

## CHAPTER 4

# Portrait of USTS Respondents

**W**ith 27,715 respondents, the U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS) is the largest survey ever conducted of transgender people in the United States, providing a rich understanding of numerous aspects of their lives and experiences. In this chapter, an overview of respondents' diverse gender identities and experiences with transitioning is presented. Additional characteristics of USTS respondents, such as race and ethnicity, age, educational attainment, and geographic location, are also presented. This information is discussed in the following sections:

- I. Gender Identity and Expression
- II. Experiences with Transitioning
- III. Being Perceived as a Transgender Person by Others
- IV. Outness
- V. Race and Ethnicity
- VI. Age
- VII. Location
- VIII. Primary Language Spoken in Home
- IX. Religious or Spiritual Identity
- X. Income and Employment Status
- XI. Educational Attainment
- XII. Disability
- XIII. Citizenship and Immigration Status
- XIV. Sexual Orientation
- XV. Relationship Status

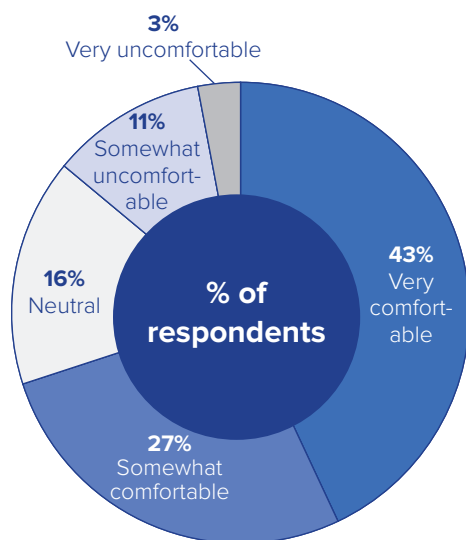
# I. Gender Identity and Expression

## a. Identity

The word *transgender* is often used as an “umbrella term” intended to encompass the spectrum of identities and capture the diversity of people whose gender differs from the one they were thought to be at birth. However, language describing identity continues to evolve, and it is difficult to describe all of those identities using just one term. Acknowledging this wide range of identities, the survey asked respondents if they thought of themselves as “transgender.” Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents reported that they thought of themselves as transgender, while the remaining 12% used other terms to describe their gender and related experiences.<sup>1</sup>

Respondents were also asked how comfortable they were with the word “transgender” being used to describe them on a five-point scale from “very comfortable” to “very uncomfortable.” Eighty-six percent (86%) expressed that they were comfortable or neutral using this term, including 82% percent of non-binary respondents. Forty-three percent (43%) were “very comfortable,” and only 14% expressed discomfort with being described as transgender<sup>2</sup> (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1: Respondent’s level of comfort with the word “transgender” being used to describe them**



Respondents were also offered a list of identity terms from which they could check all terms that described their gender identity, and they were also given an opportunity write in a gender that was not listed (Table 4.1). In addition to the listed terms, respondents wrote in more than 500 unique gender terms with which they identified.

**Table 4.1: Gender identity terms**

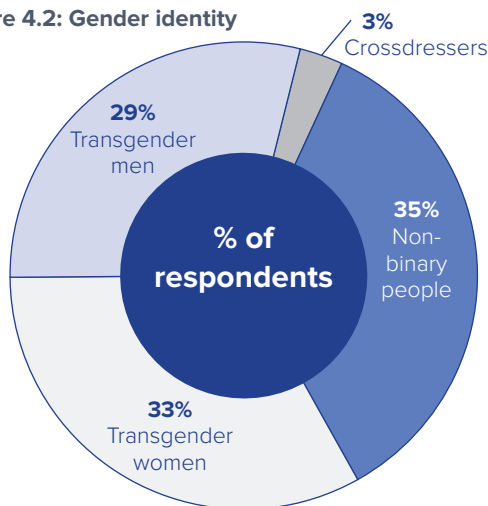
Gender identity terms	% of respondents
Transgender	65%
Trans	56%
Trans woman (MTF, male to female)	32%
Trans man (FTM, female to male)	31%
Non-binary	31%
Genderqueer	29%
Gender non-conforming or gender variant	27%
Gender fluid/fluid	20%
Androgynous	18%
Transsexual	18%
Agender	14%
Two-spirit	7%
Bi-gender	6%
Butch	5%
Crossdresser	5%
Multi-gender	4%
Third gender	4%
Intersex	3%
Drag performer (king/queen)	2%
A.G. or aggressive	1%
Stud	1%
Travesti	1%
Bulldagger	<1%
Fa'afafine	<1%
Mahu	<1%
A gender not listed above	12%

## b. Gender Identity Categories Used for Analysis

Respondents were also asked to choose only one term that best described their current gender identity out of six possible terms (*woman*, *man*, *trans woman* (MTF), *trans man* (FTM), *non-binary/genderqueer*, or *crossdresser*) to determine the gender identity categories used for primary analysis.<sup>3</sup> Respondents

were grouped into four gender identity categories based on their responses. These four categories are used throughout this report to discuss the experiences of those who completed the survey: *transgender women*, *transgender men*, *non-binary people*, and *crossdressers*.<sup>4</sup> Those who said that *woman* or *transgender woman* best described their gender identity were included in the transgender women analytical category (33%), and those who said that *man* or *transgender man* best described their gender identity were included in the transgender men analytical category (29%). Overall, 62% of respondents were included in the transgender men and women categories. Three percent (3%) said that *crossdresser* best described their gender identity. More than one-third (35%) of respondents indicated that their gender identity was best described as *non-binary* or *genderqueer*, a term often used to describe people whose gender is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify with a gender other than male or female, as more than one gender, or as no gender<sup>5</sup> (Figure 4.2). Throughout the report, these respondents are referred to as “non-binary.”

**Figure 4.2: Gender identity**



### c. Gender Assignment at Birth

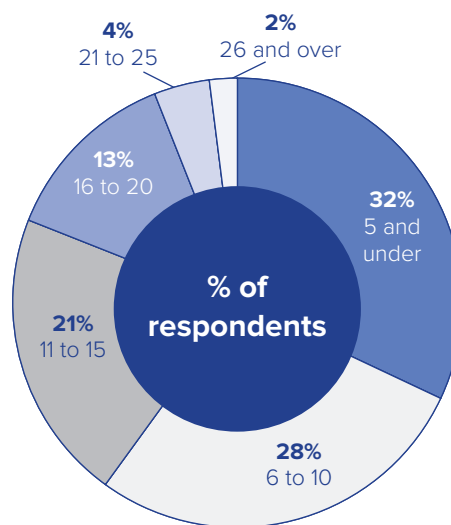
Respondents were asked about the sex they were “assigned at birth, on [their] original birth certificate.”<sup>6</sup> In this report, the term “respondents with male on their original birth certificate” is used

to describe respondents who were thought to be male when they were born (such as transgender women), and “respondents with female on their original birth certificate” is used to describe respondents who were thought to be female when they were born (such as transgender men). More than half (57%) of respondents had female on their original birth certificate, and 43% had male on their original birth certificate. Of those who were non-binary, 80% had female on their original birth certificate, and 20% had male on their original birth certificate.

### d. Development of Transgender Identity and Interactions with Other Transgender People

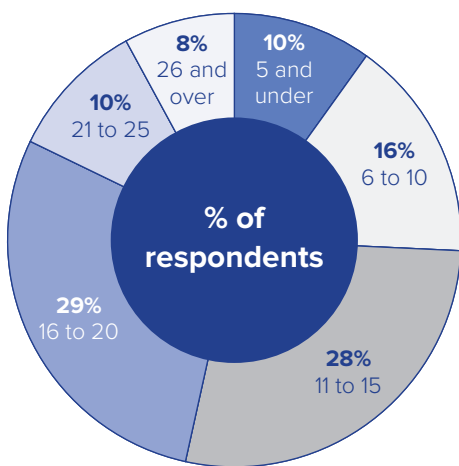
Respondents received questions related to the development of their transgender identity throughout their lives. A majority of respondents (60%) reported that they began to feel “different” from the sex on their original birth certificate at age 10 or younger, including 32% who began to feel different at age 5 or younger, and 28% who began to feel different between the ages of 6 and 10. Six percent (6%) reported that they began to feel different at age 21 or older (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3: Age they began to feel gender was different from the one on their original birth certificate**



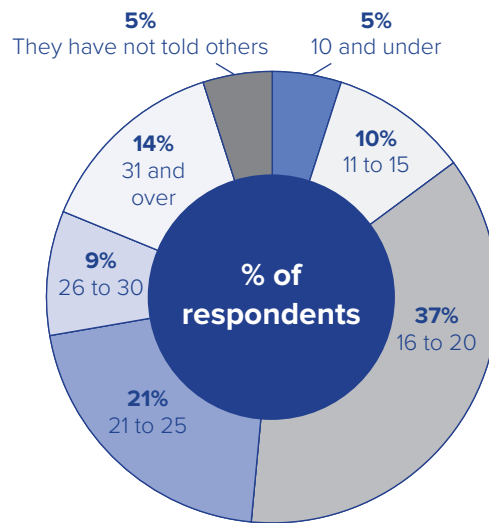
Respondents were also asked how old they were when they started to think of themselves as transgender, even if they did not know that word. One in ten (10%) reported that they began thinking of themselves as transgender at age 5 or younger. Sixteen percent (16%) began to think of themselves as transgender between the ages of 6 and 10, and 28% between the ages of 11 and 15. Eight percent (8%) reported beginning to think of themselves as transgender at age 26 or older (Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4: Age they started to think they were transgender**



Respondents were also asked at what age they began to tell others that they were transgender. One in ten (10%) respondents reported that they began to tell others that they were transgender between the ages of 11 and 15, and more than one-third (37%) did so between the ages of 16 and 20. Another 30% began telling people that they were transgender between the ages of 21 and 30, and 14% began telling people that they were transgender at age 31 or older. Additionally, 5% reported that they had not told anyone else that they were transgender (Figure 4.5).

