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Advocacy &
Services for
LGBTQ+ Elders

Delivering Results

10 Years of the
SAGE National
LGBTQ+ Elder
Housing Initiative



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
Brief History of the NHI	3
Progress and Impact in Support of LGBTQ+-Affirming Elder Housing, Long-term Care and Supportive Services	6
PILLAR 1: Building LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing	6
PILLAR 2: Training mainstream housing providers	8
PILLAR 3: Changing public policy	9
PILLAR 4: Equipping LGBTQ+ older people with resources	11
PILLAR 5: Expanding services (Aging in Place, Care Coordination, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, etc.) that support older LGBTQ+ people who face housing challenges	12
Challenges and Lessons Learned	14
Future Directions for SAGE & LGBTQ+-Affirming Housing, Long-term Care and Supportive Services	16
Conclusion	26
Addendum 1: People interviewed for this report	27
Addendum 2: NHI reports and resources	28

Executive Summary

In 2025, SAGE commemorates a decade of transformative leadership through its National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative (NHI) — a groundbreaking effort to address the urgent need for affirming housing, long-term care, and supportive services for older LGBTQ+ people.

This report reflects on ten years of progress, challenges, and future directions, guided by five strategic pillars: building LGBTQ+-affirming housing, training mainstream providers, advancing public policy, equipping LGBTQ+ elders with resources, and expanding supportive services.

Since its launch in 2015, the NHI has supported and helped catalyze the creation of 27 LGBTQ+-affirming housing communities across the country, providing 1,756 units — a 350% increase over the past decade. In addition, SAGE has supported nearly 40 more projects currently in development and trained over 310,000 professionals through its LGBTQ+ cultural competency training program, SAGECare, as well as its National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging (NRC). These efforts have provided necessary housing and improved services for an estimated 500,000 LGBTQ+ older people.

Key milestones include the creation of Stonewall House and Crotona Pride House in New York City, the launch of the Long-term Care Equality Index (LEI), and the integration of housing resources into the SAGECents financial wellness app. These achievements are set against a backdrop of shifting political landscapes, including federal rollbacks of LGBTQ+ protections. In response, SAGE has led proactive advocacy, coalition-building, and public education efforts to defend inclusive housing policies and practices.



Looking ahead, the report outlines strategic recommendations to diversify housing models, strengthen care infrastructure, expand state and local advocacy, and enhance access to resources. Emphasizing trauma-informed design, community-first approaches, and sustainable funding strategies, SAGE is committed to shaping inclusive aging experiences for current and future generations of LGBTQ+ elders.

As SAGE enters a new chapter with the launch of its unified National Impact, Advocacy, and Enterprise division, the organization reaffirms its commitment to equity, resilience, and collaboration. This report makes clear that every LGBTQ+ person deserves to age in community — with dignity, safety, and pride.

Introduction

Founded in 1978, SAGE is the world's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) elders.

In partnership with its constituents and allies, SAGE works to achieve a high quality of life for LGBTQ+ elders, supports and advocates for their rights, fosters a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and promotes positive images of LGBTQ+ life in later years.

Through its multifaceted work, SAGE has learned that one of the most significant and persistent concerns for older LGBTQ+ people is having access to affirming housing, long-term care, and supportive services as they age.

According to an [Equal Rights Center report](#), 48% of older same-sex couples applying for elder housing were subjected to discrimination. Discrimination puts LGBTQ+ elders at greater risk for chronic health problems, social isolation, poverty, and premature mortality. Because of this, SAGE has made affirming housing, long-term

care, and supportive services priority issues, connected to other indicators of health and happiness for older LGBTQ+ people.

In 2025, SAGE marked ten years of strategic innovation and partnerships through the five pillars framing the National LGBTQ+ Housing Initiative (NHI).

Over the past decade, this initiative has earned a reputation as a national hub for both developers and service organizations alike. The NHI is known for its expertise, dedication, and the ability to raise the standards for LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing, long-term care, and supportive services.

This report gives a brief overview of the history of the NHI, and details its successes, challenges, and lessons learned. It also looks ahead, outlining opportunities to build on our strengths and explore new directions for the future.

REPORT METHODOLOGY

Research for this report began with review of a variety of written primary source documents about the NHI, many generated as resources for the program itself. In addition, it included interviews with 33 people who have worked closely with the NHI, either as SAGE staff or as partners in the NHI's work. Partners include housing developers, community activists, and staff of organizations that provide housing to LGBTQ+ elders. A list of interviewees is included in an appendix at the end of the report.

Interviews took place via video and phone during the spring of 2024. In recent months, the political and policy landscape has undergone significant shifts, challenging the steady progress that has been made over the past ten years. Yet, in the face of adversity, LGBTQ+ organizations — long defined by resilience — are rising to meet the moment with renewed determination. Despite cuts to federal funding, the rollback of protections at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and attacks on DEI initiatives and LGBTQ+ rights, SAGE's community of elders continues to stand strong. These challenges have underscored the need for innovative strategies — both protective and forward-looking — and new ways to measure success. What began as a celebration of a decade of positive change has evolved into a powerful reflection on the enduring strength of our community. One thing remains certain: SAGE's trusted leadership and steady vision are lighting the way forward — and they've never been more essential.

Brief History of the NHI

The NHI officially launched in 2015, but its roots run much deeper. As far back as the 1980s, SAGE was voicing concerns about the lack of affirming housing for LGBTQ+ elders.

Those early conversations gained momentum in the 2000s and laid the groundwork for what became the NHI. In 2014, supported by SAGE and a wave of emerging housing leaders across the country, SAGE's Board of Directors took a key step forward and formally committed to exploring new housing models. This led to the initiative's early emphasis on creating inclusive, LGBTQ+-affirming housing for older people.

The NHI's history includes groundbreaking developments like Stonewall House and Crotona Pride House in New York City, the creation of resources like SAGE's [Housing Development Toolkit](#), and ongoing work to replicate these models nationwide through advocacy, training, and technical assistance.

From the start, SAGE's staff and board recognized their role had to go beyond developing housing. They aimed to build a multi-pronged approach — one that could support communities nationwide, address shared challenges, and spread effective practices.

SAGE would focus on five interlocking pillars to meet the housing needs of LGBTQ+ older people:

1. Building LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing
2. Training elder housing providers
3. Changing public policy
4. Equipping LGBTQ+ older people with resources
5. Expanding services for LGBTQ+ elders facing housing challenges

Over the past decade, these strategies have shaped SAGE's work and remain highly relevant



today. While the development and operation of LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing often receive the most attention, the ongoing efforts in training, public policy advocacy, resource development, and the expansion of affirming long-term care and supportive services are equally vital. These areas of collaborative work by the NHI, National Initiatives, Advocacy, and SAGECare teams will be prominently featured throughout this report.

SAGE's journey has evolved into a deeply intentional, relationship-centered, and contextually grounded model for community engagement.

This approach reflects a growing awareness of historical injustices, local power structures, and the vital need for sustained, empathetic collaboration and meaningful support for community partners.

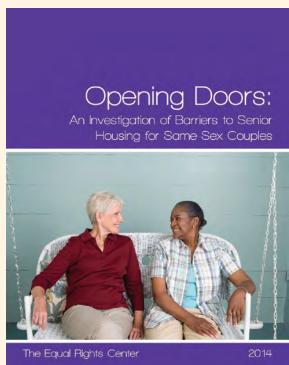
10 YEARS OF THE SAGE NATIONAL LGBTQ+ ELDER HOUSING INITIATIVE |

► 2000-2014

SAGE leadership and board begin strategic discussions on the need for LGBTQ+-affirming housing and supports.

► 2014

Equal Rights Center and SAGE release report, *Opening Doors: An Investigation of Barriers to Senior Housing for Same-Sex Couples*, which found 48% of older same-sex couples applying for elder housing were subjected to discrimination.



