

2018

# Transforming the Workplace

Los Angeles Trans and Gender Nonconforming  
Workplace Assessment Report

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*“They wanted to bury us,  
but they didn’t know we were seeds.”*

*- Mexican Proverb*

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# Introduction

The TransLatin@ Coalition (TLC) was formed in 2009 to organize and advocate for the needs of Transgender Latina women across the country. Since inception, the organization has grown to address the needs of all Transgender (Trans)<sup>1</sup> and gender nonconforming (GNC)<sup>2</sup> communities. In 2015, TLC developed the Center for Violence Prevention and Transgender Wellness (CVPTW) in Los Angeles, California to address multiple needs of Trans and GNC individuals, chief among them being economic development needs. TLC prioritizes economic development given the large numbers of Trans and GNC people who are adversely impacted by underemployment, unemployment, workplace discrimination, and who, consequently, often turn to the underground economy as means to survive.

There is a growing body of literature demonstrating that Trans and GNC people experience a severe lack of economic opportunity fueled by pervasive and persistent discrimination. This is especially true for Trans and GNC people of color. A large-scale national survey of Transgender people conducted in 2015<sup>3</sup> found that thirty percent of Transgender employees who had held a job in the past year were fired, denied a promotion,

or had experienced some other form of mistreatment in the workplace due to their gender identity of expression. The unemployment rate among respondents was fifteen percent, three times higher than the U.S. population rate at that time (5%). Further, nearly one-third of the 27,715 respondents were living in poverty, compared to twelve percent of the U.S. population. These disparities were amplified when analyzed across racial and ethnic categories. People of color, including Latino/a (43%), American Indian (41%), multiracial (40%) and Black (38%) respondents, were more than three times as likely as the U.S. population (12%) to be living in poverty. The unemployment rate among Transgender people of color was four times higher (20%) than the U.S. unemployment rate.

Relatedly, respondents also reported high rates of experience in the underground economy (e.g. sex work, drug sales, etc.). Twenty percent of the respondents had participated in the underground economy for income at some point in their lives. Nearly ninety percent of those who had interacted with the police while participating in (or perceived to be participating in) sex work reported high rates of mistreatment by the police

<sup>1</sup>Transgender or Trans is defined as an individual who does not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.

<sup>2</sup>Gender nonconforming is defined as an individual who does not conform to the gender norms or gender expression associated with their assigned sex

<sup>3</sup>James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.



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including harassment and sexual assault.

Notably, experiences of workplace discrimination and their economic consequences don't happen in a vacuum. Trans and GNC individuals experience discrimination from nearly every institution they encounter across their life span. In addition to the workplace setting, survey respondents reported high levels of mistreatment, harassment, and violence in the families they were born into, schools, healthcare settings, and more.

Although not significant enough to impact these pervasive discriminatory practices, there has been some progress with respect to Trans and GNC affirming policies and legislation. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has clearly stated that employers are not allowed to discriminate against an individual because of gender identity, including Transgender status, or because of sexual orientation.<sup>4</sup> In October of 2017, California passed Senate Bill 396 which requires employers with 50 or more employees to include training for supervisors on harassment pertaining to gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. The bill also requires that employers post a poster regarding Transgender rights in a prominent and accessible location in the workplace. The bill also expands the definition of an "individual with employment barriers" to include Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. Additionally, the Gender Recognition Act was signed into California law in 2017,

streamlining the process for Californians to apply to change their gender markers, and creating a non-binary gender category on California birth certificates, drivers' licenses, identity cards, and gender-change court orders.

To seize the momentum provided by these recent legislative successes, and to better understand the workplace experiences and needs among local Trans and GNC individuals, the TransLatin@ Coalition received grant funding from the City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board to conduct a needs assessment of the Trans and GNC community in the City of Los Angeles. This document is a report of our findings.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/sex.cfm>

# Overview and Methodology

The specific purpose of this assessment was to better understand the workplace experiences and related needs of the Trans and GNC community in **Los Angeles, California**.

