



Trans Housing Initiative St. Louis (THISTL)

A trans-led organization committed to tackling systemic injustices in housing that transgender people face in the St. Louis region.

Key Terms to Know:

ASSIGNED OR ASSUMED SEX:

Refers to the ***sex someone was assigned at birth*** according to physical (*visual*), hormonal, and/or chromosomal characteristics.

TRANS* /TRANSGENDER:

(adj) A term that describes people whose ***gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned at birth***.

NOTE: Referred to as Transgender, not Transgendered.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING(GNC):

(adj) Someone whose ***gender presentation does not align with pejorative gender-based expectations*** or norms. Gender-variant behavior is culturally specific.

CISGENDER:

(adj) A term used to describe people who **identify as the gender they were assigned at birth**.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

This is determined by **whether someone is attracted to people** of the same sex, the opposite sex, both sexes, or neither sex. It encompasses sexual behaviors as well as desires and fantasies.

LGBTQ, LGBTQIA+:

An **umbrella term** that stands for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersexual, asexual, ally, and others”.

Source: National Black Justice Coalition; nbjc.org

Mission statement:
THISTL empowers and
advocates for trans and
gender-expansive
humans' right to safe
and equitable housing.



Meet The Board

Read more at our website!
THI-STL.org



Charlie Blake
(they/them)

Charlie, a Midwest native who spent many years wandering far and wide before moving to St Louis in 2018. They are an interdisciplinary scientist, an artist, and a banjo player. They started working on housing issues as a Metro Trans Umbrella Group volunteer. Charlie is very **handy with a hammer as well as a spreadsheet** and hopes to put these skills to good use through their volunteer work.



Maxi Glamour
(they/them)

Maxi is an **internationally known multidisciplinary artist and community organizer** based in St. Louis. Maxi uses their work and platform to discuss sociopolitical issues with an underlying tone of absurdist humor that blends social justice and high fantasy. Maxi believes trans-housing justice is the most significant intersection of alleviating oppression of wealth inequality and transphobia.



Charles Unique
(he/they)

Charles can best be described as a gender anarchist who is driven by their passion to dismantle oppressive systems. As a long time resident of Saint Louis, Charles brings a diverse background of experience advocating for the rights of marginalized communities. They currently work as the **Eviction Defense Organizer for Homes 4 All St. Louis** addressing the immediate needs of tenants facing eviction. They have three fire signs and are excited to bring that same fiery energy to THISTL.



Beth Gombos
(they/them)

Beth has been involved in uplifting the transgender community since 2013. They graduated with a BA in Cultural Anthropology from SIU Edwardsville in 2016. They are transgender, genderqueer, non monogamous, pansexual, and have been growing their community development skills for over 15 years. They are handy with tools and community outreach. Beth has worked at the **Trans Queer Flat** and the **Metro Trans Umbrella Group**.



Ilia Silverman
(they/them)

Ilia (eye-lee-uh) is an abolitionist agender human who's been growing their roots in St. Louis since 2018. They are a licensed clinical social worker who believes that safe and affordable housing is a fundamental right and that all evictions are violent. Ilia believes deeply in the power of the community to make a change, especially when tearing down oppressive systems.

THISTL 2021-2023:

- provided **thousands of dollars in rental assistance** to trans and queer individuals
- created and started an ongoing **financial literacy program**
- Collected **nearly 100 survey responses to gather data about TGNC housing experiences** here in St. Louis.
- Developed **several partnerships with other organizations** who recognize that housing insecurity is an issue for our community in the St. Louis metro area in order to **promote change and advocate for community based approaches to housing transformation.**

THISTL's Values

We believe in a **housing-first approach to homelessness.**

Safe and stable housing is the foundation for improving quality of life, and everyone is deserving of that opportunity. We don't believe people have to prove their worthiness or jump through any hoops in order to deserve housing.

We believe in **queer liberation that can only be achieved through solidarity across movements.**

We resist interlocking systems of oppression and reimagine communities that empower and support everyone. Fighting for racial justice is a vital part of working towards housing equity.