► 2015

SAGE launches the National Housing Initiative on February 3, 2015.



White House hosts LGBT Elder Housing Summit on February 10, 2015, with SAGE as supporting partner.



NATIONAL PROGRESS

SAGE identifies 6 LGBTQ+-welcoming housing communities offering 379 housing units.

► 2016

SAGE and BFC Partners selected by New York City to develop an affordable elder housing project in Brooklyn.

SAGECare introduces first training geared toward housing and long-term care communities: *Creating Inclusive Communities for LGBTQ+ Older Adults*.



► 2017



BFC Partners and SAGE break ground on first project: Stonewall House in Brooklyn.



SAGE secures partnership with HELP USA for Crotona Pride House in the Bronx.

► 2018

HELP USA and SAGE break ground on second project: Construction begins on Crotona Pride House in the Bronx.



► 2019

Developer partners and SAGE start accepting applications for Stonewall and Crotona and a ribbon-cutting officially opened Stonewall House.



SAGE hosts its first National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Symposium in Washington, D.C., in October.



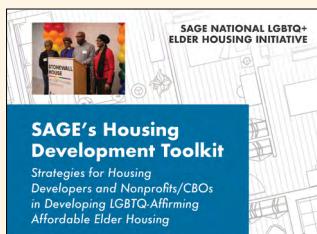
SAGE and HRC Foundation launch the Long-term Care Equality Index (LEI) Survey to support LGBTQ+-welcoming policy and practice adoption within existing long-term care communities.

NATIONAL PROGRESS

A total of 11 LGBTQ+-Welcoming Housing Communities are operating across the country, providing 657 units.

► 2020

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation invests in the NHI with a three-year grant.



SAGE increases technical assistance reach with introduction of SAGE's [Housing Development Toolkit](#), informed by SAGE's experiences building Stonewall House and Crotona Pride House in NYC and the experiences of partners building other communities across the country.

LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing and long-term care communities across the country respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and safety concerns of residents and staff.

► 2021

Crotona Pride House officially opens in the Bronx.

SAGE and HRC Foundation release the Long-term Equality Index Report 2021 with participation by 184 communities in 32 states.

► 2022

The NHI and SAGECare launch online training program consisting of nine modules specifically geared toward housing developers and property managers.

► 2023

The NHI expands toolkits and fact sheets for developers and LGBTQ+ communities.

SAGE partners with Openhouse, a community services and housing organization for LGBTQ+ seniors in San Francisco, to host a Social Services Symposium Series.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation continue to provide funding for the NHI, including with support for pre-development and technical assistance to build LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing in Baltimore, MD.

SAGE and HRC Foundation release the 2023 LEI Survey Report with 200 participating communities serving 23,000 residents.



► 2024

SAGE hosts town halls and outreach in support of work in Baltimore.

SAGE partners with the Milken Institute to research and create a report on financing affordable and LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing.



► 2025

SAGE and the Milken Institute release report: Models for Financing Affordable and LGBTQ+-Affirming Elder Housing at Scale.

SAGE and HRC Foundation Release the 2025 LEI Survey Report with 274 participating long-term care communities serving 29,000+ residents.



SAGE continues to work with key partners in Baltimore as they work toward site control.

SAGE hosts a 2025 Virtual Housing Symposium highlighting successful partners and findings from the Milken report.

NATIONAL PROGRESS

27 LGBTQ+-welcoming communities in operation across the country, providing a total of 1,756 units, representing a 350% growth in affirming communities from 2015 to 2025.

SAGE provides technical assistance and is tracking nearly 40 projects in various stages of development across the country.

Progress and Impact in Support of LGBTQ+-Affirming Elder Housing, Long-term Care and Supportive Services

In this section, we look back at how five core pillars have shaped the NHI's progress and impact. We also honor the organizations, developers, and funders whose early leadership in affirming elder housing and care paved the way for this work.

PILLAR 1: Building LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing

FOR NEARLY THREE DECADES, SAGE, alongside LGBTQ+ partner organizations, developers, and funders nationwide, has prioritized the development of LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing. In 2015, SAGE identified six affordable housing communities that embraced LGBTQ+ inclusivity, laying the groundwork for future progress. Drawing from these pioneering experiences and the building of Stonewall House and Crotona Pride House, SAGE gained firsthand knowledge to provide technical assistance, training, and educational resources, helping to catalyze the growth of LGBTQ+-affirming housing throughout this decade.

The early lessons learned by SAGE and our developer partners as well as firsthand experiences of 20 LGBTQ+ service providers, developers and property managers from seven

A key takeaway from SAGE's work and the insights shared by interviewees involved in creating LGBTQ+-affirming housing is the vital role that early and ongoing community engagement plays throughout every stage of the development process.



LGBTQ+-affirming housing communities were the focus of the first SAGE NHI toolkit released in 2017, [Understanding the Affordable Housing Development Process: A Primer for LGBT Aging Providers](#). This guide (updated in 2020) continues to provide guidance to organizations exploring the development of LGBTQ+-affirming housing.

A key takeaway from SAGE's work and the insights shared by interviewees involved in creating LGBTQ+-affirming housing is the

vital role that early and ongoing community engagement plays throughout every stage of the development process. Meaningful engagement not only helps identify and address the specific needs of LGBTQ+ individuals but also fosters understanding and collaboration with surrounding neighborhoods — facilitating smoother transitions and integration of housing projects.

The program has evolved in response to various challenges, including complex funding landscapes, resistance to new developments in high-demand areas, and the imperative to maintain LGBTQ+ inclusivity. SAGE has played a pivotal role in supporting partner organizations as they navigate sensitive issues, such as providing cultural competency training for property management and service providers, as well as consulting on strategies when projects risk losing their affirming focus.

“It is clear that providers and developers can only properly assess the housing and service needs of surrounding community by engaging its residents. This also builds trust and credibility over the long term.”

— Excerpt from Understanding the Affordable Housing Development Process

Partner organizations interviewed for this report spoke with gratitude about what they've learned from SAGE's openness — whether through shared resources, training opportunities, or national gatherings that brought people together. These efforts expanded LGBTQ+-affirming housing nationwide and sparked broader awareness of its importance. The efforts also strengthened the quality and cultural competency of long-term care and supportive services across the field.



“The most impactful thing is the technical assistance and capacity building.”

— Impact Report Interviewee

LGBTQ+ communities have long risen to the occasion to ensure access to services and supports. The growth of LGBTQ+-affirming affordable elder housing communities continues this tradition of community care and support where it matters most. SAGE looks back on the past 10 years with admiration for the 27 LGBTQ+-affirming affordable communities in California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Washington D.C., providing 1,756 rental units. SAGE continues to track and provide technical assistance to nearly 40 communities from early ideation, development, and lease up. These 40 communities would add an estimated 2,000 new LGBTQ+-affirming rental units.

PILLAR 2: Training mainstream housing providers

ACTIVISTS AND DEVELOPERS ALIKE

praised SAGE for its educational programs that helped them learn about the issues that LGBTQ+ elders face when it comes to housing. These include webinars and symposiums specifically on topics related to issues and best practices and often engaged peer education from others in the field of housing creation.

“The trainings are so great, SAGE did an amazing job putting them together. There was so much in there that I had never thought of,” observed one leader of a partner organization.

SAGECare and the NHI collaborated early on to introduce LGBTQ+ cultural competency training to elder housing and long-term care communities. In 2016, the training, Creating Inclusive Communities for LGBTQ+ Older Adults, was released and has reached 100,000 professionals across the country. Along with training, SAGE has hosted several in-person and virtual LGBTQ+ Housing Symposiums and Roundtables to share best practices and

SAGE is a recognized leader in cultural competency training programs and strategic guidance to professionals providing elder care in a wide range of settings.

learning opportunities to inspire and inform the ongoing development of LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing. In 2022, SAGE extended the training offerings by launching a [new online training program](#) consisting of nine modules geared toward housing developers and property managers.