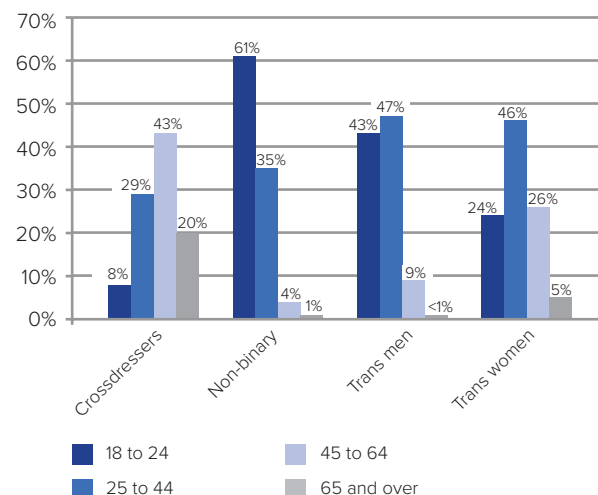
**Figure 4.5: Age they started to tell others that they were transgender**



### e. Gender Identity and Current Age

The age profile of respondents<sup>7</sup> differed widely by gender identity categories, with nearly half (47%) of transgender men and women being aged 25–44, compared to 35% of non-binary respondents, and 29% of crossdressers. Non-binary respondents were more likely to be younger, with nearly two-thirds (61%) being aged 18–24, in contrast to transgender men (43%), transgender women (24%), and crossdressers (8%). One in five (20%) crossdressers were aged 65 or older, compared to only 5% of transgender women, 1% of non-binary respondents, and less than 1% of transgender men (Figure 4.6).

**Figure 4.6: Gender identity by current age**



## II. Experiences with Transitioning

Transitioning is a process by which a person begins to live in a gender that is different than the one on their original birth certificate. Not all transgender people have transitioned or intend to do so, but many do. Gender transition can involve many different aspects, including changing one’s clothing, appearance, name, and identity documents (such as driver’s licenses or passports) and asking people to use different pronouns (such as he, she, or they) than the ones associated with the gender on one’s original birth certificate. Transitioning may also include undergoing medical procedures, such as hormone therapy or surgeries, to change one’s physical characteristics. Some people make many of these changes while others do not, depending on their needs and resources. Additionally, some transgender people may desire and make some of these changes even if they do not intend to live full time in a gender that is different than the one on their original birth certificate. However, many people who want to take these steps are not able to do so because of financial constraints, safety concerns, fear of discrimination and rejection, and other barriers.

### a. Full-Time Status and Transition

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents were currently living full time in a gender that was different from the one on their original birth certificate. Throughout the report, the process of living full time in a gender that is different than that on one’s original birth certificate is described as “transitioning.” Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents reported that they wanted to transition someday, 13% were unsure, and 3% did not want to transition (Figure 4.7). Three-quarters (75%) of transgender men and women had transitioned, and 43% of non-binary respondents had transitioned (Figure 4.8).<sup>8</sup>

Figure 4.7: Transition status of respondents

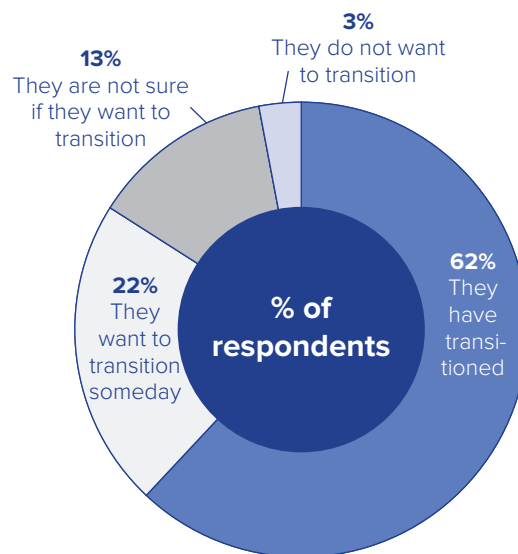
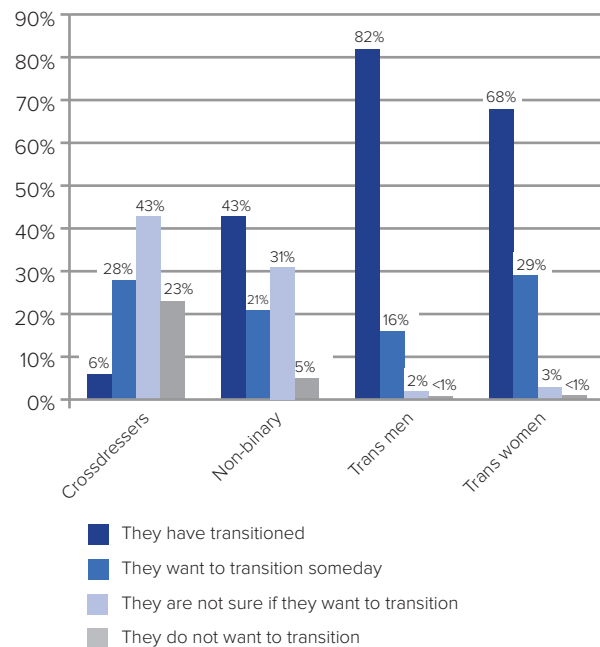


Figure 4.8: Transition status of respondents by gender identity (%)

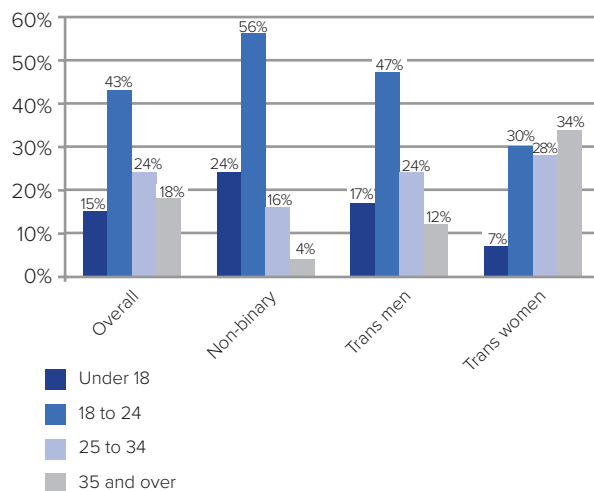


Respondents were also asked what gender they were living in on a day-to-day basis. Thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents reported that they currently lived as a man on a daily basis, 30% lived as a woman, 21% lived as neither a man nor a woman, and 15% lived part time in one gender and part time in another.

## b. Age of Transition

Those who have transitioned reported the age at which they began transitioning, or living full-time in a gender other than that on their original birth certificate. Nearly half (43%) reported that they began transitioning between the ages of 18 and 24, and nearly one-quarter (24%) transitioned between ages 25 and 34. Fifteen percent (15%) transitioned under the age of 18, and 18% transitioned at age 35 or older. Non-binary respondents and transgender men were more likely to have transitioned at a younger age, with 24% of non-binary respondents and 17% of transgender men transitioning under the age of 18, compared to 7% of transgender women (Figure 4.9).<sup>9</sup>

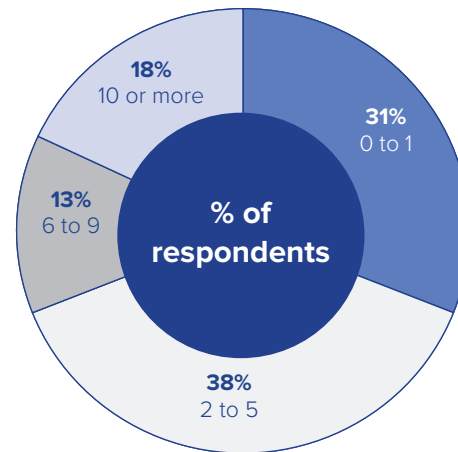
**Figure 4.9: Age began transitioning**  
GENDER IDENTITY (%)



## c. Number of Years Since Transitioning

The number of years since a respondent had transitioned was determined in order to provide valuable information and context for some of the respondents' experiences.<sup>10</sup> Nearly one-third (31%) of those who had transitioned had done so within one year of taking the survey, 38% had transitioned 2 to 5 years prior, 13% transitioned 6 to 9 years prior, and 18% had transitioned 10 or more years prior (Figure 4.10).