We believe in **radical love and acceptance for ourselves and others.**

We meet each other where we are, because all of us have growth we can do, and all of us have needs and gifts we can _____ offer.

Why is THISTL necessary?

- **Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC)** individuals face various levels of discrimination that contributes to housing insecurity and homelessness at **much higher rates than their cisgender and hetronormative peers.**
 - This has been **documented nationally** by the **U.S. Trans Survey** from 2015 and other various studies that have not only been acknowledged, but used by the **US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** to highlight housing discrimination against the LGBTQ community for the past decade.
 - According to the **Trevor Project**, **28% of LGBTQ youth overall and 38% percent of transgender and nonbinary youth reported having experienced homelessness or housing instability at some point in their lives.**

Local data has been obtained through **THISTL's housing survey**, as well as **St. Louis Queer Support Helpline** that reinforces the narrative of data coming from national sources.



National Alliance to End Homelessness highlights “point-in-time” (aka “**street counts**”) shelter information from **US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** in 2019

- 49% of cisgender adults

compared to:

- 63% of transgender adults
- 80% of gender non-conforming adults experiencing homelessness were **unable to access temporary shelter**

Equal Access Protections Still Needed for Gender Minorities Experiencing Homelessness

Unsheltered percentage by gender, 2019

Cisgender Adults



Transgender Adults



Gender Non-Conforming Adults



Source: NAEH Analysis of US Department of Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time Data, 2019

THISTL's Housing Survey Data

**as of October 5th, 2022*

% of respondents that said they have had **difficulty finding temporary emergency shelter for the night** because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation in St Louis City

30%

% of respondents that said they experienced **difficulty finding RENTAL housing** because of perceived gender identity and/or sexual orientation

32%

We had 93 respondents from the St Louis Region

- 43% of respondents are people of color
- 34% of respondents are Black/African American, 8% of respondents are Latinx/Hispanic
- 6% of respondents are intersex

41%

% of respondents currently have **broken or missing appliances** (like stoves or refrigerators in their home)

30%

% of respondents that **worry that their home may have mold, asbestos, or lead**

19%

19% of respondents had **applied for Section 8 housing assistance** but only **4% have received it**



THISTL's Housing Survey Data (cont.)

**as of October 5th, 2022*



58% of respondents live with a disability or identify as disabled and

- of those disabled respondents, 98% said they had mental health issues
- of those disabled respondents, 54% said they had a permanent disability
- of those disabled respondents, 30% said they had physical mobility issues
- of those disabled respondents, 35% said they had an issue with way they learn

Overall respondents:

Mean Monthly Income \$1,386

Median Monthly Income \$1,300

Mean monthly rent \$555

Median monthly rent \$538

Mean = average
Median = middle

10% of respondents listed income as zero

40% of respondents are below the federal poverty line

The most common and/or most difficult barriers people described in finding stable, adequate housing:

THISTL's Housing Survey Data (cont.)

**as of October 5th, 2022*

- What looks familiar?
- What looks unfamiliar?
- What stories do these words tell?



SQSH & THISTL



A partnership for sharing
data and resources

In 2021, **SQSH** responded to: **134 total helpline service calls**

- 58 calls (or **43% of total calls**) where the caller identified themselves as trans or gender expansive
- 19 calls (or **14% of total calls**) where the caller **identified themselves as trans or gender expansive and reported experiencing housing issues**

The following is a breakdown of the *kinds of housing issues* experienced by trans and gender expansive callers (n=19):

- Emergency Housing/Shelter: mentioned in 5 calls (or 26% of the time)
- Homelessness: 4 calls (or 21% of the time)
- Unstable/Insecure Housing: 9 calls (or 47% of the time)
- Abusive/Unsafe Housing: 9 calls (or 47% of the time)
- Unsupportive/Transphobic Environment: 10 calls (or 53% of the time)

More info



**St. Louis Queer+
Support Helpline
Call Data Report**



Moving forward: THISTL's Mission

We **advocate and educate transgender and gender-expansive humans** seeking shelter, housing, and home-ownership.

