

2025 SHINE THE LIGHT STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **2025 Shine the Light Study** examines the career and employment experiences of 1,386 LGBTQIA+ individuals across the United States, representing a 52 percent increase from 2024 and more than double the 2023 sample. Respondents represent the nonprofit, for-profit, and government sectors, with additional input from a 500-person panel recruited in partnership with Centiment to strengthen representativeness.

Now in its third year, the study shows cautious progress alongside persistent challenges in workplace inclusion. More employees report feeling supported and comfortable raising concerns with leadership, yet discrimination remains common and gaps in access persist for transgender and nonbinary employees.

KEY FINDINGS

Bright Spots

- **Workplace Support:** Nearly three in four respondents (74%) agree their workplace supports LGBTQIA+ employees, continuing an upward trend since 2023. Overall, 62% of respondents report being openly LGBTQIA+ at work.
- **Trust in Leadership:** Comfort approaching leadership with LGBTQIA+-related concerns rose for the third year; 34% strongly agree they feel comfortable doing so.
- **Networks Matter:** Respondents in professional networking groups are more likely to work at organizations with LGBTQIA+ employee resource groups, pointing to the role of community and external support.

Where Gaps Remain

- **Discrimination Experiences:** Nearly one in five respondents (18%) strongly agree they have experienced discrimination at work. While lower than in 2024, discrimination issues remain persistent.
- **Everyday Inclusion:** Comfort expressing gender identity remain stable, but only 50% strongly agree they can use restrooms aligned with their gender identity, with lowest agreement among nonbinary respondents.
- **Career Support:** For the third year, salary negotiation training ranks as the most valued job-search resource, signaling demand for practical career tools.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

In the workplace, LGBTQIA+ employees often navigate environments where norms do not fully reflect their identities. As workplace policies and public discourse continue to shift, tracking LGBTQIA+ experiences over time remains important. With nearly one in five respondents (18%) reporting discrimination and salary negotiation training ranking as the top job-search resource for the third year, the study employs survey data and focus groups insights to show how inclusion is experienced and inform inclusive workplace practices.

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

For Employers: Support must be visible and actionable. More than half of respondents say their workplace would benefit from LGBTQIA+-focused anti-discrimination training. Clear policies, inclusive facilities, and consistent leadership engagement remain critical.

For Employees: Career-building resources, mentorship, and professional networks continue to play a key role, especially where internal supports are limited.

For Advocates: With persistent discrimination issues and demand for career support, advocating for inclusive health care policies, mentorship pathways, and leadership accountability is essential to support LGBTQIA+ employees.