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A GUIDE FOR LGBTQ+ ELDERS MOVING STATE-TO-STATE

NAVIGATING RELOCATION

INTRODUCTION

LGBTQ+ communities have made important progress over the past several decades. But recently, there have been new laws and actions that take away rights.

This has made many places feel unsafe, especially for people who have faced discrimination for a long time. These changes in laws have impacted LGBTQ+ people's lives. Because of this, many, especially older adults, are thinking about moving to places that feel safer and more supportive.

A 2025 Study by the Movement Advancement Project states that since late 2024, many LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender and nonbinary individuals, have made big life changes because of unfair laws and harmful messages. Almost half (43%) of transgender people have thought about moving to another state, and about 1 in 10 (9%) have already moved. These numbers show how laws can affect people's health and safety.

Moving is a big decision. You might ask questions like: "Which states or cities will support me as an LGBTQ+ person?" or "What help is out there to make my move easier?" This guide is here to help individuals, families, and caregivers think through these questions and make the best choice for their needs.

43%

of transgender people have thought about moving to another state

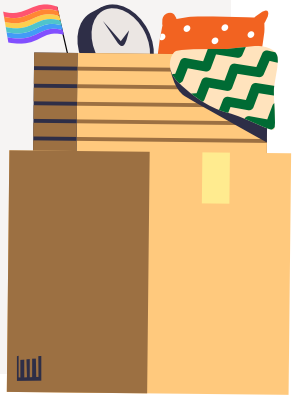
Acknowledging Risks of Staying vs Relocation

Moving to a new place can help LGBTQ+ people feel safer and more accepted. But it's not always easy or the right choice. Staying in places that are less supportive can lead to unfair treatment or feeling alone. Moving can also be expensive, stressful, and mean leaving behind friends, family, or support.

For older LGBTQ+ adults, these choices can be even harder. Health, caregiving, finances, stable housing and long-term plans all play a role. Things like race, disability, income, and immigration status also affect each person's situation.

This guide is here to help people make strategic choices that protect their health and well-being whether they move or stay where they are.

Getting help from services can be risky for LGBTQ+ people, especially older adults. Sharing your identity can lead to unfair treatment or being turned away. You don't have to share personal information if it doesn't feel safe. Supportive places will respect your privacy and help you without asking you to share more than you want.



No matter what you choose, your safety, comfort, and independence matter most.

RESEARCH OPTIONS

If you're thinking about moving, the first step is to figure out what you need and which places might meet those needs.

Some states and cities have laws that support LGBTQ+ people, while others do not. Below are some tools to help you learn about different places and how safe and supportive they are for LGBTQ+ people.

Movement Advancement Project's "LGBTQ+ Equality by State" Map
This interactive map tracks how state laws impact LGBTQ+ people across key areas like healthcare, nondiscrimination, family recognition, and more. It offers a snapshot of each state's policy environment and helps users compare protections nationwide.

Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index 2024
The Municipal Equality Index (MEI) rates cities on how inclusive their laws, policies, and services are for LGBTQ+ residents and workers. It evaluates non-discrimination laws, municipal employment, services, law enforcement, and leadership on LGBTQ+ equality.

HIV Criminalization Law Map by State
The Center for HIV Law & Policy has mapped HIV criminalization laws by state.

LGBT PridePath
A website designed to help the LGBTQ+ community make informed decisions regarding the potential need to relocate, based on LGBTQ+ laws and protections that are individually important to them, or to compare two locations side-by-side.

FINDING HOUSING

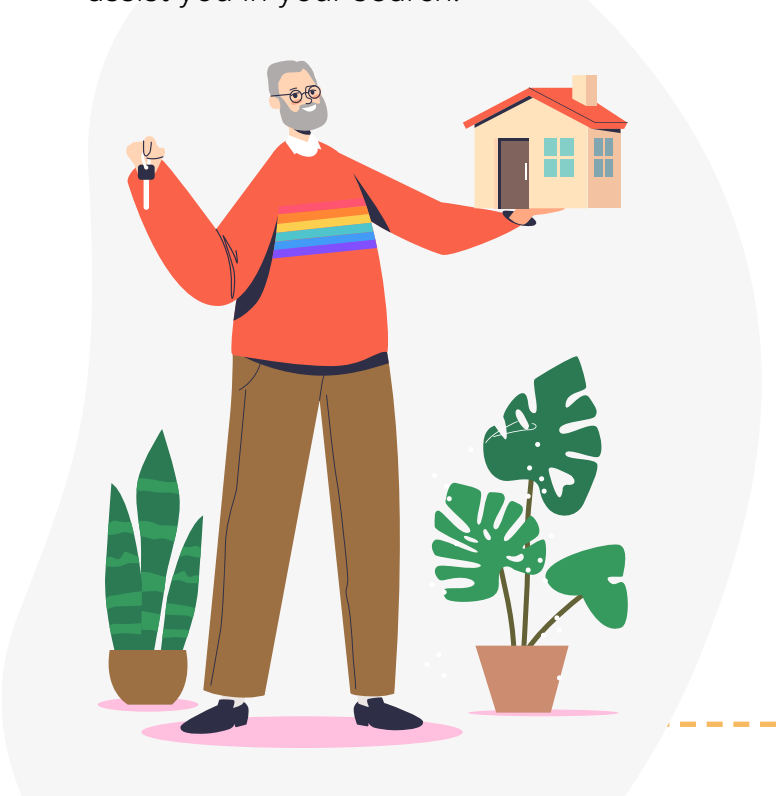
Once you know which states or areas might be a good fit for you, you can start looking for housing.