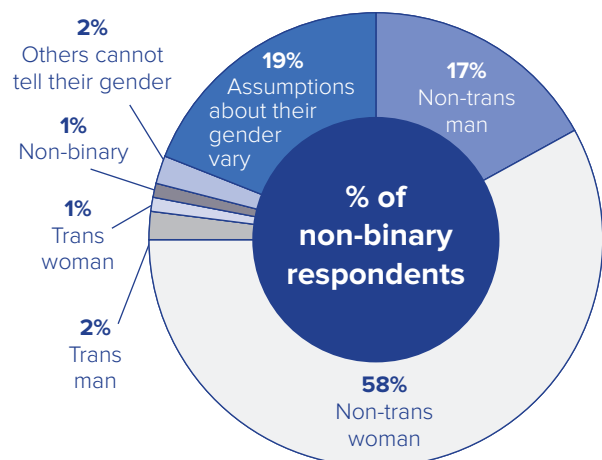
**Figure 4.10: Number of years since transitioning**



## d. Additional Questions for Non-Binary Respondents

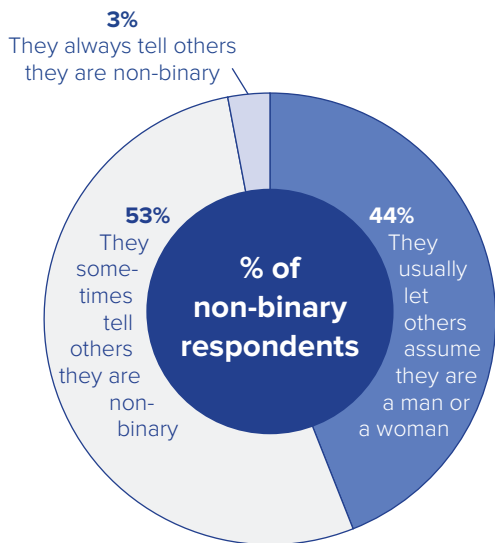
Non-binary respondents received questions about what they tell other people about their gender identity. They were asked about what gender they were perceived to be by people who did not know they were non-binary. A majority reported that people usually assumed they were non-transgender women (58%), including 72% of non-binary respondents with female on their original birth certificate, and 2% of non-binary respondents with male on their birth certificate. Seventeen percent (17%) reported that other people assumed they were non-transgender men, including 77% of non-binary respondents with male on their original birth certificate, and 3% of non-binary respondents with female on their birth certificate. Nearly one in five (19%) reported that assumptions about their gender varied (Figure 4.11).

**Figure 4.11: Gender that people who do not know they are non-binary usually assume they are**



Non-binary respondents were asked how they responded when people in their life assumed their gender was something other than non-binary. Almost half (44%) reported that they usually let others assume they were a man or woman, and 53% sometimes corrected others and told them about their non-binary identity. Only 3% always told others that they were non-binary (Figure 4.12).

**Figure 4.12: Response when people assume that their gender is something other than non-binary**



Non-binary respondents who reported that they usually let others assume they are a man or woman or only sometimes tell people they are non-binary were asked for the main reasons they do not tell others about their non-binary identity. Respondents could select multiple reasons for choosing not to tell people about their non-binary identity. A majority of non-binary respondents reported that people do not understand so they do not try to explain it (86%) or that it is easier not to say anything (82%). Approximately two-thirds reported that their non-binary identity is often dismissed as not being a real identity or just a phase (63%), and others feared they might face violence (43%) (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Main reasons for not telling people they are non-binary**

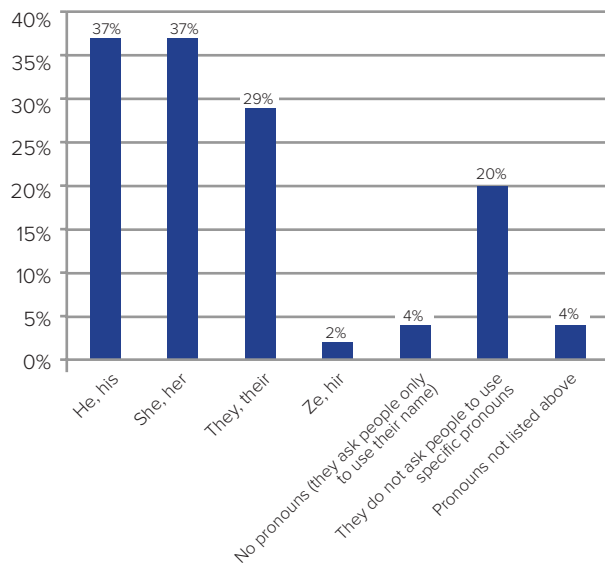
Main reasons for not telling others about non-binary identity	% of non-binary respondents
Most people do not understand so they do not try to explain it	86%
It is easier not to say anything	82%
Most people dismiss it as not being a real identity or a “phase”	63%
They might face violence	43%
They are not ready to tell people they identify as non-binary	35%
They might lose their job or not be able to get a job	35%
They might not get the medical care they need	24%
They might be hurt financially	23%
They might face mistreatment at school	18%
Their friends might reject them	18%
They might become homeless	12%
Their church or faith community might reject them	6%
A reason not listed above	18%

### e. Pronouns

Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents reported that the pronouns they used were different from those associated with the sex on their original birth certificate. Respondents reported a wide range of pronouns that they asked people to use when referring to them and could select more than one pronoun. The most widely used pronouns were “he/his” (37%), “she/her” (37%), and “they/their” (29%). One in five (20%) reported that they did not ask people to use specific pronouns when referring to them, and another 4% indicated that they used pronouns other than those provided in the answer choices. This included more than a dozen additional pronouns provided through write-in responses (Figure 4.13).



**Figure 4.13: Pronouns respondents ask people to use**



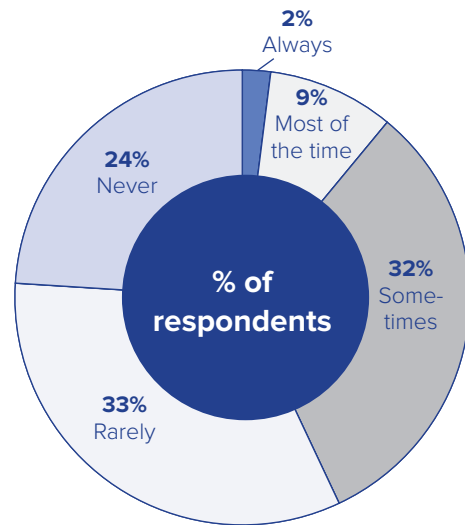
### III. Being Perceived as a Transgender Person by Others

Some transgender people find that others can routinely tell that they are transgender without being told, while others are generally perceived as the gender they identify with, and still others are perceived as the gender they were thought to be at birth. Many interactions and experiences of transgender people may be influenced by others' perceptions of them as being a transgender person. Transgender people who are visually or otherwise perceived by others as transgender or gender non-conforming may be more vulnerable to negative interactions in public or other settings.

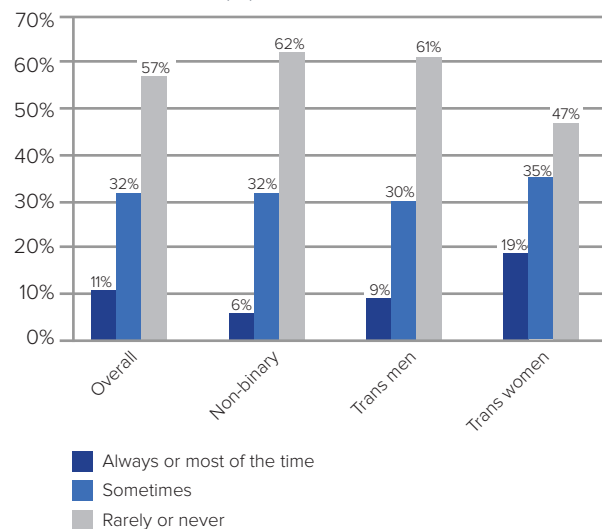
To assess whether respondents were perceived as transgender, they were asked whether others could tell that they were transgender even without being told on a five-point scale from "always" to "never." Nearly one in ten (9%) reported that others

could tell they were transgender without being told "most of the time," 32% said others could "sometimes" tell, and 24% said that others could never tell (Figure 4.14).<sup>11</sup> Respondents' experiences with others' perception of their transgender status varied by gender identity (Figure 4.15).