SAGE is a recognized leader in cultural competency training programs and strategic guidance to professionals providing elder care in a wide range of settings. One developer described how their entire staff took the training and used it in all their departments, not just LGBTQ+ housing. Another noted, “SAGE wrote the playbook about how to make an inclusive space.”



PILLAR 3: Changing public policy

IN 2015, SAGE also released the policy brief: [Welcome Home: Improving Housing Security for LGBT Older Adults](#). The policy brief laid out SAGE's housing advocacy priorities. These included strengthening housing nondiscrimination protections at every level of government, ensuring US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Equal Access Rule was fully enforced and inclusive, and increasing support for LGBTQ-friendly affordable housing for elders nationwide.

HUD updated the Equal Access Rule in 2016, when it published a final rule in the Federal Register, titled, "Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual's Gender Identity in Community Planning and Development Programs."

The Equal Access Rule has been a key driver of public education at SAGE for the past decade. SAGE provided training to older adult housing and long-term care providers to help them understand not only their obligations related to the Equal Access Rule but to further their cultural competency in supporting older LGBTQ+ people.

SAGE's advocacy team has been elevating the visibility of LGBTQ+ older adults and housing issues at HUD, in the White House, in Congress, and in state governments nationwide, all in service of advancing policies that allow LGBTQ+ elders to live where they want to live, in a welcoming environment, and without fear of discrimination. During the Obama and Biden administrations, when LGBTQ+ aging and housing policies arose, SAGE was regularly consulted and had a seat at the table.

During both Trump Administrations, the SAGE Advocacy team has been a steadfast defender of LGBTQ+ elders' rights through strategic litigation and public education campaigns.



In 2018, SAGE partnered with the Movement Advancement Project and Columbia Law School's Law, Rights, and Religion Project to release the report, [Dignity Denied: Religious Exemptions and LGBT Elder Services](#), highlighting research findings that a majority of continuing-care retirement communities were affiliated with religious institutions. This raised serious concerns, especially as the Trump Administration expanded so-called religious exemptions that could enable discrimination. In response, SAGE launched its *Care Can't Wait* campaign to challenge federal policies that threatened LGBTQ+ elders' access to essential services like emergency care and housing. The campaign galvanized national support with over 25,000 partner organizations pledging solidarity.

Momentum grew following the case of Bev Nance and Mary Walsh, a married lesbian couple denied housing at Friendship Village in Missouri because their relationship did not align with the facility's "biblical definition of marriage." In collaboration with the National Center for LGBTQ+ Rights (NCLR), SAGE redirected its advocacy to support the couple, rallying nearly 3,000 petitioners nationwide.

In 2019, SAGE continued its legal advocacy by preparing to file an amicus brief with the AARP Foundation in *Walsh v. Friendship Village of South*

County. The case, brought by NCLR and the ACLU of Missouri under the Fair Housing Act, challenged the retirement community's discriminatory denial of housing. It ultimately concluded in a confidential settlement following the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*. This case became a national symbol of LGBTQ+ elder discrimination and reinforced SAGE's commitment to systemic change.

In 2021, SAGE joined Justice in Aging in filing an amicus brief in *Taking Offense v. California*, defending California's Long-Term Care (LTC) Bill of Rights. In 2025, the California Supreme Court upheld a key provision of the law prohibiting the willful and repeated misgendering of long-term care residents. SAGE celebrated the decision as a major victory, stating:

"This decision is a huge win, but there is more work to be done. SAGE is fighting with partners across the country to pass Long-Term Care and Home and Community-Based Services Bills of Rights to protect LGBTQ+ elders everywhere."

ADDITIONAL KEY ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

Engagement at HUD:

- Elevated awareness and engagement on LGBTQ+ elder housing issues at HUD during the Obama and Biden administrations, including serving on multiple HUD Pride housing panels.
- Advocated for HUD's 2016 update to the Equal Access Rule, bolstering nondiscrimination based on gender identity in HUD-supported, sex-segregated facilities.

Legislative Advocacy:

- Joined a coalition advocating for passage of the Equality Act, which would provide for explicit protections against housing discrimination. Successfully fought for inclusion of "care centers" in the definition of public accommodations.
- Collaborated with U.S. Representative Al Green on drafting:

- *LGBTQ+ Elder Welcome Home Act* (2021): Proposed LGBTQ+-focused lending, voucher programs, and Section 202 housing funding.
- *PATH Data Act* (2021): Aimed to improve LGBTQ+ inclusion in housing data.
- Facilitated and supported SAGE constituent testimony on housing insecurity before the House Committee on Financial Services (2021).

State-Level Impact:

- Helped pass LGBTQ+ Long-Term Care Bills of Rights in:
 - DC (2019), NJ (2021), NY (2023), OR (2023), and CT (2025).

Legal Advocacy:

- Prepared to file amicus brief with AARP Foundation in *Walsh v. Friendship Village* (2019).
- Joined Justice in Aging on amicus brief defending CA's LTC Bill of Rights, in *Taking Offense v. California* (2021).

The pendulum for equity and nondiscrimination took a dramatic swing to the right in January 2025. The second Trump Administration moved quickly to erase LGBTQ+ data and resources from HUD's websites, limit funding for organizations serving trans individuals, and destroy the ability to investigate and prosecute cases of housing discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.

HUD also moved swiftly against the Equal Access Rule. On February 5, the Secretary announced the department would stop enforcing the rule, and this was soon followed by the first steps to begin the official repeal process. SAGE led the effort among LGBTQ+, housing, homeless, and civil rights organizations to create a national coalition ready to defend the rule. SAGE helped to educate the public through webinars, social media campaigns, and resources such as the [Protect Equal Housing](#) fact sheet. SAGE also prepared advocates and allied policymakers to respond to the expected repeal and launched a national communications effort to keep coalition members informed and coordinated.

PILLAR 4: Equipping LGBTQ+ older people with resources

A LEADING VALUE guiding SAGE's work is that LGBTQ+ older voices come first. As such, SAGE works to provide tools and resources for self-advocacy by older LGBTQ+ people. The NHI, NRC and SAGECents, our free financial wellness app, collaborated on numerous projects over the years to promote LGBTQ+ self-advocacy.

In 2024, SAGECents furthered this work with the NHI to build a user "housing journey" embedding housing resources in the app. With the introduction of the housing journey within SAGECents, users can now access targeted housing support tailored to their needs and goals after completing a survey about their housing situation.

