



We refuse to be invisible®

SAGE's National Housing Initiative (NHI)

Quarterly Newsletter: October 2020

SAGE's NHI is dedicated to providing information that helps LGBT elders and allies make informed decisions when it comes to housing. For LGBT older people, finding a place that's welcoming—where they can feel free to be themselves and be treated respectfully and compassionately is a mainstay of our program.

Greetings to our steadfast network of colleagues and comrades in a year that continues to bring a range of challenges, as well as a collective responsibility to continue our work. We are getting through the year, the election is around the corner, communities are mobilizing, and mutual aid—a model of care known well by LGBT+ communities—continues to demonstrate the ways we can create solutions when systems fail.

NHI Virtual Institute

On October 13th, SAGE hosted a week-long series, the 2020 National LGBT Elder Housing Virtual Institute. The first virtual event of its kind, the week included workshops, engaging dialogue, and learning sessions to build the capacity for understanding and attending to the housing challenges LGBT elders face. Members of the housing sector and community advocates came together to explore best practices, identify challenges, and innovate housing solutions within the context of a racial justice framework and the global pandemic. Special thanks to Citi Community Investing and Development for their generous sponsorship and thought partnership on this event. And thanks to the National Equity Fund for sponsoring a fun closing reception, including bingo hosted by Murray Hill and Miss J Alexander! Please reach out to Sydney if you'd like more details, takeaways, or connections to panelists.

All sessions of the series are accessible to the public [here](#), and include closed captioning in Spanish and English. Individual sessions are here:

- [Taking Care of Our Own: Best Practices and Tools to Develop Affordable LGBT Elder Housing](#)
- [Housing Models Grounded in Equity: Community Displacement, Tensions, and Collective Resilience](#)

- [The Role of Funders Amidst the Pandemic: Funding Strategies for Housing Development](#)
- [Policy, Legislative, and Community Advocacy Considerations in the Current Moment](#)

Federal Roll-Backs in Critical Housing Protections

As noted at the Virtual Institute by Jorge Soto of the National Fair Housing Alliance, the federal administration has made strident attempts to gut housing protections against segregation and discrimination, and there have been intentional efforts to undermine the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (see *the [National Fair Housing Alliance](#) for details*). HUD has been messaging to the housing market that discrimination is acceptable through explicit policies and legislation, and there is a recent Executive Order on racial and gender stereotyping, prohibiting federally-funded grant recipients from taking on training or activities that center any form of anti-oppression education. In essence, advocates are being penalized for any public education on systemic oppression. Furthermore, there are concerted efforts by right-wing interest groups to appoint ideologically-motivated judges with lifetime appointments, only removable by impeachment—so local advocacy is a critical strategy in this moment. Please read more about the federal housing landscape environment here:

- [Fair Housing Act's Disparate Impact Rule](#)
- [Affirmatively Affirming Fair Housing \(AFFH\) Rule](#)
- [Equal Access Rule](#)

SAGE Puerto Rico

Wilfred Labiosa, Executive Director of Waves Ahead and SAGE Puerto Rico, spoke at the Virtual Institute about the unique barriers and challenges faced by LGBT elders on the island. SAGE Puerto Rico has been establishing community centers and safety mechanisms amidst the failure of federal and local government, as evidenced by what has happened in the last ten years of political and natural disasters, including a crumbling economy, the worst 2 hurricanes in Puerto Rican history, government unrest and corruption, and devastating earthquakes. COVID-19 exacerbates these challenges to community safety and wellness. The population in Puerto Rico is becoming older, as young professionals are leaving the island to seek better work opportunities and safer spaces. As of October 2020, there have been six known murders of transgender people this year that have not been investigated. Death by suicide is very high amongst LGBT elders on the island—it impacts the entire community and adds to collective, compounded trauma.

Amidst various system failures, communities have been taking care of one another, with

particular focus on mental health and supportive systems. This includes an institutional campaign on suicide prevention amongst LGBT elders, both in Puerto Rico and in New York City, led by SAGE Puerto Rico. For three years, they have also hosted a weekly radio station on politics, policy, and services available to the LGBT older community, identifying political leaders who are explicitly committed to making positive change. SAGE Puerto Rico is also conducting education on Cubans and Dominicans living in Puerto Rico to build community across borders and talk about COVID-19's impact, bringing about culture shift and change. And combined with this incredible community building and care, SAGE Puerto Rico also continues to work on building three LGBT-affirming elder housing developments. Thank you, Wilfred, and your dynamic team of advocates and healers!

[Click here](#) to learn more about how to support SAGE Puerto Rico and Waves Ahead.

Research on LGBT Elder Housing Models

As the pandemic has heightened some of our society's challenges to near (or past) the breaking point, [Silvernest](#) has released a new report on their research-backed insights into the role homesharing will play in financial and social recovery—and beyond. Download the report [here](#).

In one of the first reports of its kind, [Tonic](#), [Stonewall Housing](#), and [Opening Doors London](#) teamed up to conduct much-needed research to better understand the housing, care and support requirements of older LGBT+ people in London, with over 620 respondents. The results of this research are released in the Building Safe Choices 2020 report [here](#).

The Australian Association on Gerontology (AAG) and Housing for the Aged Action Group released two new studies on the housing needs of LGBT+ communities locally. [Out of the Closet, Out of Options](#) presents the findings of a study of the housing experiences of LGBT+ older people in Victoria, undertaken by Housing for the Aged Action Group. The report aims to begin to bridge the critical gap in research by identifying the current housing circumstances and concerns of LGBT older Victorians. AAG published the [Rapid Evidence Assessment LGBTI Ageing Research on Housing Needs and Preferences](#), aiming to develop recommendations for policy improvements based on an analysis of available LGBT+ aging research on housing needs and preferences, as well as the identification of any key gaps in the evidence base.

National LGBT Elder Housing Development Toolkit Launch!

SAGE has officially launched the first module of the Housing Development Toolkit, a guide featuring strategies for developers, nonprofits, and community-based

organizations to develop LGBT-affirming affordable housing. Nine additional toolkit modules will continue to be released over the coming year. You can access the first two modules, focused on community and tenant outreach and engagement, [here](#).

Reminder: SAGECARE Certification and Training Go Virtual!

Our SAGECare LGBT aging cultural competency program is now fully virtual. Visit our [website](#) to learn how the SAGECare team are continuing to support providers during the pandemic.

Please feel free to forward any helpful information or questions to Sydney at skopprichardson@sageusa.org. Be well, friends!