There are a few LGBTQ+ friendly housing options in big cities, but not many overall. In smaller towns or states with stricter laws, it can be harder to find housing advertised as LGBTQ+ affirming.

The list below includes places and websites that can help you search for housing. Later in this guide, you'll find questions you can ask landlords or housing providers to help you decide if a place is right for you.

SAGE's National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative (NHI)
Browse resources related to LGBTQ+ senior housing and find states that have LGBTQ+ affirming senior housing projects in operation.

How to Find LGBTQ+ Affirming Housing Communities Through SAGE's Housing Resources
Tips from SAGE on finding LGBTQ+ affirming communities and navigating resources to assist you in your search.



LGBTQ+ Centers
Use SAGECollab and CenterLink to find LGBTQ+ centers and organizations that may have insights to LGBTQ+ affirming housing at the local level.

LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance
A coalition of LGBTQ+ and allied real-estate agents across the country. Use their directory to find a supportive agent and browse their resources related to relocation.

Finding Home for the TGX Community: Moving to a More Inclusive Place
The TGX Moving Guide is a resource designed to support transgender and gender-expansive individuals in navigating the process of relocating, with practical tips, affirming guidance, and community-centered support.

Local Resources
Local organizations can be a vital resource of support during relocation, especially for LGBTQ+ elders navigating unfamiliar systems. Services such as the United Way, 211, and local Area Agencies on Aging often have knowledge of housing services, financial assistance programs, and community-based services tailored to older adults.

HIV Service Organizations & HOPWA services
HIV service organizations can offer support with housing resources, medical care, case management, and community connection. The Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program provides housing assistance and supportive services. To find

services in your area, visit HIV.gov locator tool or contact your local health department or Area Agency on Aging for referrals.

HUD Counseling Agencies

HUD-approved housing counseling agencies offer free or low-cost guidance on renting, buying, avoiding eviction, and understanding your housing rights. These services can help you make informed, empowered decisions during your move. To find a HUD counseling agency near you, visit HUD's official locator tool or contact your local Area Agency on Aging.

Alternative Housing Models for LGBTQ+ Elders — SAGE

Mobile homes, RVs, and tiny homes offer lower-cost housing options and can support intentional community living. These models may be a good fit for LGBTQ+ elders depending on lifestyle, needs, and financial situation. This guide introduces alternative housing options to consider as part of your personal housing journey.

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

Are you an LGBTQ+ elder looking for affirming housing in your community? Check out this one-pager that outlines resources in your community. These resources can be used to determine where there is LGBTQ+ affirming housing support near you.

Emergency Funds for Relocating and Supporting Families and Transgender Individuals

A Human Rights Campaign list of resources and organizations that may provide emergency funding to individuals and families impacted by anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, to relocate or to access care or services outside of your current state of residence.

Trans Lifeline

A peer support hotline and microgrants program assisting trans people with identity documents, including those seeking asylum.

International Relocation Resources

Some LGBTQ+ people may think about moving to another country to find a safer and more welcoming place to live. In some cases, other countries may have stronger laws that protect LGBTQ+ rights or offer better healthcare and support. Moving to a new country is a big step and can be hard, but there are guides and resources that can help you learn what to expect and how to plan your move.

Trans Relocation Guide: Finding Trans Asylum and Safe Havens

This guide offers resources to help transgender and gender expansive people understand and navigate the international relocation process.

7 Resources for LGBTQ+ Folks Ready to Move Abroad (2025 Edition)

If you're thinking about moving to another country, Rainbow Relocation has helpful information for LGBTQ+ people living abroad, including tips, stories, and resources to guide your journey.

LONG–TERM CARE

Finding long-term care that supports LGBTQ+ people is important for living safely and with respect.

While there aren't many assisted living or nursing homes made just for LGBTQ+ people, more and more communities offer intentional care for the LGBTQ+ community.

The resources below can help you find long-term care that fits your needs.

2025 LEI Report
The Long-Term Care Equality Index 2025 Report represents the second validated survey on LGBTQ+ inclusion in long-term care and senior housing communities. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation and SAGE present this report on the 274 communities from 33 states (including D.C.) that actively participated in the LEI 2025 survey cycle.