**Figure 4.14: How often people could tell they were transgender without being told**



**Figure 4.15: How often people could tell they were transgender without being told**  
**GENDER IDENTITY (%)**





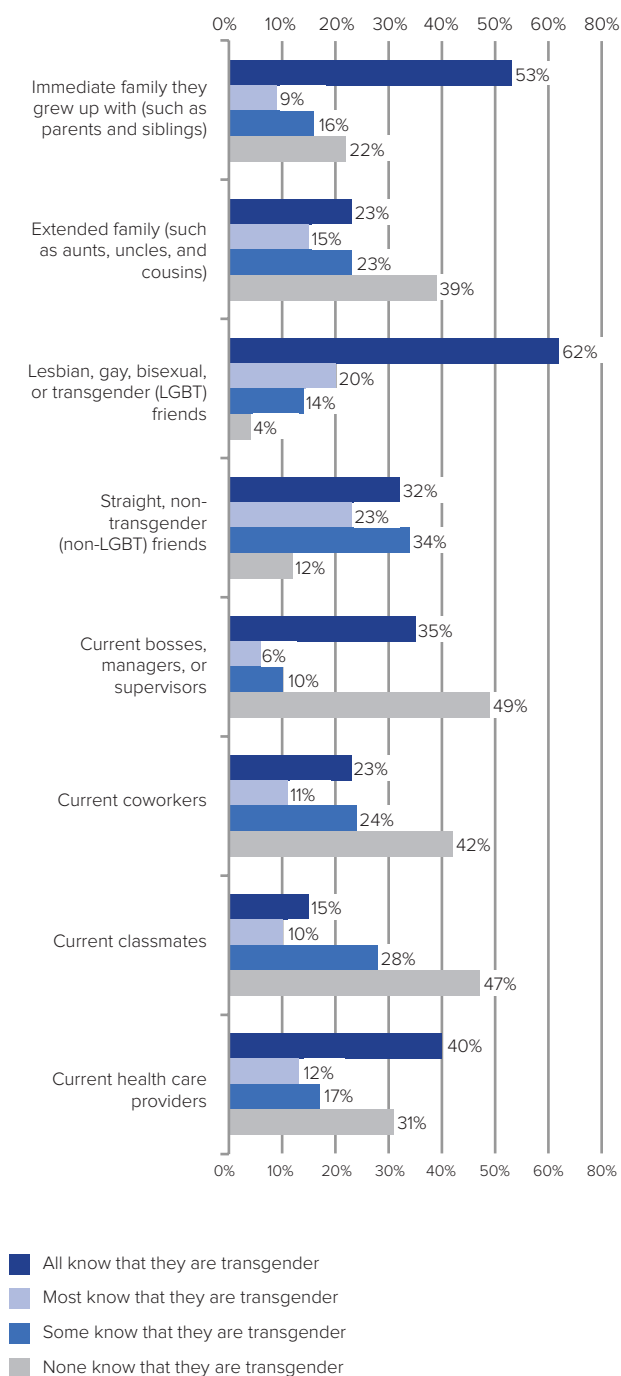
## IV. Outness

Respondents were asked whether they thought different groups of people in their lives knew that they were transgender to determine if they were “out”<sup>12</sup> about their transgender identity to family members, friends, supervisors and colleagues at work, classmates, and health care providers. Respondents were asked whether all, most, some, or none of the people in their lives knew they were transgender in each of the groups of people in their lives. Results reflect only those respondents who had people from each group in their lives. Overall, 8% reported that they were out to all of the people in their lives, across all groups of people, 48% were out to most, 43% were out to some, and only 2% were out to none of the people in their lives.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) were out to all or most of the immediate family that they grew up with, and 38% were out to all or most of their extended family.<sup>13</sup> Regarding workplace environments, nearly one-half reported that none of their current supervisors (49%) or coworkers (42%) knew that they were transgender.<sup>14</sup> In terms of health care providers, although 40% reported that all of their health care providers knew that they were transgender, almost one-third (31%) indicated that none of their health care providers knew that they were transgender (Figure 4.16).

Of all groups of people the survey asked about, respondents were most likely to be out to all of their LGBT friends (62%). Respondents were also asked about the methods by which they socialize with other transgender people. Sixty-four percent (64%) reported that they socialized with other transgender people in person, and 79% socialized online. Nearly one-third (32%) said they interacted with transgender people in political activism, and 10% reported that they did not socialize with other transgender people.

Figure 4.16: Outness to people in respondents' lives



## V. Race and Ethnicity

Respondents received a question on race and ethnicity and were asked to select only one of the following categories that most accurately described their racial or ethnic identity:

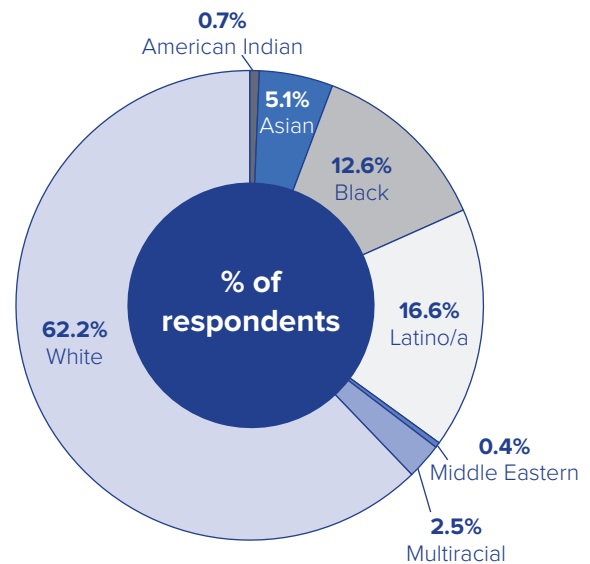
- Alaska Native (received a write-in option)<sup>15</sup>
- American Indian (received a write-in option)<sup>16</sup>
- Asian or Asian American
- Biracial or multiracial (received a follow-up question)<sup>17</sup>
- Black or African American
- Latino/a or Hispanic
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White or European American
- A racial or ethnic identity not listed above (received a follow-up question)<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the report, respondents who identified as biracial, multiracial, or more than one racial or ethnic category are included in the multiracial group. Additionally, due to small sample sizes and for purposes of analysis, certain racial and ethnic groups were combined into single categories. American Indian and Alaska Native respondents are combined in one category and reported as “American Indian.” Similarly, the Asian/Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander groups are also combined in one category and reported as “Asian.”<sup>19</sup>

The USTS sample had a percentage of white respondents that is notably higher than the U.S. general population, which is common among internet-based surveys.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, a race and ethnicity weight was developed to more closely represent what is estimated to be the actual racial and ethnic distribution for the transgender population in the U.S., based on the Census

Bureau’s 2014 American Community Survey (ACS).<sup>21</sup> Racial and ethnic categories were weighted to reflect the ACS distribution for race and ethnicity as part of the standard survey weight that was applied to all results presented in the report (Figure 4.17).<sup>22</sup>

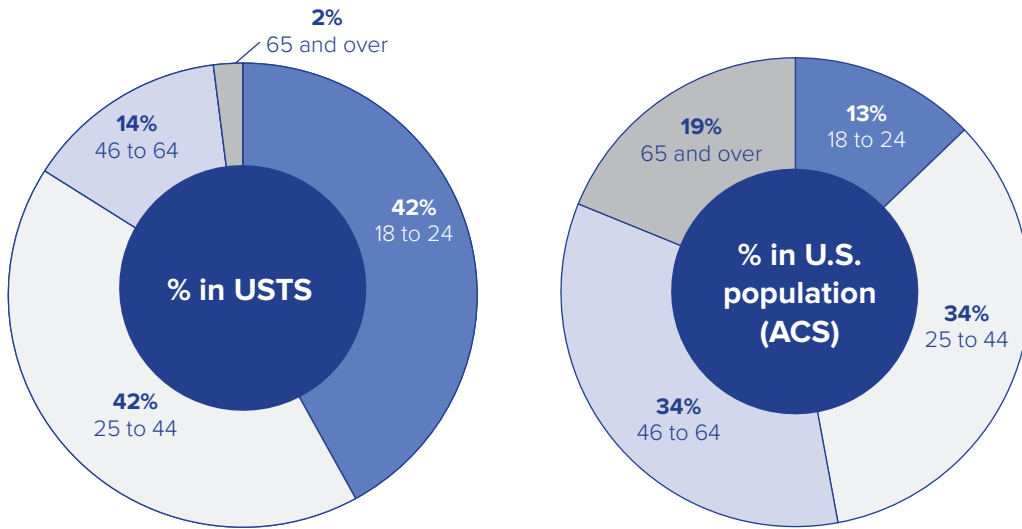
**Figure 4.17: Race and ethnicity of respondents**



## VI. Age

The age of respondents in the sample ranged from 18 to 87. The overall age of respondents in the sample was generally younger than that in the U.S. population. In addition to having a younger age distribution, a disproportionately large number of respondents reported an age of 18 years old. Therefore a weight was created to balance the representation in the sample of those 18-year-old respondents in relation to the rest of the sample. This weight was part of the standard survey weight that was applied to all results presented in this report (Figure 4.18). Additionally, for certain findings in this report, a “supplemental weight” was applied to adjust the USTS sample to reflect the age distribution for the U.S. population based on the ACS.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 4.18: Age of respondents**

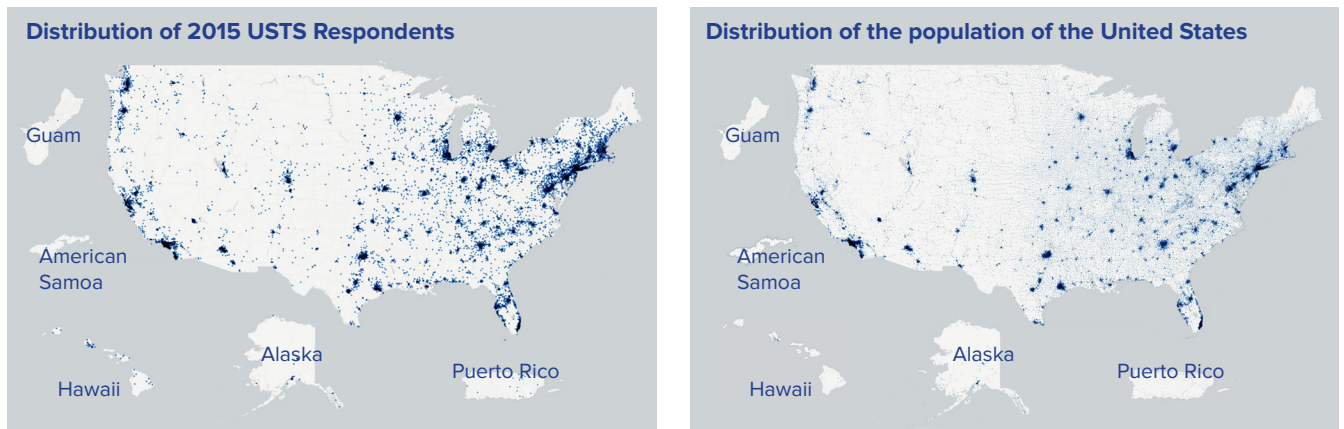


## VII. Location

The sample included respondents from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and several U.S. military bases overseas. The geographic distribution of the sample generally mirrors that of the U.S. general population (Figure 4.19).

