

LGBTQ+ Aging in Community

A summary companion to [Delivering Results: 10 Years of the SAGE National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative](#)



In 2025, SAGE marked ten years of leadership through the [National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative](#). Over the past decade, this work has helped expand LGBTQ+-affirming housing, strengthen long-term care and supportive services, and deepen the field's understanding of what it takes for LGBTQ+ older people to age with dignity, safety, and pride.

This companion piece highlights why this work matters, what the initiative has accomplished, and what the last ten years have made clear. Housing matters, but it does not stand alone. LGBTQ+ older people need affirming communities, affirming care, and systems that support belonging across the full experience of aging. LGBTQ+ advocates play a vital role in helping create these communities by advancing visibility, challenging exclusion, and shaping supports and services that help ensure LGBTQ+ people can age with dignity, safety, and connection.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

For many LGBTQ+ elders, housing has never been just about shelter. It is about safety, identity, and the ability to age without fear.

A landmark investigation by the Equal Rights Center found that 48% of older same-sex couples applying for elder housing were subjected to discrimination. National research has also shown that 25% of transgender older adults have experienced housing discrimination, while 41% of LGBTQ+ adults worry they may need to hide who they are to secure housing as they age.

AT A GLANCE¹

48% of older same-sex couples applying for elder housing were subjected to discrimination

25% of transgender older adults reported housing discrimination

41% of LGBTQ+ adults worry they may need to hide their identity to secure housing as they age



FEDERAL PROTECTIONS and enforcement mechanisms have become less stable in recent years

¹Unless otherwise noted, the data points and policy context summarized in this "At a Glance" section are drawn from [Delivering Results: 10 years of the SAGE National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative](#). SAGE. (2025).

Aging in community means more than having a place to live. It means being safe, seen, supported, and able to stay connected to the people and services that make life possible.



A 10-year initiative with national impact

The [National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative](#) officially launched in 2015, but its roots run much deeper. For decades, SAGE had been sounding the alarm about the lack of affirming housing and supports for LGBTQ+ elders. By the time the initiative was formally launched, it was already clear that the need was urgent and national in scope.

From the beginning, SAGE understood that this work could not stop at developing individual housing sites. The organization chose a broader strategy that could support communities across the country, respond to shared barriers, and help spread practices that work. That choice shaped a decade of progress.

10 YEARS AT A GLANCE



27

LGBTQ+-affirming
housing communities



1,756

housing
units



40

projects in
development



310,000+

professionals
trained



500,000

LGBTQ+ older
people reached



Stonewall House
and Crotona Pride
House opened in
New York City



The Long-term
Care Equality
Index (LEI)
launched in 2019



Housing resources
integrated into the
[SAGECents](#) financial
wellness app

These milestones helped establish SAGE as a trusted national hub for developers, service providers, advocates, and community organizations seeking to build more affirming environments for LGBTQ+ elders. Just as important, SAGE showed that meaningful progress depends on partnerships, technical assistance, cultural competency, and sustained community engagement.

The original [report](#) organizes this work through five pillars. Each pillar reflects a distinct strategy and a set of lessons about what it takes to build affirming housing, long-term care, and supportive services that can last. Within this framework, LGBTQ+ advocates have opportunities to engage in strategic advocacy to advance affirming communities.

Five strategies guiding this work

Over the past decade, five strategies have helped SAGE grow a body of work that is practical, responsive, and increasingly national in reach. They also surfaced lessons about what it takes to create affirming housing, long-term care, and supportive services that can last.

1 BUILDING LGBTQ+-AFFIRMING ELDER HOUSING

A central part of this work has been helping to grow LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing across the country. Through technical assistance, training, toolkits, and direct support to local partners, SAGE has helped communities move projects from early vision to development and lease-up.

One of the clearest lessons from this work is that community engagement is essential. LGBTQ+ elders, neighborhood residents, community groups, and local leaders need to be involved early and often.

Looking ahead, the report points toward continued technical assistance, peer learning, and exploration of more diverse housing models, including approaches that can work in regions where large developments may be out of reach.

As an advocate, you can:

- ➔ Connect with a local [SAGECollab](#) partner, LGBTQ+ center, aging organization, or housing coalition and learn about developing and/or growing LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing in your community.
- ➔ Reach out to local housing providers and inquire about their nondiscrimination policies, staff LGBTQ+ training, and complaint or discrimination processes.
- ➔ Share resources like [SAGECare](#) or the [LEI](#) with housing providers interested in training staff or taking the pledge to be an inclusive care community.
- ➔ Connect with other advocates and consider inclusive housing models in your communities. Consider shared housing or intentional living spaces for more affirming options in your area. Check out SAGE's resources like [Housing Models Resource](#) or [Alternative Housing Models for LGBTQ+ Elders](#).



2 TRAINING MAINSTREAM HOUSING AND CARE PROVIDERS

SAGE understood early on that most LGBTQ+ elders will age in settings that were not designed specifically for them. Through [SAGECare](#), housing trainings, symposiums, roundtables, and online modules for developers and property managers, SAGE has helped mainstream providers strengthen cultural competency and improve daily practice. A key lesson is that training works best when it is ongoing, practical, and tied to operations rather than treated as a one-time event. The future vision is not limited to training individual champions. It is about raising standards across housing, long-term care, and the broader aging network so that affirming care becomes part of how institutions operate.