We **train and educate organizations and businesses** providing shelter and housing to transgender and gender-expansive people.

We are building a network across organizations to **document housing disparities** for transgender and gender-expansive folks, confront those disparities, and design solutions by creating new systems or reforming existing systems.

We **facilitate decent, safe housing that is affordable** to low-income transgender and gender-expansive humans.

Multi Level Approach

THISTL believes that **in order for programs and policies to be effective** in addressing issues of trans and queer housing instability, **we must approach from at least three specific levels of housing** in St. Louis

THISTL is currently partnered with **St. Louis City Treasurer's** office to provide **financial literacy classes** for trans/gnc/queer individuals.

Our first cohort prioritized those who have experienced racism and/or gender discrimination in housing.

Get into stable housing
(emergency and transitional)

Keep their housing
(rental/utility assistance, affordable prices, bank programs, financial literacy)

Home ownership; generational and community wealth
("legalize tiny homes," bank loan/mortgage assistance and programs)



**“St. Louis is a
transgender oasis for
the midwest.”**

-Sayer Johnson, 2019

Founding and retired Executive
Director of the Metro Trans
Umbrella Group; Trans Queer
Flat

Trans Queer Flat

SQSH

Covenant House (youth)

Metro Trans Umbrella Group

Transgender Memorial Garden

Pridefest

Black Pride

Tent Mission STL

**Washington University Adult and
Pediatric Transgender Centers**

**St. Louis University Transgender
Health Collaborative**

Trans Spectrum Conference

Trans-identified religious leaders

**City government “Firsts” with
trans community under Tishaura
Jones’ administration (LGBTQ
advisory board: attending TDOV
& TDOR)**

Resources & Works Cited:

[US Trans Survey](#) National Center for Transgender Equality

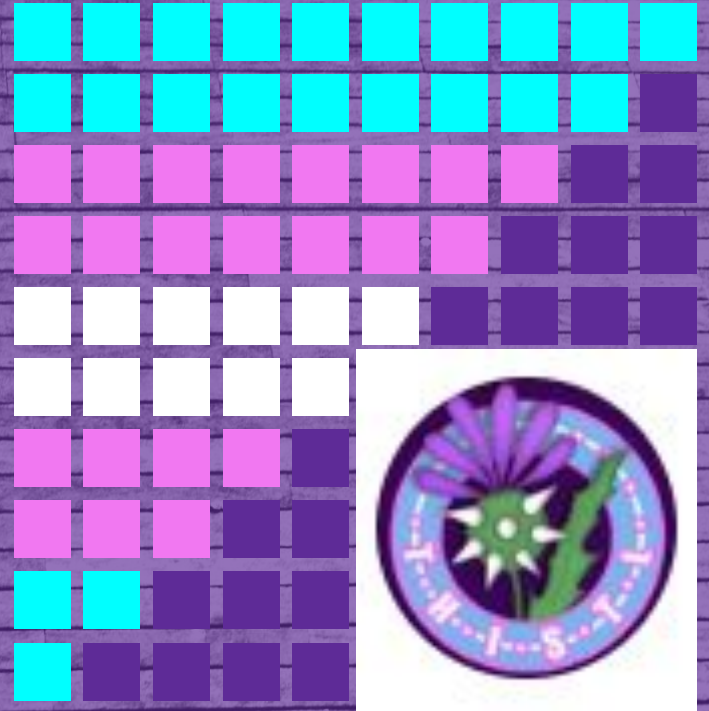
[Equal Access for Transgender People; Supporting Inclusive Housing and Shelters](#) and

[LGBTQ Homelessness HUD Exchange](#) US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

[Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Homelessness](#). National Alliance to End Homelessness

[SQSH Call Data Report for THISTL](#) (2022)

[THISTL's Survey Data](#) from 2022



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