6

Focus groups

85

Participants

(10-15 in each group)

2

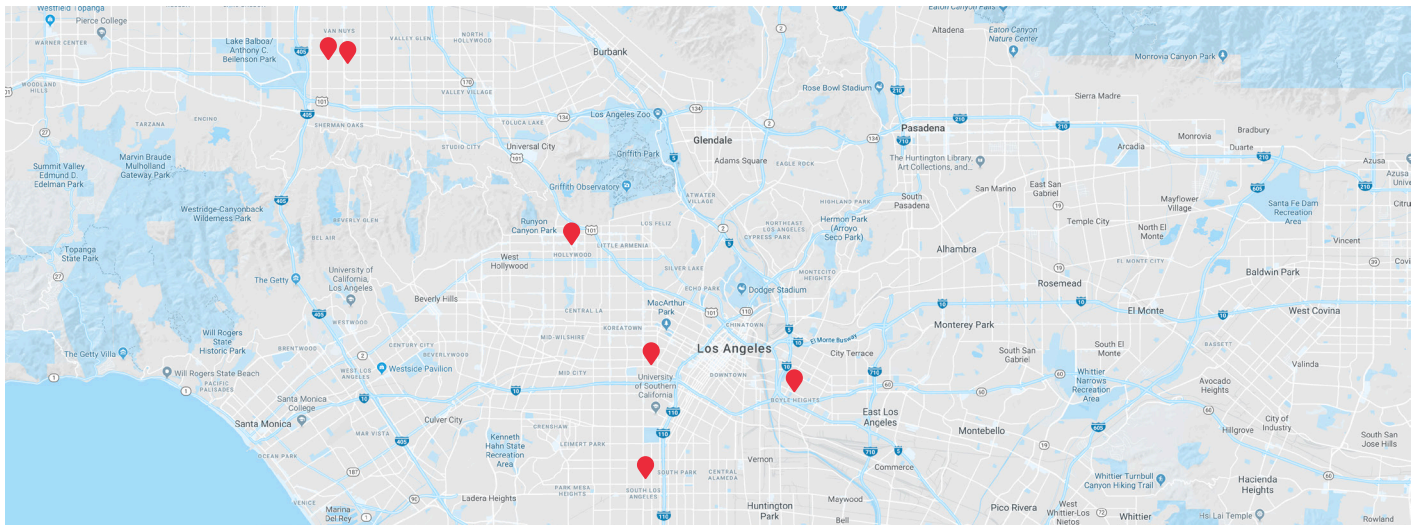
Languages available

English and Spanish

The specific purpose of this assessment was to better understand the workplace experiences and related needs of the Trans and GNC community in Los Angeles, California. The research team consisted of two staff members of the TransLatin@ Coalition, including the President & CEO, an MSW graduate student and an independent consultant.

The assessment consisted of six focus groups, each preceded by a self-administered survey. The focus groups were convened between November 2017 and February 2018 and were conducted in English (4) and Spanish (2). There was a total of eighty-five participants with ten to fifteen participants in each group. Sixty-one individuals completed the survey and participated in the focus groups in English, and twenty-four did so in Spanish. The groups were intentionally held at social service organizations trusted by the community and in different geographic locations within the **City of Los Angeles (South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, and Metro)**.





## Focus Group Locations

To be eligible for the focus groups, participants had to identify as either Trans or GNC; live, work or receive services in the City of Los Angeles; and be 18 years of age or older. Participants were recruited through the use of social media, the distribution of flyers at community events, and word of mouth. Individuals who were interested in registering for a focus group were pre-screened to make sure they met eligibility criteria.

Prior to the collection of data, participants were asked to sign a consent form (available in both English and Spanish). Upon completion of the focus groups, each participant received an incentive for their participation.

Prior to convening the focus groups, participants were asked to complete a brief survey (available in English and Spanish) to collect demographic data, including data related to social determinants of health, and data pertaining to workplace experiences. Focus group topics included positive experiences

in the workplace, experiences with workplace discrimination, experiences with local work force development centers, current employment status and intentions related to future employment.

The focus groups were audio recorded (with consent) and the assessment team also took notes during each group. Participants were asked not to share any identifying information during the focus groups to maintain confidentiality. Focus group content was analyzed by the assessment team to identify common themes.