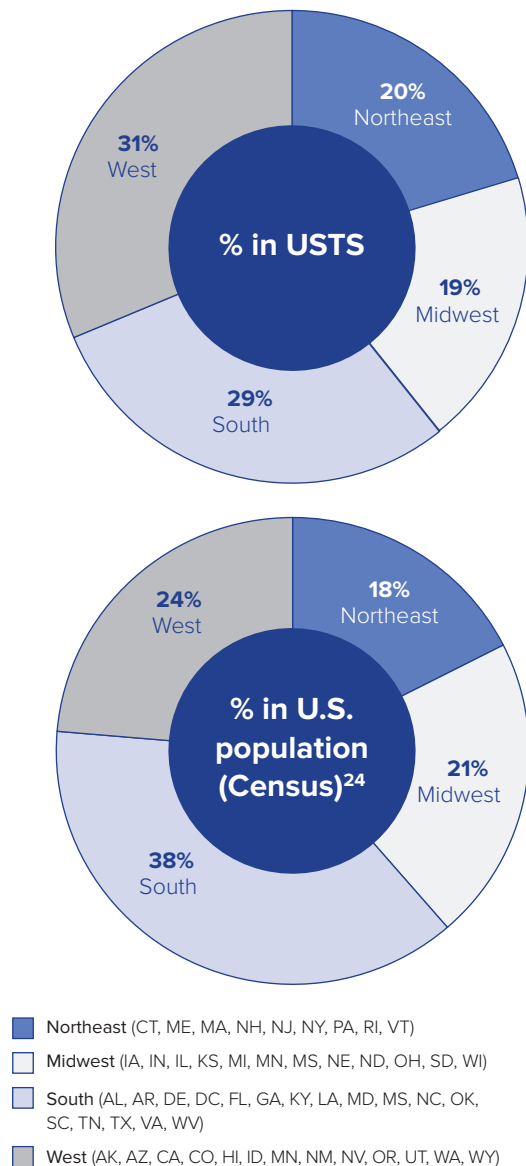
The sample was divided into regions based on the Census Bureau regions, which included the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West (Figure 4.20). These regional categories did not include U.S. territories or U.S. military bases overseas.

**Figure 4.19**



*Each dot on the maps represents the number of people in a zip code. Every dot corresponds to at least one person, and the size of each dot increases in accordance with the number of people in each zip code.*

Figure 4.20: Respondents' location by region



## VIII. Primary Language Spoken in Home

Respondents were asked about the primary language spoken in their home. Eighty-four percent (84%) reported that English was the only language spoken in their home, compared to 79% in the U.S. general population, as reported in the

American Community Survey (ACS).<sup>25</sup> Fourteen percent (14%) reported that English and another language were mainly spoken in their home, and 2% reported that a language other than English was the primary language spoken in their home. In addition to spoken languages, 0.4% of respondents also reported that American Sign Language was either the main language or one of the main languages used in their home.

Spanish (including Spanish Creole) was reported as the most common language spoken in their home other than English, with 10% of respondents reporting Spanish was the main language spoken in their home, exclusively or along with English. This was slightly lower than the percentage of those who spoke Spanish in the home in the U.S. general population (13%).<sup>26</sup> Each of the other identified languages were spoken by less than 1% of respondents.

## IX. Religious or Spiritual Identity

Respondents were asked about their current religious or spiritual identity and could select one or more identities from a provided list, or they could select a religious affiliation or spiritual identity not listed.<sup>27,28</sup> Sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents reported that they had a spiritual or religious identity, and 37% of respondents reported that they did not have a spiritual or religious identity.<sup>29</sup> Respondents were most likely to identify as agnostic (23%), atheist (22%), or Christian (21%), followed by a smaller percentage who identified as Pagan (9%), Buddhist (6%), or Jewish (4%). One-quarter (25%) of respondents identified as spiritual, but with no religious affiliation. Thirteen percent (13%) had no religious or spiritual affiliation, and 7% identified a religious affiliation or spiritual identity that was not listed (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Current religious or spiritual identity**

Current religious or spiritual identity	% of respondents
Spiritual, but no religious affiliation	25%
Agnostic	23%
Atheist	22%
Christian	21%
Pagan	9%
Buddhist	6%
Jewish	4%
Secular Humanist	4%
Wiccan	4%
Druid	1%
Hindu	1%
Muslim	1%
Native American Traditional Practitioner or Ceremonial	1%
Polytheist (write-in response)	1%
Taoist	1%
Baha'i	<1%
Confucian	<1%
Jain	<1%
Jehovah's Witness	<1%
Rastafarian	<1%
Scientologist	<1%
Shinto	<1%
Sikh	<1%
Tenrikyo	<1%
A religious affiliation or spiritual identity not listed above	7%
No affiliation	13%

## X. Income and Employment Status

Respondents were asked about various aspects of their income using a series of questions based on the Current Population Survey (CPS).<sup>30</sup> Results for income and employment status are presented

briefly in this section and discussed in greater detail in the *Income and Employment Status* chapter. In order to compare USTS respondents' income and employment data with data from the CPS and other national data sources, income and employment results are presented with the "supplement weight" applied.<sup>31</sup>

### a. Sources of Income

Nearly half (45%) of respondents received income from multiple sources, such as employment, Social Security income, or a pension. Thirty-six percent (36%) received income solely from their own employment or a partner or spouse's employment (not including underground economy work, such as sex work, drug sales, or other work that is currently criminalized). Nearly one in ten (9%) received income from Social Security, including disability, and 3% received income solely from a pension. Three percent (3%) reported that they were currently working in the underground economy, including 1% whose income came solely from underground economy work (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Current sources of income by single and multiple sources**

Sources of income	% of respondents (supplemental weight)
Employment only (from their own employer, partner/spouse's employer, or self-employment)	36%
Social Security income/disability only	9%
Pension/retirement only	3%
Other sources of income only	3%
No income	2%
Sex work and other underground economy work only	1%
Unemployment benefits/cash assistance only	1%
Multiple sources	45%

## b. Individual and Household Income

Individual and household incomes for the USTS sample and the U.S. population were reported from 2014, the last full year prior to the survey for which annual income figures were available. Respondents reported lower incomes than the U.S. population (Figure 4.21 & Figure 4.22).<sup>32</sup>

Figure 4.21: Individual income in 2014

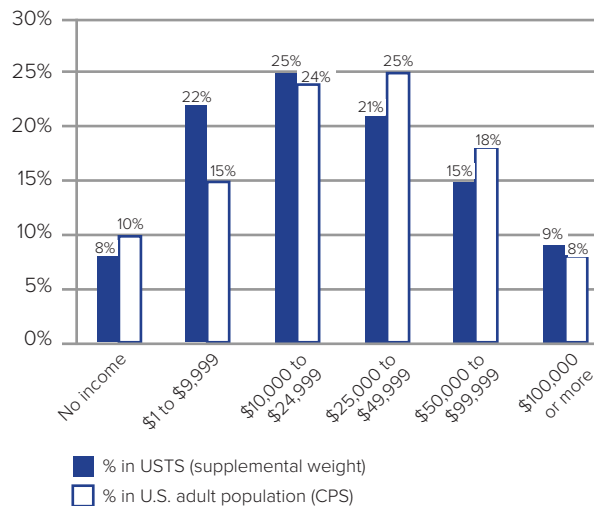
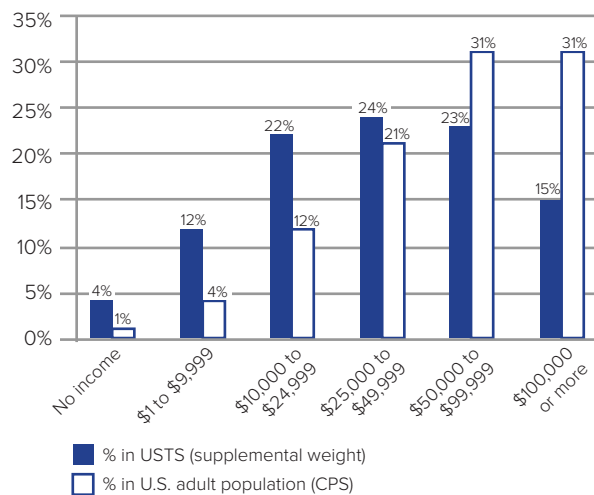