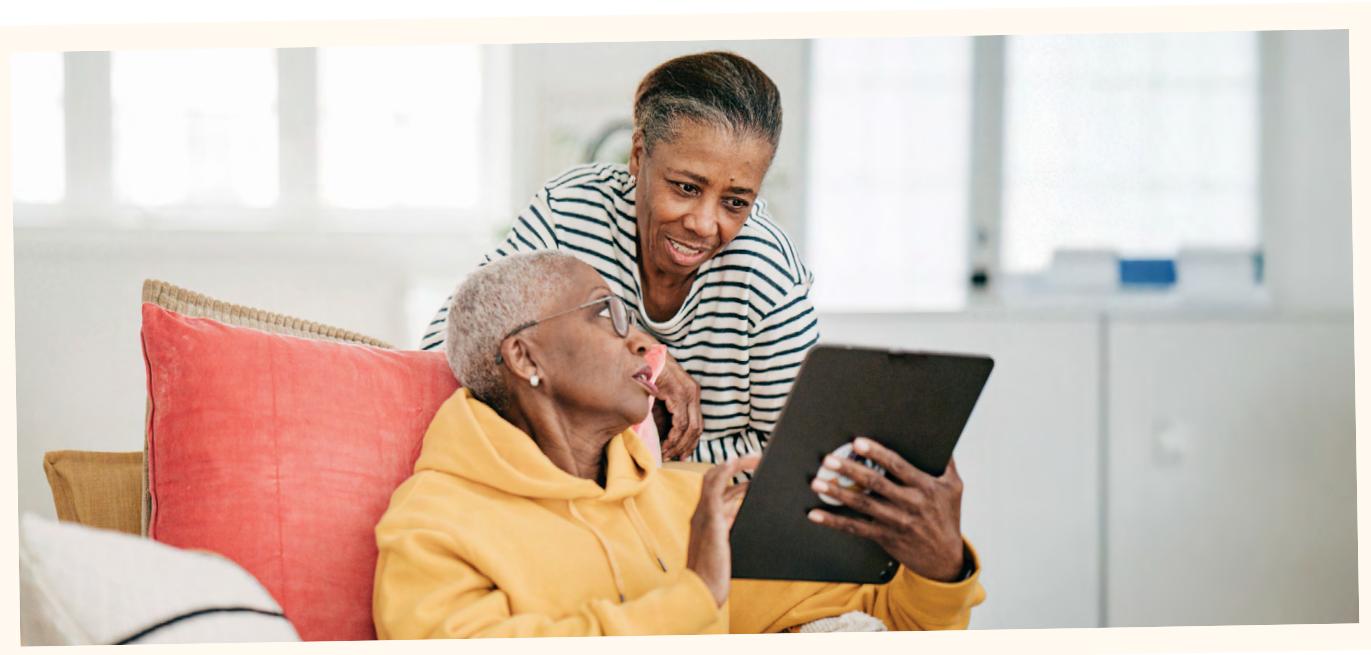
Recognizing the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in securing stable housing, SAGECents provides personalized reports based on users' living situations, whether they are homeowners, renters, or seeking long-term care options. Key features include resources for:

- Navigating the renting process
- Addressing homeownership challenges

Empowering members of our community with knowledge about their housing rights and access to supportive services is a crucial strategy for self-advocacy as they navigate the intersections of aging, housing, and care.

- Planning for future housing changes
- Seeking immediate shelter and support

As LGBTQ+ individuals live in communities of all sizes across the country, many older LGBTQ+ people find themselves in areas without purpose-built, LGBTQ+-affirming housing. Empowering members of our community with knowledge about their housing rights and access to supportive services is a crucial strategy for self-advocacy as they navigate the intersections of aging, housing, and care. The SAGECents housing journey is open to LGBTQ+ individuals and allies of all ages, offering guidance and support every step of the way.



PILLAR 5: Expanding services (Aging in Place, Care Coordination, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, etc.) that support older LGBTQ+ people who face housing challenges

SAGE RECOGNIZES the need for expanding LGBTQ+-affirming supports beyond LGBTQ+ purpose-built communities. Through this strategy, SAGE actively engages the broader aging network including existing affordable housing, long-term care communities and home and community-based services that support aging in place. Research has shown that older people desire to remain in their communities and age-in-place. The success of this strategy relies on collaboration across SAGE, particularly among our National Impact, Advocacy, and Enterprise Division.

STRENGTHENING THE NHI ECOSYSTEM THROUGH COLLABORATION

Long-term Care Equality Index (LEI)

SAGE and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) began developing the LEI in 2019, after years of strategic planning and fundraising. The program partners with long-term care communities — including independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, affordable housing, and hospice providers — to incorporate LGBTQ+-welcoming policies and affirming practices, staff training, supportive services, and community outreach.

The [2025 Survey Report](#), based on nearly 300 communities across 33 states, shows a growing commitment among providers to create inclusive, welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ residents, families, and staff alike. The LEI ensures that LGBTQ+-affirming care remains a cornerstone of SAGE's vision and creates the infrastructure for others to follow.

SAGECollab

As the LEI works to strengthen affirming care within existing long-term care settings,



SAGECollab focuses on keeping LGBTQ+ older folks connected to their communities. Launched in 2021, SAGECollab is a fast-growing partnership network of nearly 120 service organizations and community groups across 36 states. These partners help older LGBTQ+ people age in place by fostering social connection, delivering essential services, and advocating for local needs.

Many SAGECollab partners also serve as non-profit service anchors for LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing communities. To further deepen collaboration, SAGECollab launched its Housing Circle in summer 2025 — a shared space for partners to exchange knowledge and address housing challenges together. In doing so, SAGECollab ensures that SAGE's principles of inclusion and community connection extend beyond housing developments themselves.

SAGECare and the National Resource Center (NRC)

Complementing these on-the-ground efforts, SAGECare and the NRC have spent the past decade strengthening the cultural competency of the aging services field nationwide. These programs have trained more than 310,000 professionals across federal, state, and local agencies, as well as non-profit and for-profit organizations. Over 1,100 agencies have earned SAGECare credentials, directly improving services for an estimated **half a million LGBTQ+ older people across the U.S.**

By embedding affirming practices into mainstream aging networks, SAGECare and the NRC ensure that the lessons and values at the heart of SAGE shape how older people are served everywhere — not just in LGBTQ+ affirming housing.



LOOKING AHEAD

In today's challenging political climate, where hard-won progress toward equity is under threat, the need for inclusive, high-quality services for LGBTQ+ older people has never been more urgent.

Despite today's challenging climate, SAGE's national programs and the NHI continue to lead with purpose. Together, they demonstrate that equity, inclusion, and belonging are not just ideals but essential ingredients for a stronger LGBTQ+ aging experience.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

SAGE has gained valuable insights from its work in the NHI, particularly from its deep community engagement efforts and collaborations across the country.

The program's most significant achievement is the role it has played in a culture shift, where LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing is now a recognized need for cities. SAGE has learned several key lessons, many of which are demonstrated through its projects and partnerships. The interviews with key external and internal partners provided insights into challenges and lessons learned over the past decade. The interviews also provided a road map for the future of LGBTQ+-affirming housing, long-term care and supportive services that continue to shape the work of SAGE and partners in this work.

IMPORTANCE OF A COMMUNITY FIRST APPROACH

A key lesson from SAGE's early housing initiatives is the critical importance of establishing trust well before launching a project. SAGE documented these lessons in the guide, [So You Want to Build LGBTQ+ Inclusive Housing?](#) Following is a summary from this guide:

Community Engagement from the Start

- SAGE emphasized engaging LGBTQ+ elders, activists, and community organizations early in the planning process.
- Broad outreach is essential, including Pride events, places of worship, and groups serving black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) and transgender/nonbinary (TGNB) communities, with translated materials for accessibility.

Strong Partnerships Are Essential

- Success depended on collaboration among developers, service providers, city agencies, elected officials, and community organizations.

- Partnerships evolved post-occupancy to include local politicians, police precincts, and mental health providers.

Site Acquisition and Timing

- Pre-owned sites (by developer or non-profit partner) simplified development, while other projects may require extensive site research and community input.

Intentional and Inclusive Design

- Age-friendly design was prioritized — including features like emergency alert systems, accessible lighting, and mobility-friendly layouts.
- Construction delays (e.g., archaeological finds) were common and required flexibility.

Creative and Persistent Funding Strategies

- Funding came from a mix of public sources (e.g., LIHTC, HPD, HDC) and private foundations.
- Unanticipated funding gaps required additional fundraising and advocacy.

Local Buy-In Is Crucial

- Community trust-building was vital, especially in gentrified neighborhoods.
- Tenant associations played a key role in ongoing advocacy and feedback.

Comprehensive Services Sustain Housing Stability

- On-site centers can provide meals, programming, care management, and mental health support.
- The pandemic highlighted the need for robust service plans and virtual engagement tools (e.g., tablets and tech training).