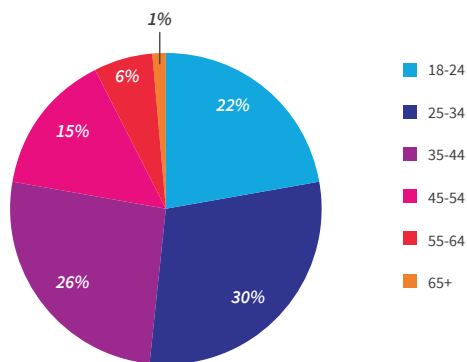
## Limitations

This research study utilized a convenience sample, not a random sample, and does not represent the population of the City of Los Angeles. Nor does this study include a comparison with cisgender people. As such, findings from this study cannot be generalizable.

# Participants: Demographic Information

The specific purpose of this assessment was to better understand the workplace experiences and related needs of the Trans and GNC community in Los Angeles, California.

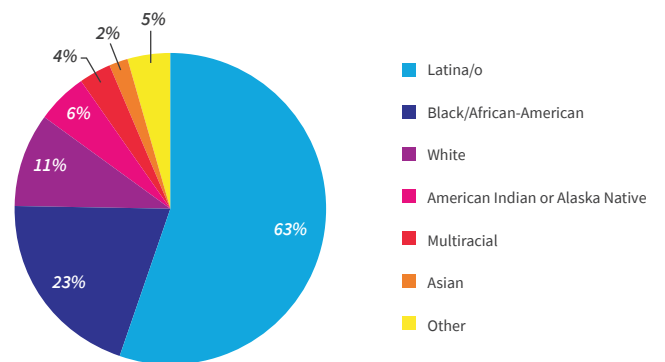
Age



The majority (56%) of the eighty-five focus group participants ranged in age from 25-44.

Approximately 1 in 5 (22%) were less than 25 years old.

Race/Ethnicity\*



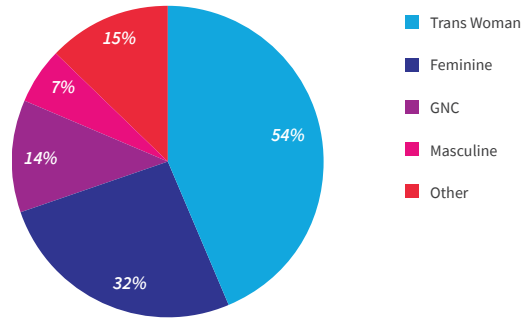
The majority (63%) of respondents identified as *Latino/a*, with 23% identifying as *Black/African-American*, 11% as *White*, 6% as *American Indian/Alaska Native*, 4% as *multiracial*, 2% as *Asian* and 5% as *Other*.

*Other* includes Filipina, Caribbean, Puerto Rican, Native American

\*Percentages totaling more than 100% are due to participants being able to choose more than one category.



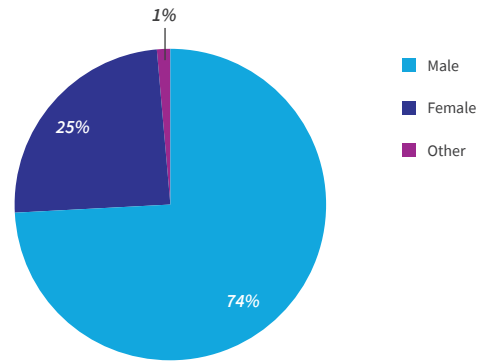
### Gender Identity\*



Eighty-six percent of the participants identified their gender as either *Trans Woman*, *Feminine*, or both; 14% identified as *gender nonconforming*; 7% as *Masculine*; and 15% as *Other*.

*Other* includes Non-binary, Transmasculine, Trans Man, Two-Spirit, Agender, Goddess, Gendercool

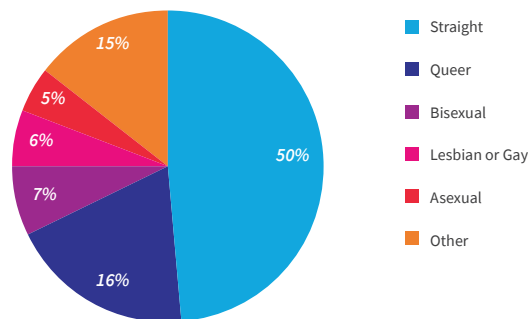
### Sex Assigned at Birth



The majority (56%) of the eighty-five focus group participants ranged in age from 25-44.

Approximately 1 in 5 (22%) were less than 25 years old.