As an advocate, you can:

- ➡ Ask housing, long-term care, hospice, and home care providers what LGBTQ+ training staff receive and how often that training is refreshed.
- ➡ Share resources like [SAGECare](#) or the [LEI](#) with providers in your community.
- ➡ Look for signs that inclusion is supported by leadership, policy, training, and accountability, not just the goodwill of individual staff.
- ➡ Ask providers how they address everyday care needs for LGBTQ+ residents, including names and pronouns, chosen family, privacy, visitation, rooming, dementia care, and complaint processes.



3 CHANGING PUBLIC POLICY

SAGE has also worked to strengthen the policy environment surrounding housing and aging. Over the past decade, that has included advocacy related to fair housing protections, public education on the Equal Access Rule, legislative engagement, legal advocacy, and support for state-level Long-Term Care Bills of Rights. Affirming housing and care requires policy guardrails, visible advocacy, and reliable information that people can use. The report suggests that the path ahead will need stronger state and local advocacy, closer alignment with civil rights partners, and continued efforts to help communities respond quickly when protections are threatened or weakened.

As an advocate, you can:

- ➡ Join [SAGE's Action Squad](#) and receive tangible steps for moving your community and country towards more inclusive policies
- ➡ Make your voice heard! Contact your representatives and advocate for stronger protections for the LGBTQ+ community. [Find and contact elected officials | USAGov.](#)
- ➡ Connect with your local [SAGECollab](#) partner or LGBTQ+ organization to see what efforts are happening at the state and local level.
- ➡ Advocate for written policies, training, and complaint systems that protect LGBTQ+ elders and recognize chosen family.

4 EQUIPPING LGBTQ+ OLDER PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES

A core value guiding this work is that LGBTQ+ older people should have access to practical tools that support self-advocacy. Through the [National Housing Initiative](#), the [National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging](#), and [SAGECents](#), SAGE has expanded access to information about housing rights, housing options, long-term care, and planning for future needs. The lesson is that information must be clear, usable, and easy to find. Older people navigating housing and care decisions often need straightforward guidance, not dense policy language. The report points toward simpler tools, stronger pathways to trusted information, and more personalized ways to connect people with resources that match their circumstances, goals, and local realities.

As an advocate, you can:

- ➡ Connect with your local [SAGECollab](#) partner or LGBTQ+ organization to see what resources and advocacy efforts are happening in your community or state.
- ➡ Contact your local [Aging Network](#) or Age-Friendly Community to become a volunteer.
- ➡ Join your local council, commission, or equivalent. Advocate for inclusive and culturally responsive housing and services.
- ➡ Help older adults, caregivers, and chosen family members prepare questions before housing or long-term care tours.
- ➡ Encourage people to ask for policies in writing, including non-discrimination, visitation, rooming, privacy, complaint, and resident rights policies.
- ➡ Work with local aging networks, senior centers, libraries, LGBTQ+ centers, or faith communities to make LGBTQ+ aging resources easier to find.
- ➡ Explore and share resources through the [National Housing Initiative](#), the [National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging](#), and [SAGECents](#).

5 EXPANDING SERVICES THAT SUPPORT AGING IN PLACE AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

SAGE has increasingly emphasized that affirming aging must extend beyond individual housing developments. Many LGBTQ+ elders want to remain in their homes and neighborhoods as they age. Others will rely on long-term care communities, home- and community-based services, care coordination, or local organizations that help reduce isolation and keep people connected. Through efforts such as the [Long-term Care Equality Index](#), [SAGECollab](#), [SAGECare](#), and the [National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging](#), SAGE has invested in this broader ecosystem of support. One lesson from the last decade is that aging in community depends on strong collaboration across housing, care, social connection, and local infrastructure. Looking ahead, the report calls for more support for aging in place, stronger care infrastructure, and new partnerships in underserved regions.

As an advocate, you can:

- ➡ Contact your representatives and advocate for stronger protections for the LGBTQ+ community.
- ➡ Ask local aging service providers, home care agencies, senior centers, meal programs, transportation programs, and caregiver support programs how they serve LGBTQ+ older adults.
- ➡ Advocate for written policies, training, and complaint systems that protect LGBTQ+ elders and recognize chosen family.
- ➡ Encourage local providers to partner with LGBTQ+ organizations, [SAGECollab](#) partners, or community groups that already have trust with LGBTQ+ older people.
- ➡ Join your local council, commission, professional networking group, or equivalent. Advocate for services that recognize chosen family, reduce isolation, support aging in place, and respect LGBTQ+ identity across the full aging experience.
- ➡ Share resources like [SAGECare](#) or the [LEI](#) with providers in your community.

Housing matters deeply. But the goal is larger than housing. The goal is to ensure that LGBTQ+ people can age in community, with dignity, safety, and pride.



What the last ten years have made clear

Over the last decade, SAGE and its partners have helped lead a culture shift. LGBTQ+-affirming elder housing is now more widely recognized as a real and urgent need. Just as important, this work has made clear that no single building or development can solve the broader challenges LGBTQ+ older people face as they age.

The larger lesson is that affirming aging requires a full ecosystem: safe and welcoming housing, trained providers, supportive services, strong policy protections, trusted information, and community connections that reduce isolation and help people remain visible and respected over time. LGBTQ+ advocates are vital to this work.



Looking ahead

The first ten years of the National LGBTQ+ Elder Housing Initiative have demonstrated what is possible when housing, care, advocacy, and community are treated as connected parts of the same mission. The work ahead is not only to protect what has been built, but to continue expanding the vision. That means supporting LGBTQ+ elders in many kinds of communities and care settings, strengthening local and national advocacy, and investing in the relationships and infrastructure that make affirming aging possible.

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