SAGECare Directory
SAGECare delivers LGBTQ+ aging and person-centered care training to help professionals in senior living, healthcare, and related fields create safer, more inclusive environments for older adults. Use the SAGECare Directory to locate services in your area that are trained and credentialed on best practices for LGBTQ+ elders.

Finding an Inclusive Long-Term Care Community — A Guide by SAGE & The Human Rights Campaign Foundation
Moving into a long-term care community is a significant life-change and requires someone to consider several factors when deciding where to live. When the time comes for extra support while aging, everyone deserves to feel welcome and safe accessing long-term care. Use this guide to support your search and learn what questions may be helpful in identifying a community that may be right for you.

Finding Long-Term Care — The Consumer Voice
A comprehensive resource designed to support individuals and families navigating the complex process of choosing long-term care.

Questions to Ask and Helpful Tips

This part of the guide helps older LGBTQ+ adults think through their choices about moving.

It includes questions to help you understand your current situation and what you might need in a new place. You'll also find tips for speaking up for yourself, downsizing your home, and finding good long-term care.

SAFETY & WELL-BEING

1. Do I feel safe in my current community?
2. Do I feel stressed, scared, or alone because of local laws and attitudes?
3. Would moving help me get better healthcare, housing, or support and feel safer?

IDENTITY & BELONGING

1. Do I want to share that I am LGBTQ+?
2. Can I live openly in a new place?
3. Are there LGBTQ+ groups or centers I can join?
4. Is it important for me to be around people who accept and support me?

HEALTH & CARE NEEDS

1. What healthcare do I need now and in the future? Can I get it in a new place?
2. Are there long-term care options that support LGBTQ+ people?
3. Will I be able to get HIV care, mental health help, or gender-affirming care?

FINANCIAL & LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Can I afford to move and live in a new place?
2. Will I have access to housing, transportation, and financial help?
3. What legal protections are available in the place I am thinking about?

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

1. Will I be leaving behind important relationships or people who help me?
2. Can I make new friends or find support in the new place?
3. Are there services to help me with the move?

EMOTIONAL READINESS

1. Am I ready for the changes that come with moving?
2. What worries or hopes do I have about relocating?
3. How can I care for myself during this time?

SELF-ADVOCACY TIPS

To support your self-advocacy, the National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative offers a three-part fact sheet series with practical tips for finding housing, addressing discrimination, and advocating for change.

TIPS FOR DOWNSIZING

Downsizing involves moving from a larger space to a smaller, potentially less expensive one. Downsizing and decluttering can make life easier and safer. Still, scaling back on your possessions to fit your new home can be emotional and stressful, especially if you've lived in one place for a while. Here are some tips to make the process more manageable.

GLMA, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ADVANCING LGBTQ+ EQUALITY

The GLMA Provider Directory is a great resource to find affirming healthcare near you.

IDENTITY DOCUMENT RESOURCES

Rules about IDs, passports, and legal documents for transgender people can change often. To stay updated, you can check Lambda Legal's TGNC Rights Checklist, which explains your rights and how to get the documents you need.

GETTING QUALITY CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE SETTING

This resource from The Consumer Voice offers practical tools to help older adults and their caregivers advocate for high-quality long-term care. It includes guides for choosing care settings, recognizing poor treatment, and resolving issues with providers. The site centers resident rights and empowerment, making it especially helpful for LGBTQ+ elders seeking affirming, respectful environments.

Know Your Rights

Knowing your rights is an important part of speaking up for yourself, especially if you're moving or looking for long-term care.

The resources below can help LGBTQ+ older adults stay safe, deal with unfair treatment, and find places that offer respectful and supportive care.

Know Your Rights: Trans Legal Survival Guide — LGBTQ Aging Center
A practical guide for transgender and nonbinary individuals covering identity documents, healthcare access, and legal protections.

Residents' Rights and the LGBT Community: Know YOUR Rights as a Nursing Home Resident Updated 2018 — LGBTQ Aging Center
A focused guide on how federal nursing home resident rights apply to LGBTQ+ individuals, with tips for self-advocacy and reporting discrimination.

Residents' Rights — The Consumer Voice
A clear summary of the rights of individuals living in long-term care settings, including dignity, privacy, and freedom from discrimination.

What is Housing Discrimination and How Can I Report It?
A directory from the National Fair Housing Alliance of state and local organizations that can help advocate for you if you experience housing discrimination.

CONCLUSION

While no location can guarantee complete safety, LGBTQ+ elders can take proactive steps to find communities that support them and meet their needs.

By using helpful tools and resources, people can find welcoming places and build strong support systems. Moving isn't just about changing where you live, it's about finding a place where you can grow older with respect, safety, and peace.