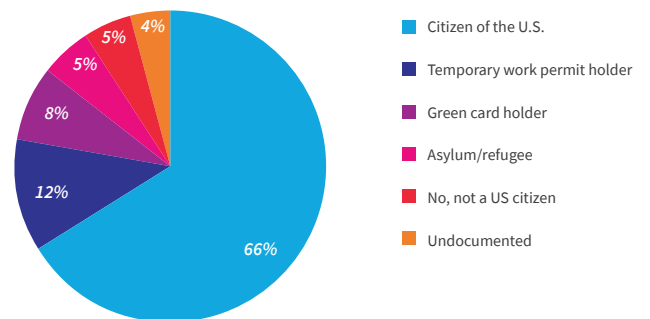
### Sexual Orientation



Half of the participants identified their sexual orientation as *straight*; and 16% identified as *Queer*. Participants also identified as *bisexual* (7%), *lesbian or gay* (6%), *asexual* (5%) or *Other* (15%).

*Other* includes Pansexual, Trans, Don't know I date straight.

### Citizenship/Immigration Status

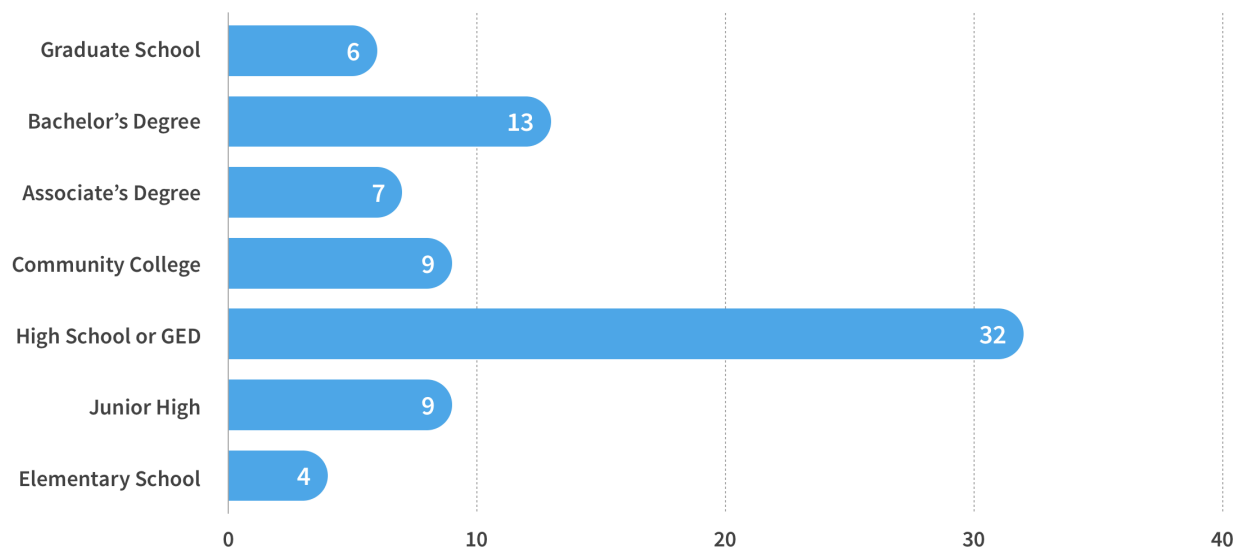


The majority (66%) identified as citizens of the United States, with 12% identifying as *Temporary work permit holders*; 8% as *Green card holders*; 5% as *Asylum/refugee*; 5% as *not a U.S. citizen*; and 4% as *Undocumented*.

\*Percentages totaling more than 100% are due to participants being able to choose more than one category.

In addition to basic demographic data, the survey also collected data related to **employment** including **educational attainment, housing status, and income.**

### Educational Attainment



Forty percent of the participants had a high school diploma or GED and 44% had minimally received some college education. Less than 1% held a graduate degree while 16% had not advanced beyond Junior High School.