These experiences have directly informed the approach of the NHI, which now emphasizes:

- **Early and sustained community involvement:** NHI encourages partners to begin engagement at the outset of a project, not near its completion.
- **Deliberate, phased processes:** NHI encourages the use of focus groups, listening sessions, and other participatory methods to ensure community voices are heard and integrated.
- **Awareness of historical trauma:** NHI promotes a trauma-informed approach and design that recognizes the lasting effects of historical and generational trauma experienced by many in LGBTQ+ communities.

By embedding these practices into the fabric of our work, NHI aims to cultivate more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable housing outcomes.

CLARIFYING ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

The interviews also highlighted the importance of clearly defining roles and managing expectations right from the start of a project.

To ensure successful collaboration from the start of any project, it is essential to:

- **Define roles clearly:** Establish who is responsible for what, early in the process.
- **Align expectations:** Discuss and document what each partner expects from the collaboration.
- **Assess project-specific needs:** Recognize that each project is shaped by its location, community dynamics, developer experience, legal context, and funding landscape.
- **Clarify support requirements:** Understand that “support” may look different depending on the project’s unique circumstances.
- **Evaluate capacity:** Identify what each stakeholder can realistically contribute and adjust plans accordingly.

By taking these steps at the outset, teams can build stronger, more effective partnerships tailored to the specific context of each project.

FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

One of the program’s most impactful achievements is its direct technical assistance and capacity building. This goes beyond providing resources — it cultivates collaboration and connection, which has led to a significant increase in LGBTQ+ housing projects since the program’s inception. Interviewees highlighted the following themes.

Catalyzing Local Projects: A standout example is the Resource Center in Dallas, which used SAGE’s data and guides to begin exploring housing. After attending a SAGE housing symposium, they were introduced to a Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation representative, who became a key funder. SAGE also connected them with a housing consultant and developers, which the Center described as a “game changer.”

Serving as a Trusted Thought Partner: Developers and community leaders consistently highlighted NHI’s role as a thought partner and sounding board. SAGE staff regularly checked in, offering support and encouragement while maintaining professionalism. These trust-based relationships were seen as essential to project success.

Addressing Isolation in Housing Development: Housing development is a complex, multi-layered process involving funding challenges, legal requirements, and community dynamics. Many partners reported feeling isolated. SAGE’s relationship-centered approach helped alleviate that, offering emotional and strategic support that partners deeply valued.

Intangible but Invaluable Support: While difficult to quantify, the emotional and relational support provided by NHI was repeatedly cited as a critical factor. As one partner shared: **“It’s about having a friend on our side.”**

Future Directions for SAGE & LGBTQ+-Affirming Housing, Long-term Care and Supportive Services

FACILITATE LEARNING, CONNECTIONS AND MENTORSHIP

SAGE has played a pivotal role as a connector — bridging developers with communities, funders with projects, and established efforts with emerging initiatives. Interviewees highlighted the importance of site visits to LGBTQ+-affirming housing, noting that peer learning opportunities helped them sidestep familiar challenges. NHI's credibility and dedication underscore the importance of its continued role in facilitating connections that might not otherwise occur — benefiting stakeholders across sectors.

SAGE remains a central hub for developers and service providers to exchange best practices, including insights gained from setbacks. The aforementioned SAGECollab Housing Circle will provide a quarterly forum offering technical assistance and peer networking for partners engaged in LGBTQ+-affirming housing initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- Connecting funders with projects in underserved areas.
- Sharing advocacy strategies to strengthen funding opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Leveraging SAGE's media presence during crises such as the COVID pandemic.
- Continuing to serve as a connector for LGBTQ+ organizations and foundations focused on capital and general operating funds.



- Continuing to be a champion for LGBTQ+-affirming housing and long-term care during challenging times.
- Providing space for peer-to-peer mentoring through programs like SAGECollab to support skill-building and knowledge transfer.

EXPLORE INNOVATIVE MODELS OF CARE

Interviewees encouraged SAGE to expand its approach to aging services beyond LGBTQ+-affirming, purpose-built housing developments. There is a strong call to support a broader range of housing models and services that enable LGBTQ+ older people to age in place with dignity and cultural affirmation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Diversify Housing Models

Support and explore alternatives to large LIHTC developments, including:

- Smaller, community-led housing projects
- Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)
- Co-housing and cooperative housing models
- Community land trusts
- Alternative housing types such as RV communities and tiny homes

Strengthen Care Infrastructure

Develop partnerships to provide culturally responsive care services:

- Collaborate with care managers and in-home care agencies.
- Ensure services are affirming and tailored to older LGBTQ+ people.
- Support care coordination that enables aging in place.

Prevent Displacement from Affirming Communities

Address the risk of older LGBTQ+ people being forced to leave affirming environments due to increased care needs:

- Build systems that integrate health and mobility support within affirming communities.
- Advocate for inclusive service delivery in mainstream aging services.

MONETIZE EXPERTISE AND OFFER CONSULTING

Several interviewees suggested that SAGE should develop a consulting arm or a “consulting package” based on its NHI best practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- **Create a consulting package** that leverages the expertise and best practices developed through the NHI.

- **Extend the SAGECare fee-for-service model** to include training and support previously offered at no charge through NHI.
- **Support organizations launching housing projects** by offering structured guidance and resources through this consulting model.
- **Implement tiered pricing:**
 - **For-profit developers:** Offer consulting services at full market rates.
 - **Non-profit developers and community organizations:** Provide services at a reduced rate or on a sliding scale to ensure accessibility.

FOCUS ON DIFFERENT MODELS AND REGIONS

The interviews highlighted a strong call to prioritize rural communities and traditionally underserved regions, particularly in the South and Southeast.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Increase focus on rural and underserved regions:** These areas often face unique challenges that require tailored approaches and dedicated resources.
- **Encourage creative, region-specific solutions:** Localized strategies are essential. What works in one region may not be effective in another.



- **Address transportation barriers:**
 - Many rural residents struggle with limited transportation options, which hinders access to critical services such as healthcare, housing, and community support.
- **Acknowledge safety concerns in conservative areas:**
 - LGBTQ+ individuals in conservative communities may face threats to their physical safety simply for being visible.
 - Solutions must consider how to create safe, affirming environments in areas where sharing openly LGBTQ+ identity may be risky.
- **Learn from real-world examples:**
 - After the opening of Lavender Courtyard in Sacramento, a group from a nearby conservative community reached out discreetly for guidance on creating similar housing that would feel safe in their context. This underscores the need for adaptable models that can be implemented quietly or subtly when necessary.
- **Ask critical, inclusive questions:**
 - What does a welcoming space look like for different communities?
 - How can we ensure that expanded resources reflect the diverse needs and realities of those in underserved areas?

INCREASE ADVOCACY AND POLICY EFFORTS

With the shifting political landscape, proactive federal policy efforts are becoming increasingly defensive, especially as current federal actions threaten to roll back protections for LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities. SAGE's vision of inclusive, affirming housing is deeply tied to civil rights and housing protections, which vary significantly across states.



Key Challenges in 2025:

- Federal advocacy is largely defensive due to administrative rollbacks and Congressional inaction.
- Lack of state-level protections or weak enforcement can force some LGBTQ+ elders to hide their identities or relocate.
- Relocation among LGBTQ+ people to affirming cities or states is on the rise, but this can strain already limited affordable and affirming housing markets.
- The Trump administration's attacks on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives threaten providers and companies who support LGBTQ+ cultural competency training.
- Political dynamics across the three branches of the federal government make federal progress on LGBTQ+ housing protections unlikely in the short term.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Expand Policy Focus to State and Local Levels

- Explore proactive advocacy in states and municipalities where change is more feasible in the short term.
- Use state level policy to create templates that can be replicated at the national level when there is a pro-LGBTQ+ federal government.

- Support local LGBTQ+ coalitions and providers already working on inclusive housing.

