



Supporting LGBTQ+ & Immigrant Youth: A Guide for Shelters & Service Providers Amid Policy Shifts

On March 26, 2025 Youth Law Center held a listening/discussion session with youth homeless shelters and service providers concerning the challenges that they and the LGBTQ+ and immigrant youth they serve are facing in light of rapidly changing laws, policies, and practices. This document reflects priorities that were identified in our session and resources that support those goals. Below are key actions that shelters and service providers can take to help protect the youth they serve during a period of significant change:

1. Reaffirm Inclusion:

- a. **Nondiscrimination policies** that explicitly include sexual orientation, gender identity, and immigration status.
- b. **Clear expectations** for staff and volunteers to maintain inclusive environments regardless of external changes.

2. Protect Confidentiality and Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

- a. **Review information policies**, especially for data related to identity, immigration status, and sensitive personal details.
- b. **Clarify legal boundaries** for when staff can legally refuse to share information.
- c. **Designate staff responders** for information requests or interactions with immigration enforcement.

3. Provide Continuous Staff Training and Support:

- a. **Ongoing training** on meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ and/or immigrant youth.
- b. **Address impacts** of policy changes on LGBTQ+ and/or immigrant youth's mental health, safety, and trust in institutions.

- c. **Support affected staff** staff who might be worried about how policy changes might directly impact themselves due to their identities.

4. Foster Community Partnerships with Organizations that also serve LGBTQ+ and Immigrant Youth

- a. **Collaborate** with LGBTQ+ and immigrants rights organizations, and mental health providers for wraparound services.
- b. **Partner** with immigration and other legal aid attorneys to provide specialized support for youth navigating legal processes.

5. Amplify Youth Voices to Navigate Changes

- a. **Establish youth advisory boards** that include LGBTQ+ and immigrant youth to help inform shelter policies, services, and safety protocols.
- b. **Empower youth participation** in response to new policies or requirements from the federal government.

6. Advocate and Stay Informed

- a. **Stay connected** with local and national organizations monitoring policy shifts affecting LGBTQ+ and immigrant youth.
- b. **Monitor policy shifts through trusted organizations:**
 - i. [PFLAG resources](#) for LGBTQ+ federal policy changes.
 - ii. The [Immigration Policy Tracking Project \(IPTP\)](#) for immigration federal policy changes.
- c. **Review rights under California law** for [LGBTQ+](#) and [immigrants](#).
 - i. Be sure to review information for yourself, consult a trusted source, and/or seek legal advice or education from a qualified attorney.

Feel free to connect with Christopher Middleton, cmiddleton@ylc.org, if you have questions or want to discuss steps your organization is planning to take.