40%

High school diploma  
or GED

16%

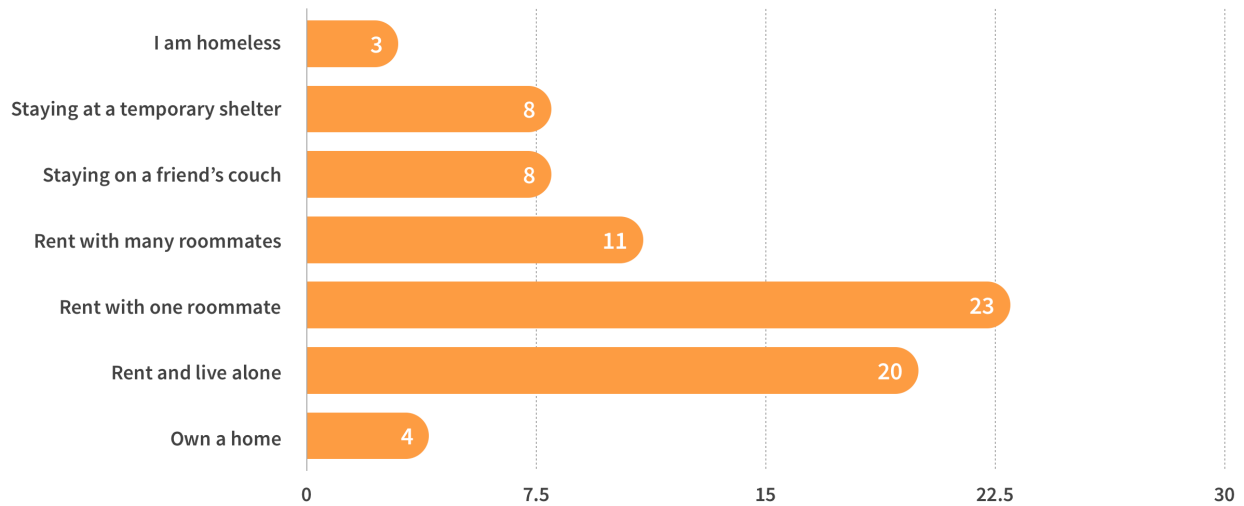
Junior High School  
or lower

>1%

Graduate degree



### Housing Status



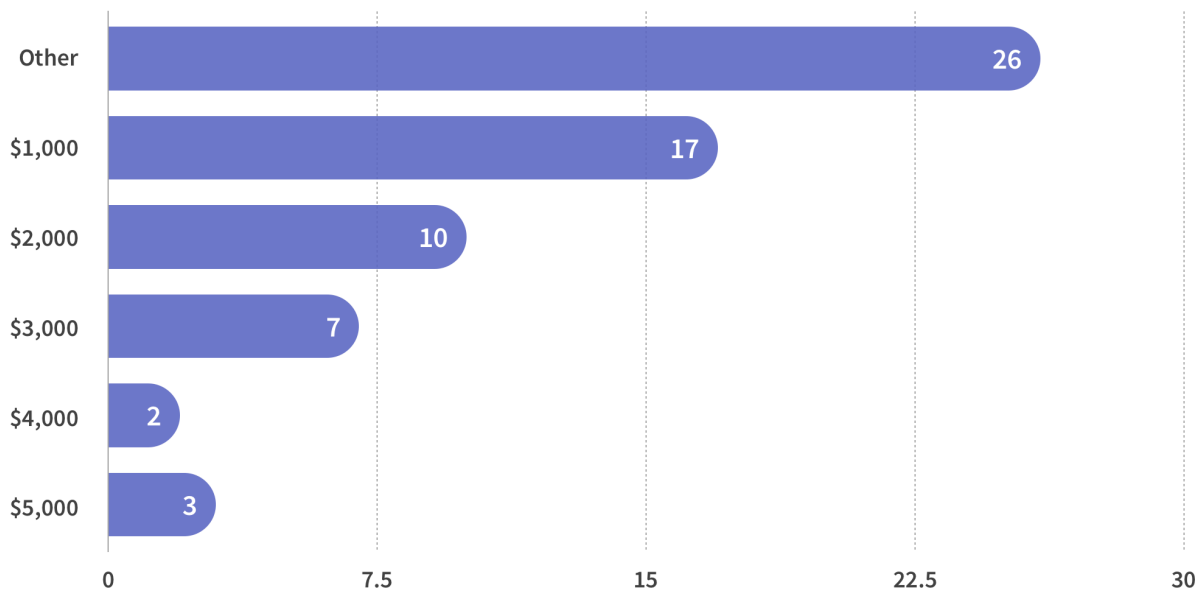
Seventy percent of participants rented a place to live and either lived alone or with one or more roommates. One in five participants were either homeless, staying at a temporary shelter, or *staying on a couch at a friend's place*; and less than one percent owned their own home.

