

The 2023 LGBTQ+ Law School Survey

Student Experiences: Gender Inclusiveness and Support

Facilities, Supplies, and Health Services

Law schools can support students' well-being by providing access to inclusive¹ facilities and inclusive health services. However, the 2023 LGBTQ+ Law School Survey found that these spaces and resources are often limited by the binary understanding of gender as only male or female.

Gender Inclusive Restrooms

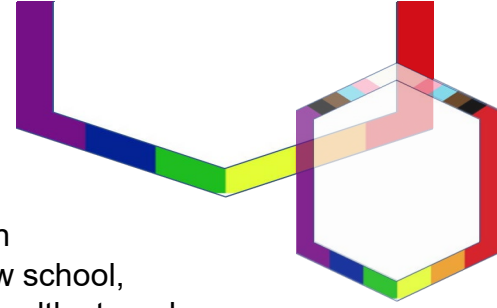
Of the 117 responding schools, almost all (92%, n=108) had gender-inclusive, single-occupancy restrooms that could be used by any student. Just over one-quarter also had gender-inclusive, multi-stall restrooms that could be used by any student. While these policies may appear to be inclusive, they make the assumption that students — specifically transgender and gender nonbinary students — will simply use whichever gender-designated restroom matches their gender identity. However, in practice, this assumption or codified policy forces transgender or gender nonbinary students to fit into a traditional binary system of gender that does not recognize them. Schools indicated they had formal policies or practices to ensure students feel safe and do not have to fear discrimination just for using the restroom by:

- Having a written policy supporting the use of restrooms based on the gender with which a student self-identifies (26%, n=30)
- Posting signage by gender-designated, multi-stall restrooms specifying a student can use the restroom based on the gender with which they self-identify (13%, n=15)

Inclusive Restroom Supplies

A growing best practice in higher education is ensuring universal availability of sanitary supplies and sanitary product receptacles. Where these receptacles are available is often dictated by the binary understanding of gender, and many schools only provide them in restrooms specifically designated for women. However, not all menstruating people are women. More than two-thirds of responding schools (70%, n=74) included sanitary product receptacles in all single-occupancy restrooms, and less than one-quarter (23%, n=14) included receptacles in all multi-stall restrooms regardless of gender designation.

¹ Inclusion refers to an organizational climate and/or program environment where all participants are and feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate and have an opportunity to achieve and/or demonstrate their potential.



Health Services

Access to health services is critical for LGBTQ+ students. Research indicates that LGBTQ+ graduate students, including students in law school, are more likely than non-LGBTQ+ students to experience mental health struggles, most commonly depression and anxiety. With the high need for health services among LGBTQ+ students, it is important that schools understand all aspects of how LGBTQ+-identifying students access their health services, including the financial and other barriers that may create barriers to use of available services.

An overwhelming majority of schools (90%) offer on-campus health services to students, up from 78% in 2021, but only 34% (n=39) reported these services are free to all students. While it appears that most schools require a student to have insurance, fewer than three-quarters of schools offer emergency funds for LGBTQ+ students in crisis, for which routine healthcare costs often do not qualify. Because of the rising debt among law school students, mandatory healthcare costs may be prohibitive for some students or cause them to go into greater debt to meet these costs. Encouragingly, many schools mentioned that mental health services are offered free to students, unrelated to health insurance coverage.

Even with access to health care, many LGBTQ+ individuals are often reluctant to seek help from medical professionals for fear they may be, for example, outed as LGBTQ+ or that providers will not understand their gender identity or sexual orientation. Of the 105 schools that responded to a question asking if their on-campus healthcare providers were trained in providing culturally and clinically competent care to LGBTQ+ individuals, fewer than two-fifths (n=40) indicated all of their providers were so trained. Close to half of all responding schools (n=48) were unsure of whether their on-campus services could meet the needs of LGBTQ+ students. While this uncertainty does not mean that these schools do not have on-campus health providers who are clinically and culturally competent in providing care to LGBTQ+ students, not knowing means that prospective LGBTQ+ law students will not know if they are assured care they feel comfortable accessing.

To learn about recruitment, admission, orientation, engagement, and more, [download the full report online.](#)