Figure 4.22: Household income in 2014



## c. Poverty

Nearly one-third (29%) of respondents were living in poverty,<sup>33</sup> nearly twice the poverty rate among the general U.S. adult population (14%).<sup>34</sup>

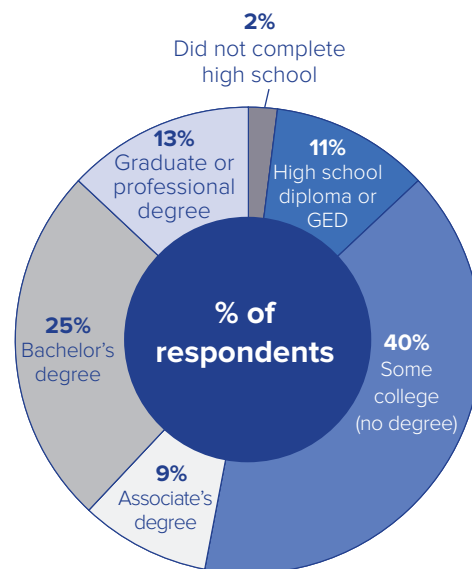
## d. Employment Status

When asked about their current employment status, 35% of respondents reported that they currently had at least one full-time job, 15% had at least one part-time job, 15% were self-employed, and 11% were students. The unemployment rate for USTS respondents was 15%, three times the U.S. unemployment rate at the time of the survey (5%).<sup>35</sup>

# XI. Educational Attainment

Respondents were asked about the highest level of education or degree that they had completed. Thirteen percent (13%) of respondents had a high school diploma or GED, or did not complete high school. Forty percent (40%) had completed some college but had not obtained a degree, 9% had an associate's degree, and 38% had received a bachelor's degree or higher (Figure 4.23).

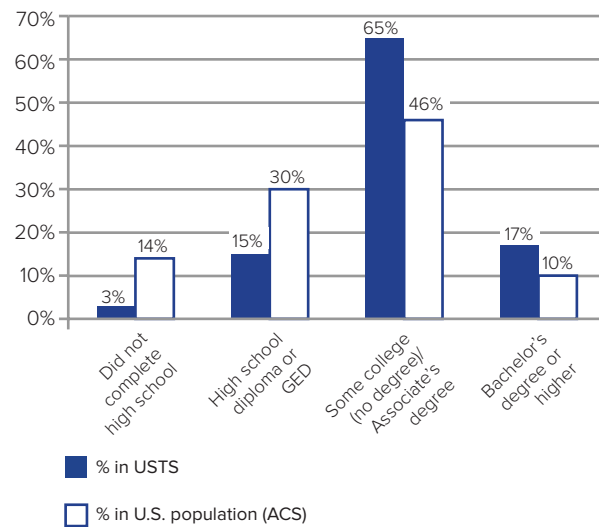
Figure 4.23: Educational attainment (categories used in report)



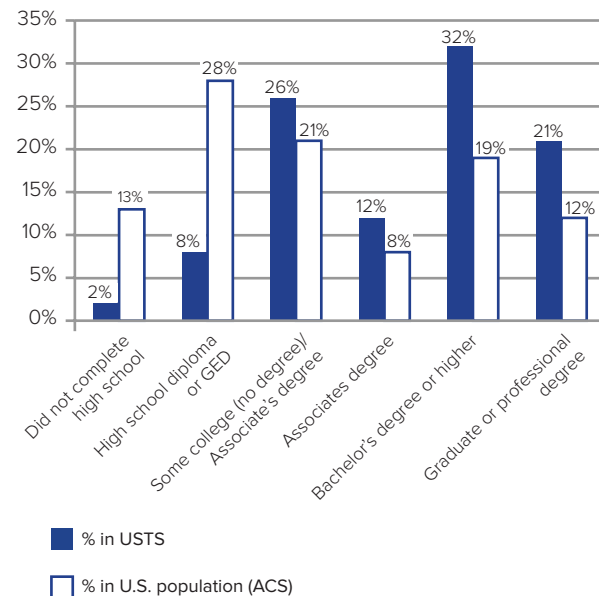
Throughout the report, educational attainment is reported according to the categories reflected in Figure 4.23. However, alternative categories are

also presented here for comparison to the U.S. population.<sup>36</sup> The USTS sample overall reflected higher educational attainment than the U.S. population, which is common among internet-based surveys.<sup>37</sup> To account for differences in educational attainment by age, USTS respondents are compared to the U.S. population for two age ranges: (1) ages 18 to 24 (Figure 4.24) and (2) ages 25 and older (Figure 4.25).<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 4.24: Educational attainment (ACS categories), ages 18 to 24**



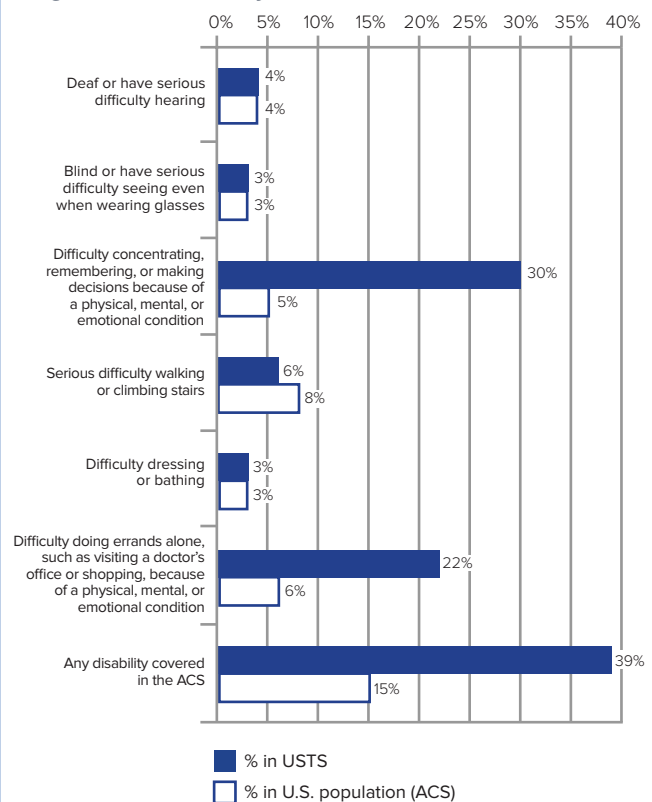
**Figure 4.25: Educational attainment (ACS categories), age 25 and older**



## XII. Disability

Respondents received questions about their disability status based on questions from the American Community Survey (ACS) in order to compare those in the USTS sample to those with disabilities in the U.S. general population. Overall, 39% of respondents indicated that they had one or more disability as described in the ACS, compared to 15% of the general population.<sup>39</sup> Four percent (4%) of the sample reported that they were deaf or had serious difficulty hearing, similarly to the U.S. general population (4%).<sup>40</sup> Three percent (3%) reported that they were blind or had serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses, similarly to those in the U.S. population (3%).<sup>41</sup> USTS respondents were six times as likely to report having serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition (30%), in contrast to those in the U.S. population (5%).<sup>42</sup> Respondents were also almost four times as likely to report difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition (22%), compared to the U.S. population (6%) (Figure 4.26).<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 4.26: Disability status**





Respondents were also asked if they identified as a person with a disability to better capture disabilities that were not outlined in the ACS. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the sample identified as a person with a disability.<sup>44</sup> Throughout the report, the experiences of “people with disabilities” reflect the experiences of these individuals.

