to develop and review the online survey and stakeholder interview questions, recommend

**“ THIS IS LONG  
OVERDUE.  
BIPOC LGBTQ  
FOLKS FROM THE WEST  
AND SOUTH SIDES GET  
CRIMINALIZED JUST FOR  
BEING IN SPACES ON THE  
NORTH SIDE THAT USED TO  
BE QUEER.”**

stakeholders for interviews, advise on outreach and promote the survey.

The needs assessment took a mixed methods approach. The quantitative portion of the assessment consisted of an online survey, which received responses from 233 community members. Additionally, eight key stakeholder interviews were conducted

with LGBTQ+ organization and community leaders. This report summarizes the data that was collected June 29 – September 15, 2020. The report is divided into the following sections:

- Background – a summary of the project’s history.
- South Side Needs Assessment Steering Committee – a discussion of the recruitment and purpose of the Steering Committee and member list.
- Evaluation design and methods – a description of the methodology and assessment design.
- Who took the survey – a summary of demographic information of survey takers.
- Hopes, desires and concerns about the new center – a lengthy discussion of survey and stakeholder interview data about the services and attributes that respondents want to see in the center, level of comfort including LGBTQ in the name of the proposed facility and feelings and concerns about the center and Howard Brown.
- Respondents’ thoughts about the South Side and their neighborhoods – a discussion of what respondents reported as strengths of the South Side, their level of satisfaction and feelings of safety in their communities and thoughts about the future.
- Health and services – a summary of health services and needs as well as a peek at how respondents have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Takeaways from analysis of the survey and key stakeholder interviews are listed below by section.

## WHO TOOK THE SURVEY

- Most respondents identify their sexual orientation as lesbian/gay/SGL and cisgender.

- The majority of respondents identified their race as African American or Black.
- The majority of respondents were in the 25-45 years of age.
- Slightly more than half of the survey takers indicated that they are able to meet at least most of their needs with their income.
- The vast majority of respondents are paying all of their housing costs.
- Despite the overall financial and housing stability of respondents, those who identify as bisexual and/or transgender, nonbinary or another gender are not faring as well.

## HOPES, DESIRES AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE CENTER

- Many respondents expressed the desire for the center to be a space where they feel safe and welcomed and that is also inclusive of everyone in the community. A variety of programs and activities were suggested but there was an emphasis on mental healthcare to address trauma and PTSD, as well as centering Black leaders and culture in the development of the new center.
- Stakeholders were overall supportive of the center but expressed concerns about community support for an LGBTQ+ center as well as Howard Brown being seen as a North Side organization. However, they were also willing to work with Howard Brown on the development of the center and reported their relationship with Howard Brown as positive. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of BIPOC leadership.
- Key stakeholders are generally supportive of a LGBTQ center, but are concerned about the details – collaborations, financial sustainability for the new center and existing organizations, etc.
- Howard Brown, while respected, will

be seen as “the enemy” if relationship building, transparency and shared power are not prioritized and demonstrated.

- Centering the cultural heritage of Black and Latinx people on the South Side is very important to stakeholders.
- Stakeholders see an opportunity to create an institution that can bring more visibility to LGBTQ+ people on the South Side and encourage economic development in the neighborhood where the center is located.

## RESPONDENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SOUTH SIDE AND THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

- The majority of respondents expressed general satisfaction with their neighborhood. However, there was an overwhelming dissatisfaction with the number of LGBTQ+ services and programs, suggesting the need for a space dedicated to LGBTQ+ members of the community.
- Respondents take pride in their community members always being there for each other and the rich culture of the South Side, which underscores the importance of including Black culture in the development of the new center as mentioned above.
- Overall, most respondents are very comfortable getting services from or attending programs at a facility with LGBTQ in the name. However, a much lower number of bisexual people feel this way.
- Although most respondents feel their neighborhood is pretty safe, Blacks/ African Americans were least likely to feel this way.
- While most respondents are at least somewhat satisfied with their neighborhood, they are dissatisfied

with the number of LGBTQ+ services or programs in the neighborhood or area where they live.

## HEALTH & SERVICES

- The lack of culturally competent LGBTQ+ services was cited by many respondents as an issue they face when trying to access care. About half of respondents reported needing LGBTQ-specific services, emphasizing the importance of a center focused on LGBTQ+ needs.
- Respondents who identify as queer, bisexual, other sexual orientations, cisgender men and/or nonbinary, transgender and people with other identities are less likely to rate their health as at least good compared to respondents as a whole and other subgroups.
- While LGBTQ-specific services, mental health treatment/counseling, and financial assistance were most often selected as needed during the last 12 months, there are a significant number of services that they did not have the ability to get.
- As expected, the corona virus pandemic has had an impact on respondents. Over 1/3 said their service needs have changed while just under half said their ability to access these services had changed as well.



pride  **ction**  
Celebrating 5 Years **tank**