Broaden Housing Advocacy Scope

- Re-frame housing advocacy around broader civil rights issues to build wider support.
- Emphasize that fair housing protections and affirming housing policy serve every community with the simple goal of creating a home where anyone can live regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Emphasize the shared needs of marginalized communities and how public programs serve every community.

Support LGBTQ+ Elders in Unprotected States

- Develop resources and strategies to help elders remain safe where they are.
- Explore partnerships with local organizations and LGBTQ+ friendly service providers to expand affirming services and housing.
- Explore policy ideas through state regulations or city and county ordinances when a state government may be hostile to LGBTQ+ issues.

Advocate for Federal Recognition of LGBTQ+ Housing Needs

- Continue efforts to enforce the rights of LGBTQ+ people as a protected class in federal housing law.
- Monitor and respond to federal policy changes through regulatory comments and Congressional outreach and accountability.

Strengthen Developer and Provider Support

- Offer advocacy tools and resources to developers and providers working on inclusive housing, or who have expressed a willingness to create more inclusive housing.
- Advocate for local governments to address gaps in funding and services

that support the full continuum of elder care, including housing.

ENHANCE AND AUTOMATE RESOURCES

Interviewees frequently suggested making the NHI's resources and information even more accessible and user-friendly.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increase Accessibility and User-Friendliness:

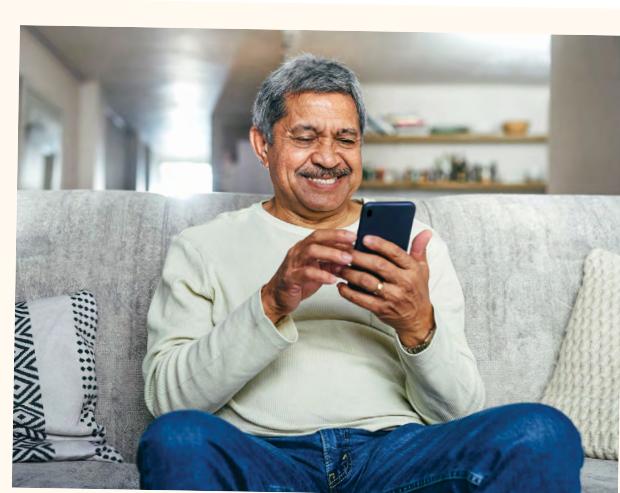
- Develop more clearly defined subsections within existing resources.
- Create simpler, easy-to-follow guides to prevent users from feeling overwhelmed.

Leverage Technology for Automation:

- Implement systems that automatically deliver relevant resources to partners based on the stage of their housing development projects.

Expand Personalized Information-Sharing Models:

- Expand and promote consumer-focused platforms like:
 - **SAGEYou online community hub** offers tailored content based on user preferences.



- **SAGECents housing journey feature** enables users to easily find and save resources and information aligned with their priorities and interests within the free SAGECents platform.

FOCUS ON FUNDING

Funding remains a significant challenge for both well-intentioned communities and developers. Interviewees consistently highlighted the difficulty of long-term fundraising and the need for support in identifying and securing resources as major barriers to success.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Fundraising Strategy & Pitch Development

- Workshops on crafting compelling narratives for funders.
- Peer review sessions where participants can refine their pitches.
- Guest speakers from successful campaigns to share lessons learned.

Capital Campaign Planning

- Step-by-step guidance on structuring a campaign.
- Budgeting tools and timelines aligned with construction phases.
- Case studies of LGBTQ+-affirming housing projects.

Navigating Public Funding Streams

- State-specific policy briefings (rotating focus by region).
- Deep dives into HUD funding, LIHTC, and local housing trust funds.
- Interactive Q&A with policy experts and housing finance consultants.

Building Fundraising Resilience

- Realistic timelines and expectations for multi-year fundraising.
- Strategies for aligning funding cycles with construction and municipal deadlines.

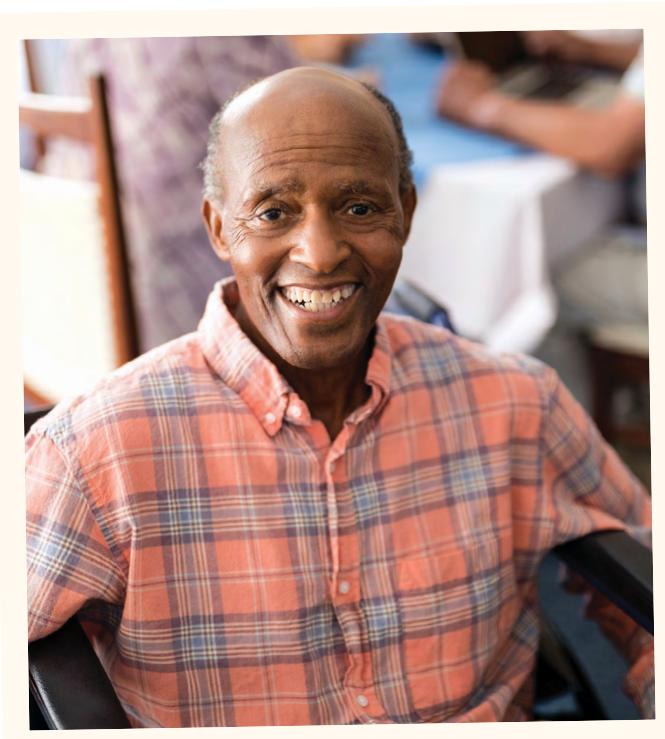
- Emotional and organizational resilience in long-term fundraising.

Resource Mapping & Connections

- Curated lists of funders interested in LGBTQ+ housing.
- Networking sessions with philanthropic and government funders.
- Guidance on building relationships with local officials and agencies.

SUSTAINABILITY OF LGBTQ+-AFFIRMING HOUSING AND LONG-TERM CARE

Interviewees consistently highlighted the challenge of maintaining LGBTQ+-affirming housing and long-term care beyond the initial launch or policy adoption. Changes in property management or leadership can significantly impact the ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusive practices. LGBTQ+ non-profit organizations serving as anchor partners must continue fundraising efforts to ensure the continuity of services once the community becomes fully leased and operational.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Establish Operating Agreements:** LGBTQ+ non-profit anchors should develop formal agreements with property management companies that include participation in hiring processes, such as serving on interview panels for property management staff.
- **Engage in Ongoing Cultural Competency Training:** Developers and property managers should have continued access to LGBTQ+ cultural competency training to reinforce inclusive practices.
- **Develop Resident and Participant Codes of Conduct:** Implement clear codes of conduct that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and bullying among residents and community center participants.
- **Ensure Sustainable Funding Partnerships:** LGBTQ+ non-profit anchors should collaborate with corporate sponsors, municipal and state aging services, and philanthropic foundations to support the long-term operation of community centers.

MEASURING IMPACT IN LGBTQ+ AGING SERVICES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The challenge of identifying quantitative metrics to measure progress in LGBTQ+ aging services has grown more complex, especially amid rising concerns about government access to personal data. Despite these barriers, finding innovative and community-informed ways to assess impact remains essential.

National surveys underscore the persistent effects of housing discrimination among LGBTQ+ older adults. The [Out & Visible](#) study (SAGE and Harris Interactive, 2014) found that 25% of transgender older adults experienced housing discrimination, while AARP's [Dignity 2022: The Experience of LGBTQ Older Adults](#) revealed that 41% of LGBTQ+ adults worry they may need to hide their identity to secure housing as they age.



These data points establish the broader context in which SAGE and its partners operate.

Within this broader landscape, SAGE continues to strengthen systems of care and accountability. Tracking the number of care providers trained through **SAGECare** and the growing number of organizations participating in the **Long-Term Care Equality Index (LEI)** provides clear indicators of sector-wide progress. Together, these metrics demonstrate both expanding provider capacity and increasing institutional commitment to LGBTQ+-affirming care. Continued data collection in these areas is vital to demonstrate sustained impact over time.