## XIII. Citizenship and Immigration Status

Respondents were asked about their citizenship or immigration status. In addition to those who were citizens in the sample (97%), respondents reported a range of immigration statuses, including being permanent residents (1%), visa holders (1%), refugees (<1%), or undocumented residents (<1%) (Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5: Citizenship or immigration status**

Citizenship or immigration status	% of respondents
U.S. citizen (by birth)	94%
U.S. citizen (naturalized)	3%
Permanent resident	1%
A visa holder (such as F-1, J-1, H1-B, or U)	1%
Undocumented resident	<1%
DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival)	<1%
Refugee status	<1%
Currently under a withholding of removal status	<1%
DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability)	<1%
Other documented status not listed	<1%

Six percent (6%) of respondents were not citizens by birth, compared to 16% in the U.S. population.<sup>45</sup> This included approximately 3% who were naturalized citizens, 2% were documented residents (such as permanent residents and visa holders), and <1% were undocumented residents<sup>46</sup> (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6: Citizenship or immigration status (collapsed)**

Citizenship or immigration status	% in USTS	% in U.S. population (Census)
U.S. citizen (by birth)	94%	84%
U.S. citizen (naturalized)	3%	8%
Documented resident	2%	8%
Undocumented resident	<1%	

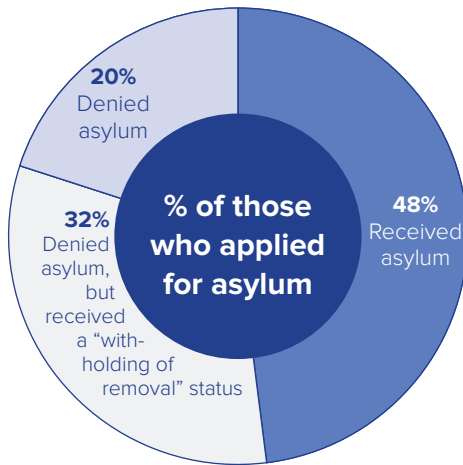
Respondents who were not U.S. citizens by birth were asked if they had ever applied for asylum in the United States. Seven percent (7%) applied for asylum, including 3% who applied on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Of those who did not apply for asylum, 51% reported that they did not need asylum in order to stay in the United States because they had access to other avenues for becoming citizens, permanent residents, or visa holders.<sup>47</sup> Others respondents indicated that they did not know how to apply (17%) or did not apply for other reasons (Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7: Reasons for not applying for asylum**

Reasons for not applying for asylum	% of those who did not apply for asylum
They had access to other legal statuses	51%
They did not know how to apply	17%
They did not want to apply	16%
They did not need to or were not eligible	12%
They were afraid to apply	3%
They believed they were past the one-year deadline	2%
A reason not listed above	30%

Nearly half (48%) of respondents who applied for asylum received it. Another 32% did not receive asylum but instead received a “withholding of removal” status, an alternative form of relief that allows someone to stay in the United States under certain conditions. One in five (20%) of these respondents were denied asylum (Figure 4.27). Of the respondents who were denied asylum (n=11, unweighted),<sup>48</sup> 31% reported that they were denied asylum because they were past the one-year deadline, 44% indicated that it was because the immigration official decided that they did not face danger in their country of origin, and 25% reported that it was because of a reason not listed.

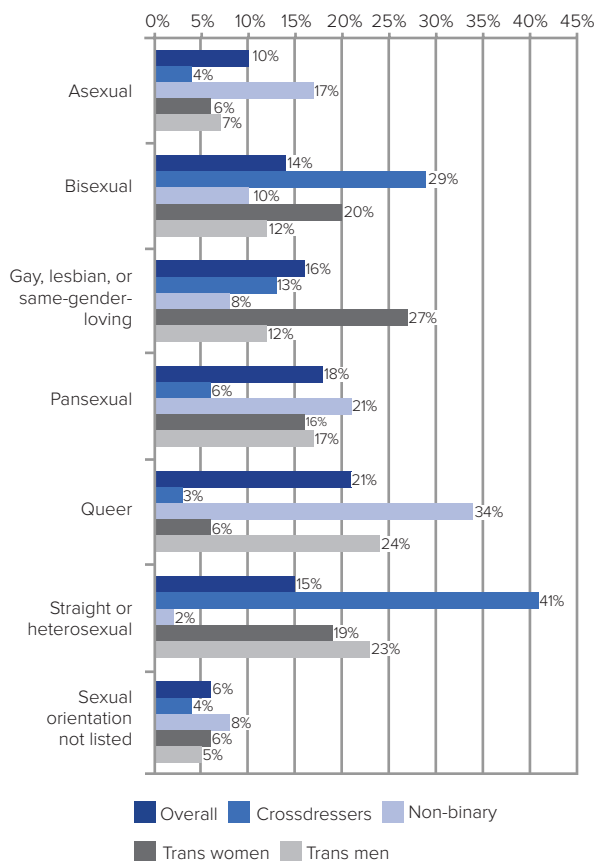
Figure 4.27: Outcome of asylum application



## XIV. Sexual Orientation

Respondents were asked which terms best described their sexual orientation. Respondents were most likely to identify as queer (21%), and they also identified as pansexual (18%), gay, lesbian, or same-gender-loving (16%), straight (15%), bisexual (14%), and asexual (10%) (Figure 4.28).

Figure 4.28: Sexual orientation

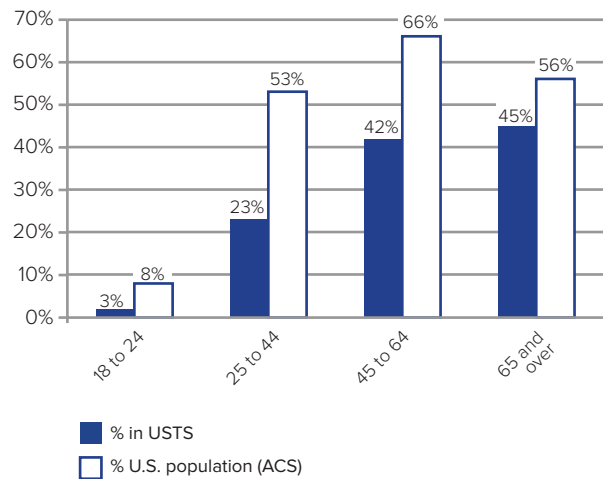


## XV. Relationship Status

Respondents were asked about their relationship status. Thirty-one percent (31%) were partnered and living together, 17% were partnered and not living together, 49% were single, 2% were in a polyamorous relationship, and 1% had a relationship status that was not listed.

Respondents were also asked about their current legal marital status for the purpose of comparison to the U.S. adult population through the ACS. Eighteen percent (18%) of USTS respondents were currently married, in contrast to 52% in the U.S. adult population (Figure 4.29).<sup>49</sup> Almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents have never been married, which is more than twice as many as the U.S. adult population (30%).

Figure 4.29: Currently married CURRENT AGE (%)



- 1 Respondents who were among the 12% who did not “think of [themselves] as transgender” in Q. 1.10 were eligible for the survey based on answers they provided to questions Q. 1.11–1.18. See *Appendix C (Detailed Methodology)* for a discussion of eligibility. Many of those individuals identified other terms that better described their gender and experiences.
- 2 Although only 12% of respondents reported that they did not think of themselves as transgender in response to Q. 1.10, a slightly larger number (14%) expressed discomfort with the word “transgender” being used to describe them in Q. 2.4. This may have been due to respondents’ differentiation between identity and the terminology used to describe their identity. For example, while a respondent may have identified with the word transgender, they may not have been comfortable using the term “transgender” and would have instead preferred another term to describe their identity.
- 3 See Q. 2.3.
- 4 While most respondents were categorized for analysis by gender identity based on their selection of the term that best described them in Q. 2.3 and their selection in Q. 2.1 (sex assigned at birth on their original birth certificate) alone, a small number of respondents (n=439) required further analysis of their survey responses to determine if they met the eligibility criteria for the survey and, if so, what the most appropriate gender identity categories were for analysis. This included, for example, respondents who indicated in Q. 2.1 that the gender on their original birth certificate was female and that they identified as a woman in Q. 2.3, or who indicated that the gender on their original birth certificate was male and that they identified as a man. This recoding process is described in further detail in *Appendix C (Detailed Methodology)*.
- 5 Respondents were also asked in an earlier question (Q. 1.11) if they identified “as more than one gender or as no gender (such as genderqueer or non-binary),” without asking them if that is the *best* term to describe their gender identity. Nearly half (47%) of respondents said that they identify as such. This means that some respondents who said that another term (such as transgender man, transgender woman, or crossdresser) best described their gender identity also identified as having more than one gender or as no gender.
- 6 Although the vast majority of people have either male or female on their original birth certificate, there are rare instances where the sex on a birth certificate is left blank or where a gender marker other than “male” or “female” is listed at the time of birth. It is possible that some respondents had an original birth certificate that did not list them as “male” or “female” at the time of their birth. These respondents may not have been able to accurately answer this question. Respondents were required to select one response to the question about the sex listed on their original birth certificate in Q. 2.1—either “female” or “male”—in order to proceed, since this answer was used to determine subsequent questions that they would receive later in the survey.
- 7 The age of respondents in the sample is discussed in further detail in section VI of this chapter.
- 8 Note that Q. 1.12 asked whether respondents were currently living full time in a gender different from the one assigned to them at birth. Some non-binary respondents may have been living as a non-binary person full time (including people for whom living part time in one gender and part time in another gender is most consistent with their non-binary identity), but did not select “yes” because they assumed the survey was asking only about people who were living exclusively in a binary gender (male or female) that is different than the gender on their original birth certificate.
- 9 Although 6% of crossdressers reported that they had transitioned based on Q. 1.12, the sample size of crossdressers who had transitioned was too low to report on their experiences by age.
- 10 The number of years since transitioning was calculated based on respondents’ current age as reported in Q. 2.13, and the age at which they began to transition, as reported in Q. 1.13.
- 11 Throughout this report, respondents’ experiences with being perceived as transgender by others are reported according to three categories: those who said that people could tell they were transgender “always” or “most of time” (11%), those who said that others could “sometimes” tell (32%), and those who said that others could “rarely” or “never” tell (57%).
- 12 The term “out” is used here to describe a person who openly self-identifies as transgender in their private, public, and/or professional lives.
- 13 See the *Family Life and Faith Communities* chapter for a more detailed discussion of respondents’ experiences with being out to the immediate family they grew up with and their extended family, as well as their experiences with being out to partners or spouses and children.
- 14 Respondents’ experiences with being out in the workplace are further discussed in the *Employment and the Workplace* chapter.