**70%**  
 Renting, living alone  
 or with one or more  
 roommates

**1 in 5**  
 Have no permanent  
 residence

**>1%**  
 Own their own home

### Approximate Monthly Income



The average monthly income of participants was \$1,454, with 26% of participants reporting a monthly income of \$1,000, 15% reporting \$2,000, and 18% reporting \$3,000 or more. Twelve percent of participants reported a monthly income of \$0.

**\$1,454**

Average monthly income

**26%**

Monthly income of  
\$1,000

**12%**

Monthly income of  
\$0







# Findings

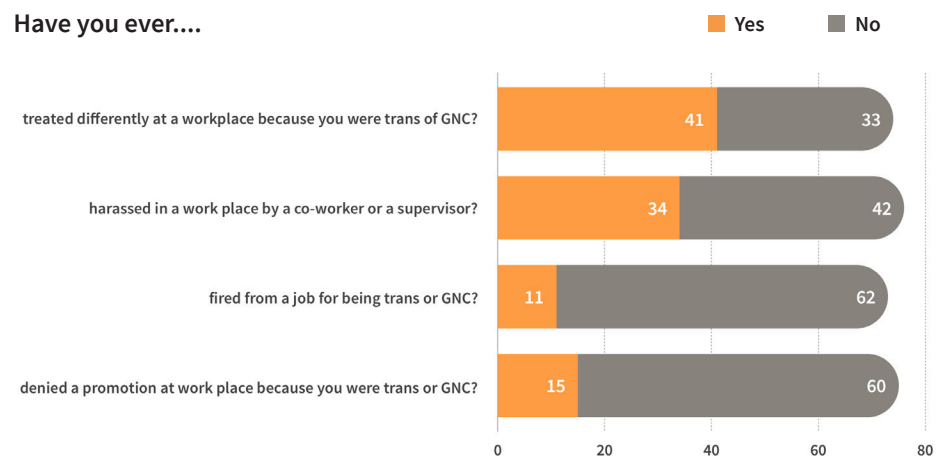
Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions on the survey about workplace discrimination and mistreatment.

## Workplace Discrimination Experiences

Fifty-five percent of respondents stated that they had been treated differently because they were Trans or GNC; 45% had been harassed by a co-worker or supervisor; 15% had been fired; and 20% had been denied a promotion because they were Trans or GNC. Notably, among those who experienced any kind of discrimination 53% reported that they did so “at least several times a week” or “at least more than once a day.”

The discrimination experienced by the participants took many forms from blatant assault to relentless micro-aggressions. Participants reported being called by the wrong name or gender, living in fear of being “outed,” and being refused job interviews. Participants described discrimination and/or harassment from supervisors, co-workers, and hiring personnel.

## Experiences with Workplace Discrimination





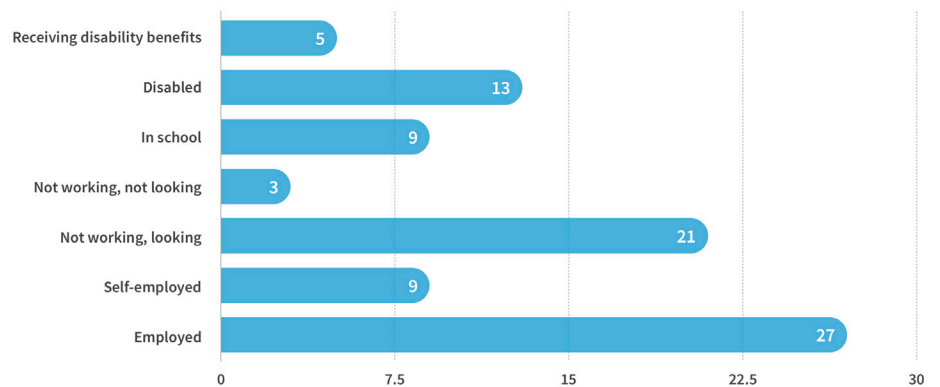
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## Employment Status and Future Employment Opportunities

Thirty-four percent of participants identified as *employed*; 11% as *self-employed*; 26% as “not working, but looking for work.” Other categories included “disabled” (16%); “in school” (11%); receiving disability benefits (less than one percent); and “not working but not needing to find a job” (less than one percent).