Complementing these system-level efforts, **SAGECents** provides a more immediate, community-level perspective. In a recent SAGECents survey, 15% of respondents reported that discrimination had negatively impacted their housing situation, including 26% of black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) respondents and 23% of transgender and non-binary (TGNB) respondents. While these figures are lower than those from

national studies, the difference may reflect both the smaller sample size and the fact that SAGECents users are individuals already accessing SAGE's programs — people who may be more connected to supportive resources and networks than the broader LGBTQ+ older adult population. Even so, this data offers valuable insights into the experiences of those actively engaging with SAGE's services.

Taken together, these findings highlight both the persistence of housing disparities and the importance of using multiple data sources to fully understand the landscape. Integrating community-driven tools like SAGECents with broader national research and organizational metrics such as SAGECare and the LEI strengthens SAGE's ability to evaluate the impact of LGBTQ+-affirming housing, long-term care, and supportive services — and to identify where further outreach and advocacy are most needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Expand Data Collection with Privacy in Mind:** Develop methods for gathering meaningful data that respect individual privacy, especially in communities with heightened concerns about surveillance or discrimination.
- **Leverage Existing Metrics:** Continue tracking SAGECare training completions and LEI participation as foundational indicators of progress in affirming care environments.
- **Connect Metrics to Unmet Needs:** Use data to identify gaps in service delivery and highlight areas where LGBTQ+ communities remain underserved, guiding future investments and advocacy.
- **Engage Communities in Evaluation:** Collaborate with older LGBTQ+ older people and service providers to co-create evaluation tools that reflect lived experiences and community priorities.



INNOVATIVE FINANCING OF NEW PROJECTS

Many interviewees expressed frustration with the limitations of existing financing models — particularly HUD and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) — and voiced a strong desire for alternative approaches. While both HUD and LIHTC have played critical roles in making low-income housing possible, they present significant barriers to creating LGBTQ+-affirming communities.

Additionally, income eligibility requirements under affordable housing laws often exclude individuals who fall into the “missing middle” — those with modest incomes that are too high to qualify for assistance but too low to afford market-rate housing. One community partner shared a deeply personal example: despite being the visionary behind a development and dedicating years of work to its realization, she and her wife are ineligible to live there due to income restrictions. This exclusion was a painful and disheartening realization.

SAGE is already working to identify and promote alternatives through a partnership with the Milken Institute. A 2025 report, [Models for Financing LGBTQ+ Affordable Elder Housing at Scale](#), the result of a research collaboration between SAGE and the Milken Institute, offers

five innovative ideas for financing affordable and LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing. These recommendations include:

1. Issuing social bonds to fund LGBTQ+-affirming and affordable housing, programs, and/or services.
2. Designing an impact investment fund to create LGBTQ+-affirming and affordable residential communities.
3. Utilizing a pay-for-performance model to fund LGBTQ+-affirming programming, workforce training, and inclusive design improvements.
4. Creating an LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing prize to reward best-in-class housing developments and increase market visibility.
5. Establishing financial sector partnerships to incentivize LGBTQ+-affirming service integration.

These types of innovative approaches provide ideas beyond LIHTC and HUD and other restrictive models to reward creativity and collaboration between the private sector and housing advocates. Especially in an era where the federal government is putting up barriers rather than creating paths forward, the search for new ideas is particularly urgent.

CONTINUED ADVOCACY AND DISSEMINATION OF RELIABLE INFORMATION

SAGE plays a vital role in the lives of older LGBTQ+ people, especially in turbulent and regressive times. The organization is trusted by the communities it serves, and its credibility is more critical than ever in an era of widespread disinformation.

Recommended Actions to Continue and Strengthen:

- Advocate for older LGBTQ+ people at all levels of government: federal, state, and local.

- Educate and inform the community about current events, policy changes, and their real-world implications.
- Provide clarity on complex issues, such as HUD regulatory rollbacks, by accurately communicating policy impacts on the everyday lives of people.
- Correct misinformation that affirming housing only serves LGBTQ+ individuals, and ensure people have access to reliable and truthful information through local community sources.
- Equip individuals with the tools and opportunities to speak up and advocate for themselves, such as by organizing direct meetings or events with policy makers and providing people with one-pagers or talking points to help them navigate complex policy discussions.

Funders' Needs:

- Deliver data and insights on what support is most needed.
- Demonstrate impact of programs and advocacy efforts.



- Identify and communicate risks faced by older LGBTQ+ people.

State and Local Advocacy:

- Collaborate with local LGBTQ+ organizations to advocate for better housing services and resources.
- Ensure diverse LGBTQ+ voices are present in housing policy discussions, which are often dominated by large state agencies and housing developers.
- Navigate and influence bureaucratic systems, such as state housing finance agencies or local offices of community planning and development, that currently exclude LGBTQ+ perspectives.

As one community leader noted:

“If SAGE has the capacity to work with strong LGBT organizations in states to help advocate for better services and resources for housing, that would be great. LGBT orgs are not at the table when housing decisions and policy are made... They don’t know what they don’t know.”

CREATING A BOLD VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This report would be remiss if it did not highlight the need for SAGE and peer organizations to actively imagine and plan for the lives, identities, and needs of future LGBTQ+ elders. The theme surfaced repeatedly in interviews as people thought about the future of the LGBTQ+ community.

Over the past few decades, we’ve seen profound cultural change — greater visibility, expanded legal protections, and increased access to support driven by the internet, advocacy efforts, and community organizations. Marriage equality, trans and nonbinary visibility, rural connectivity, and affirming media have reshaped how people see themselves and their place in society.



Tomorrow’s elders will age in a world transformed by technology, evolving identities, and new social landscapes.

Recent surveys show that [nearly 1 in 10 U.S. adults now identify as LGBTQ+](#), meaning more people than ever will enter older adulthood with experiences and expectations shaped by a lifetime of greater openness and diversity. SAGE has an opportunity to lead this future-thinking and is committed to anticipating, innovating, and ensuring that the experience of aging remains as dynamic, inclusive, and self-defined as the people living it.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Recognize the evolving lived experiences of LGBTQ+ elders.** While many current elders lived through eras marked by hostility and exclusion, younger generations are entering elderhood with different expectations — many having lived openly and received support from family, workplaces, and communities. However, the shifting political climate and renewed hostility toward LGBTQ+ communities are prompting individuals

of all ages to reconsider what physical, psychological, and political safety means to them. This evolving reality must inform how services and support systems are designed.

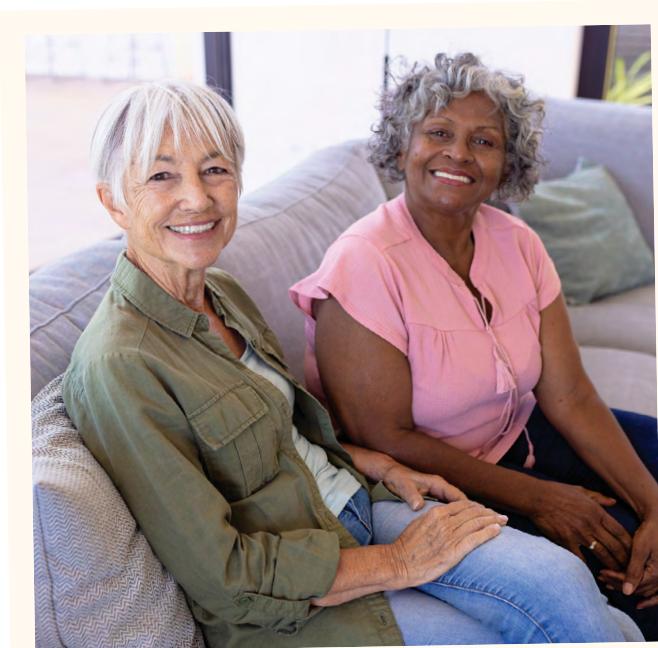
- **Reimagine aging services through a generational lens.** Generations X, Y, and Z will age with diverse needs and cultural references. Planning must begin now to understand what inclusive housing, healthcare, and community engagement will mean to them. This includes conducting generational research and engaging these communities directly in planning.
- **Expand the definition of LGBTQ+ inclusive housing.** Consider how all elder housing and long-term care can be made welcoming and affirming and encourage greater participation in the LEI and SAGECare training and credentialing. These initiatives can expand LGBTQ+ inclusive housing and long-term care in areas of the country that lack LGBTQ+ specific programs and services.
- **Prepare for diverse family structures and support systems.** Future elders may rely more on chosen families, peer networks, and community-based support. Services should

be flexible and responsive to these evolving support systems, rather than assuming traditional family models.