- 15 Respondents who reported that “Alaska Native” most accurately described their racial or ethnic identity were asked to enter their enrolled or principal corporation.
- 16 Respondents who reported that “American Indian” most accurately described their racial or ethnic identity were asked to enter their enrolled or principal tribe.
- 17 Those who reported that “biracial/multiracial” best described their racial or ethnic identity received a follow-up question in which they could select one or more of the racial or ethnic identities listed above that best described them.
- 18 Those who selected “a racial/ethnic identity not listed above” were asked to specify their identity and then received a follow-up question asking them to select the racial/ethnic identity or identities that best described them from the list above, with the exception of the “identity not listed above” category.
- 19 Racial and ethnic categories are combined in a manner similar to that in the U.S. Census, which is important for the purposes of making racial and ethnic comparisons to the U.S. population. The notable exception to U.S. Census categorization is that Middle Eastern and white respondents are reported separately throughout the report. Additionally, this report includes a Latino/a category, and other racial and ethnic categories should be considered to be of “non-Hispanic” origin, based on U.S. Census categories.
- 20 The difference in racial and ethnic population distribution in the USTS sample and the U.S. general population may be due to sampling bias that is common in internet-based surveys and convenience samples. See e.g., Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (4th ed.)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. See also the *Methodology* chapter and *Appendix C (Detailed Methodology)* for more information about potential internet-based survey sampling bias. See *Appendix A (Characteristics of the Sample)* for unweighted frequencies and percentages for race and ethnicity in the USTS sample.
- 21 Prior research using representative samples of transgender adults have found that transgender adults differ from the general population in regard to race and ethnicity, with transgender people being more likely to be people of color. See e.g., Flores, A. R., Brown, T. N. T., & Herman, J. L. (2016). *Race and Ethnicity of Adults who Identify as Transgender in the United States*. Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute; Conron, K. J., Scott, G., Stowell, G. S., & Landers, S. J. (2012). Transgender health in Massachusetts: Results from a household probability sample of adults. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(1), 118–122. The USTS sample has a higher percentage of white respondents than the U.S. general population. To help correct for this sampling bias, weights for race and ethnicity were applied based on the racial and ethnic makeup of the U.S. population. While this may still over-represent white respondents relative to the makeup of the transgender adult population, this weighting procedure brings the sample closer to what is estimated to be the true population distribution for race and ethnicity for transgender people. See the *Methodology* chapter and *Appendix C (Detailed Methodology)* for more information on weighting procedures applied to the sample. See also *Appendix A (Characteristics of the Sample)* for unweighted frequencies and percentages for race and ethnicity in the USTS sample.
- 22 Although the ACS groups Middle Eastern and white people in one category, the experiences of Middle Eastern respondents are presented separately from white respondents throughout this report. Despite a low number of Middle Eastern respondents in the sample overall (<1%), it is important to report in a manner that best reflects the unique circumstances of transgender people who identify as Middle Eastern.
- 23 The weight for 18-year-old respondents was created with propensity scores developed using a regression discontinuity model. For more information on this process and other weighting procedures, such as the development and application of the “supplemental weight,” see *Appendix C (Detailed Methodology)*. See *Appendix A (Characteristics of the Sample)* for unweighted frequencies and percentages for age in the USTS sample.
- 24 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015*. Available at: [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP\\_2015\\_PEPANNRES&src=pt](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2015_PEPANNRES&src=pt).
- 25 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *2015 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates: Language spoken at home by ability to speak English for the population 5 years and over*. Available at: [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_1YR\\_B16001&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B16001&prodType=table). The percentages of people who reported on the primary language spoken in their home in the American Community Survey (ACS) were calculated by the research team. ACS findings include those in the U.S. population who are 5 years of age and older, in contrast to the USTS sample, which includes respondents who are 18 and older. Therefore, the comparison to the USTS sample should be interpreted with caution.
- 26 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *2015 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates: Language spoken at home by ability to speak English for the population 5 years and over*. See note 25.
- 27 Q. 2.12 asked about religious or spiritual identity only, rather than current involvement in a faith community. More information about respondents’ experiences in faith communities (including religious and spiritual communities) can be found in the *Family and Faith Communities* chapter.

- 28 In addition to the main drop-down list of affiliations, those who identified as Christian, Jewish, or Muslim were able to provide additional specificity for their identity from a drop-down list of more specific religious affiliations in Q. 2.12. Although respondents were provided with numerous categories to specify for Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths, these lists were not exhaustive and likely did not capture all religious or spiritual identities represented in the sample. Furthermore, while those who identified as Christian were given an option to write in a Christian affiliation that was not listed, Jewish and Muslim respondents did not receive that option, which may have limited the manner in which they were able to identify their religious or spiritual identity.
- 29 Respondents who reported that they did not have a religious or spiritual identity included those who selected agnostic, atheist, or no affiliation without selecting another religious or spiritual identity.
- 30 The Current Population Survey is used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to make determinations about the state of employment in the United States.
- 31 The “supplemental weight” includes the standard survey weight for 18-year-olds and race and ethnicity, as well as additional weights for age and educational attainment that were created based on the Census Bureau’s 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). This weight was applied when comparing the USTS sample to the U.S. population for items that were sensitive to age and educational attainment, such as employment status and individual and household income.
- 32 USTS respondents seem to have similar household sizes to the U.S. population. For instance, according to the CPS, 2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 28% of U.S. households have a household size of one, whereas 29% of USTS respondents have a household size of one (supplemental weight applied). However, USTS respondents are less likely to be living with family members, rather than with unrelated members of the household. Sixty-four percent (64%, supplemental weight applied) of USTS respondents reported a family size of one compared to 24% in U.S. population as reported in the CPS. Available at: <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar15.pdf>. Calculations were completed by the research team.
- 33 “Living in poverty” means living at or near the poverty line. The research team calculated the USTS poverty measure using the official poverty measure, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, which can be found at: <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html>. The income ranges in the USTS allowed for designation of respondents as living in or near poverty if their total family income fell under 124% of the official poverty line.
- 34 Proctor, B. D., Semega, J. L., & Kollar, M. A. (2016). *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015*. (p. 12). DC: U.S. Census Bureau. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.pdf>.
- 35 Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). *The Employment Situation—August 2015*. Available at: [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit\\_09042015.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_09042015.pdf); Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). *The Employment Situation—September 2015*. Available at: [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit\\_10022015.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_10022015.pdf).
- 36 The educational attainment results reported for USTS respondents likely overestimates the number of transgender people with a level of education beyond high school and/or some college. This may be due to the method by which the survey was administered (online only) and the sampling technique (convenience sampling). Population-based surveys in several states have found lower educational attainment or no difference in educational attainment among transgender people when compared to non-transgender people. Conron, et al. See note 21; Meyer, I .H., Brown, T. N. T., Herman, J. L., Reisner, S. L., & Bockting, W. O. (in press). Demographic characteristics and health outcomes among transgender adults in select U.S. regions in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. *American Journal of Public Health*.
- 37 See the *Methodology* chapter and the detailed methodology explanation in *Appendix C (Detailed Methodology)* for more information about potential internet-based survey sampling bias. See also note 20.
- 38 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *2015 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates: Educational Attainment*. Available at: [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_1YR\\_S1501&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S1501&prodType=table).
- 39 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *2015 American Survey 1-Year estimates: Disability characteristics*. Available at: [http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_1YR\\_S1810&prodType=table](http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S1810&prodType=table). Calculations were completed by the research team.
- 40 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). See note 39.
- 41 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). See note 39.
- 42 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). See note 39.
- 43 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). See note 39.
- 44 The difference in the reported rate of those who had one or more listed ACS disabilities (39%) and those who identified as a person with a disability (28%) may be due to some individuals not being comfortable referring to themselves as a person with a disability. However, those who identified as people with a disability likely reflect a much wider range of disabilities.

- 45 U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *2015 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates: Sex by age by nativity and citizenship status*. Available at; [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_1YR\\_B05003&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B05003&prodType=table). Calculations were completed by the research team.
- 46 Documented and undocumented residents are often underrepresented in surveys for many reasons, including concerns about jeopardizing their residency by revealing information about their immigration status on a survey. When asking questions relating to citizenship and immigration status, the survey included statements reminding respondents that their answers were confidential and could not be used against them. However, it is likely that the number of documented and undocumented residents is underrepresented in this sample.
- 47 This percentage includes those who reported that they had access to other legal statuses and those who indicated that they were already citizens or permanent residents in Q. 9.8.
- 48 Due to the small sample size, the unweighted frequency is being presented alongside weighted percentages here to be clear that the percentages reflect the experiences of a small sample of respondents. While it is important to present these experiences in this report, the findings presented in this sentence should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.
- 49 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *2014 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates: Sex by marital status by age for the population 15 years and over*. Available at: [http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_1YR\\_B12002&prodType=table](http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B12002&prodType=table). These findings, as presented in the ACS, include adults who are currently married with both spouses who are present and not present based on the ACS definitions. Calculations were completed by the research team based on 2014 ACS data.