

On behalf of The San Diego LGBT Community Center, whose mission is to enhance and sustain the health and well-being of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, nonbinary, immigrant, and HIV communities to the betterment of our entire San Diego region, I am writing to share the importance of the LGBTQ+-affirming shelter and gratitude for funding project.

As a health and human service provider, The Center has seen first-hand a tremendous increase in housing needs in the past several years in San Diego. According to the region's 2022 PITC, which captures only a snapshot in time, youth currently represent 8% of San Diego's unsheltered population and 35% of the sheltered population.ⁱ Additionally, LGBTQ+ young adults are twice as likely to experience homelessness as their non-LGBTQ+ peers.ⁱⁱ Considering the severity of the youth housing crisis, which available data underrepresents, it is critical that the city invests in proactive early intervention programs to combat chronic homelessness. Without early intervention and comprehensive and affirming support services, unhoused LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of serious mental illness, incarceration, substance abuse, and early death. They are also far more likely than their non-LGBTQ+ peers to be sexually victimized while experiencing homelessness. Given that LGBTQ+ youth and youth of color, in particular Black youth, are overrepresented in San Diego's homeless system, it is vital that the city intentionally invests in programs that focus on offering person-centered support services delivered with cultural humility.

We commend the Council and Mayor Gloria for allocating \$1.5 million in funding for LGBTQ+ youth housing and comprehensive support services in the FY23 budget. This is a critical first step to expand services for unhoused LGBTQ+ youth.

ⁱ *County of San Diego 2022 Point-in-Time Data*. 2022, https://www.rtfhsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-San-Diego-Region-FINAL_05192022-1.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Morton, Matthew, et al. "LGBTQ Young Adults Experience Homelessness at More than Twice the Rate of Their Peers." *Chapin Hall*, 2018, <https://www.chapinhall.org/research/lgbtq-young-adults-experience-homelessness-at-more-than-twice-the-rate-of-peers/>.