- **Continue advocacy despite political setbacks.** Even as rights face potential rollbacks, the cultural foundation has shifted. SAGE and similar organizations must remain vigilant, proactive, and adaptive — ensuring that progress is not lost and that future elders continue to thrive.
- **Invest in ongoing research and innovation.** Understanding the future needs of LGBTQ+ elders requires continuous exploration. SAGE can lead by commissioning studies, piloting new models of care, and sharing best practices across sectors.
- **Advance LGBTQ+ Inclusive Aging-in-Place Strategies.** Many LGBTQ+ older adults prefer to remain in their homes and communities yet face limited access to affirming elder housing and long-term care. SAGE can play a leading role by strengthening partnerships with programs that support aging in place. Examples include:
 - [National Shared Housing Resource Center](#)
 - [National Pace Association](#)
 - [Village to Village Network](#)
 - [Aging Life-Care Association](#)
 - [LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance](#)
 - [SOLO AGERS Advocacy Initiative](#).

By expanding these collaborations, SAGE can help ensure that LGBTQ+ elders have access to culturally affirming support systems — wherever they choose to age.

In today's ever-changing world, planning for the future isn't just a good idea — it's a necessity. By embracing these recommendations and collaborating with community partners, we can help ensure that LGBTQ+ people experience aging not only with safety and support, but with joy, connection, and endless possibilities.



Conclusion

SAGE has built a powerful foundation for a future that continues to advance affirming housing, long-term care, and supportive services.

In the words of one community partner:

“SAGE has done durable work that will remain relevant.”

That durability comes not only from what SAGE has created, but from what it has learned in nearly five decades of insight, relationships, and innovation that continue to guide the way forward.

As demonstrated throughout this report, SAGE has made significant strides in realizing the vision for the NHI through its five pillars, thanks to deep collaboration across the organization. Yet as the landscape of aging and housing grows more complex, SAGE knows that we cannot build our way out of a national housing crisis. The path forward demands creativity and collaboration — leveraging every tool at our disposal: policy influence, partnerships, data, storytelling, training, and the expertise of decades in the LGBTQ+ aging landscape.

This report arrives at a pivotal moment as SAGE looks to the future with a new CEO and launches its new National Impact, Advocacy, and Enterprise division. With this change,



we are uniting our programmatic, advocacy, and social enterprise work under one shared purpose so that SAGE is empowered to not only meet today's needs but to shape tomorrow's realities. By leading with equity and building resilience into systems of care, we're ensuring that every LGBTQ+ person, now and in the future, can age in community, with pride.



Addendum 1: People interviewed for this report

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

William Bedwell — Executive Director, Belle Reve

Andy Bowen — Senior Advisor for External Affairs, Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development & Workforce

Pamela Calvert — Founder, One Roof Chicago

Mason Cavell — Senior Development Manager, Community Roots Housing and The Pride

Cece Cox — Chief Executive Officer, Resource Center

Dr. Jason Flatt — Professor and Researcher, School of Public Health, Department of Social & Behavioral Health, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Angela Gabridge — Executive Director, MiGen

Derek Gaskill — Senior Development Project Manager, Ascendant Neighborhood Development Corporation

Jodi Glass — Community advocate and Board Member, Aldersbridge

Roberto Jiménez — CEO, Mutual Housing California and Lavender Courtyard

Britta Larson — Senior Services Director, Center on Halsted/Town Hall Apartments

Ed Miller — Elder Initiative Social Engagement Manager, William Way Center, and John C. Anderson Apartments

Jim Pieffer — CEO, Presbyterian Senior Care and The Mosaic Housing

Kiera Pollock — Director of Senior Services, Los Angeles LGBT Center

Jeannette Ruffins — CEO, Homeward NYC

Carrie Schell — Director of Community Support Services, Openhouse

Gretchen Van Ness — Executive Director, LGBTQ+ Senior Housing, Inc.

Phillip Westry — Executive Director, FreeState Justice

SAGE STAFF

Sadiya Abjani, Director of Trainings and Instructional Design

Michael Adams, Former Chief Executive Officer

Denise Atherly, Director of Data Strategy Initiatives

Christina DaCosta, Chief Experience Officer

Josh Dubensky, Housing Policy Advocate Associate

Lynn Faria, Chief Executive Officer

Thomas Godwin, Former NHI Assistant Director

Jane Haskell, Director of Collaborations

Elise Hernandez, Former Director of Research and Impact

Keith Holt, Baltimore Community Engagement Coordinator

Sydney Kopp-Richardson, Former NHI Director

Sarah Streat, Senior Manager of Institutional Partnerships

Maddie Thompson, Consumer Engagement Manager

Sherrill Wayland, Senior Director of Special Initiatives and Partnerships

Addendum 2: NHI reports and resources

The following reports and resources were used to help develop this report:

Alternative Housing Models for LGBTQ+ Elders

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource/alternative-housing-models-for-lgbtq-elders/>

Are you Looking for LGBTQ+-Affirming Elder Housing? A One Page Resource

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource/are-you-looking-for-lgbtq-affirming-elder-housing-a-one-page-resource/>

Dignity 2022: The Experience of LGBTQ Older Adults

<https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/aging-experience/demographics/lgbtq-community-dignity-2022/>

Long-Term Care Equality Index 2025 — Executive Summary

<https://lgbtagingcenter.org/resource/long-term-care-equality-index-2025-executive-summary/>

Models for Financing Affordable and LGBTQ+-Affirming Elder Housing at Scale: Report

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource/models-for-financing-affordable-and-lgbtq-affirming-elder-housing-at-scale-report/>

Protect Equal Housing

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource/protect-equal-housing/>

Pushing for equality: LGBT elders need discrimination-free access to care in community

<https://lgbtagingcenter.org/resource/pushing-for-equality-lgbt-elders-need-discrimination-free-access-to-care-in-community/>

SAGE: Annual Report 2018

<https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/sage-annual-report-2018.pdf>

SAGE Out and Visible: The Experiences and Attitudes of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Older Adults

<https://lgbtagingcenter.org/resource/out-visible-the-experiences-and-attitudes-of-lgbt-older-adults-ages-45-75/>

So You Want to Build LGBTQ+ Inclusive Housing

<https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/sageusa-lessons-learned-lgbtq-affordable-housing.112822.pdf>

Understanding the Affordable Housing Development Process: A Primer for LGBT Aging Providers

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource/understanding-the-affordable-housing-development-process-a-primer-for-lgbt-aging-providers/>

Welcome Home: Improving Housing Security for LGBT Older Adults

<https://lgbtagingcenter.org/resource/welcome-home-improving-housing-security-for-lgbt-older-adults/>

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We refuse to be invisible®

305 Seventh Avenue, 15th Floor

New York, NY 10001

212.741.2247

sageusa.org

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