When participants were later asked if they currently had a job, 42% reported that they did and 58% reported that they did not. Those who were not currently employed listed a wide range of jobs/professions they would like to be pursuing. Participants were also asked to share any special skills or talents they would bring to their “dream jobs” in the future.

## Employment Status



42%

Currently *employed*

58%

Currently *unemployed*

11%

Identified as *self-employed*



"This co-worker after they found out I was Trans and intersex, she asked intrusive questions about my genitals and surgery. "

"Retail beauty shops told me they won't hire me because I'm not a ciswoman."

"I presented my resume to 5 potential employers and as long as the contact was over phone or internet, everything was great. I was given appointments for interviews but as soon as I walked into the offices, my interviews ended abruptly, and I was told they would call me. Never called!"

"The fear of being outed is a lot of pressure."



"They treat me like a man, not a Trans woman."

"I've seen people with less experience and less education been promoted with less time on the job. It was clear that they didn't want a GNC person working with people being the "face" of the work. There was an assumption that I would make people uncomfortable by being me - so people wouldn't want to work with us if they had to work with me. The more GNC I was the more they put me behind the scenes."

"There's no room for people like me."

"(I've) been at the receiving end of jokes - often sexual in nature. Constantly."



## What kind of job would you like to have?

Work With LGBTQ Youth ✍️  
Postal Worker ✉️ Fashion ✨ Artist ✨  
Warehouse Management ✨ ✨  
Factory Worker Security 🛡️ ✨  
Veterinarian 🐾 Own a Beauty Salon ✨  
Event Decoration ✨ ✨  
Cook ✨  
Waitress 🍴  
Chef 🍳 Music Therapist Makeup Artist  
Entrepreneur 🎧 Front Office  
Phlebotomy 🩸 Professional Dancer  
Tech 🖥️ Comedian 😊 Receptionist  
Work With Designer ✨ ✨  
Homeless People 🏠  
Public Speaker 🎤  
Medical 🏥 Family Therapy  
Field 📄 Counselor ✨ ✨  
History ✨  
Professor ✨  
Freedom ✨  
Fighter ✨  
Help The Trans Community



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# Please tell us what kind of skills you bring to your dream job

"I have a big imagination and can create or come up with great ideas. And I would put all my effort to do a great job. "

"Ambition."

"I would bring optimism and determination to any job."

"I am so passionate about what I'm learning I can't wait to finish school and show the world the skills I'm learning."

"I am a very patient type of person. I am a team player. I will go out of my way to assist a co-worker for the success of the whole team."

"I'm bilingual. I'm kind."

"I have great customer service skills."

"I work well with the public."

"I am a hard worker, give 100% to everything I do."

"Talent, dedication, charmingness."

"I would bring lots of personality, experience, and knowledge to my job."

"Great listening skills; research and writing skills; the ability to work with a variety of people."

"Creativity, organization and patience."

"I know how to program computers. "

"A little bit of everything. I learn quickly."

"Empathy; patience."

"I have office abilities. I am bilingual. I have a lot of computer knowledge."

"Knowledge of how to start my own business."

"Talent for conversation."

"Very creative. Lots of energy."



## Qualitative Themes from Focus Groups

Analysis of the qualitative data from the focus groups revealed themes related to six different categories: positive work experiences, negative work experiences, experiences with workforce development centers, dream jobs, suggestions to improve the workplace for Trans and GNC people, and resilience. These themes are highlighted below and outlined in Appendix B.

### Positive Work Experiences

**“It was liberating to be able to work in an office and be validated.”**

Most of the positive experiences in the workplace that participants discussed were related to the treatment that they received from their supervisors and coworkers. Support from those around them helped them navigate transphobia when they encountered it from others.

Other factors that contributed to their positive experiences included working in Trans affirming spaces, having meaningful jobs that allowed them to give back to the community in some way, and utilizing important skills obtained through engaging in sex work. Participants described Trans-affirming environments as places where policies related to nondiscrimination were upheld and abided by.



“I quit my job because I thought I wasn’t going to be accepted. I came back after transitioning and was shocked by the support I received from my coworkers and boss.”

“... it was all about your experiences and your skill set and “can you do this job” It wasn’t about what you looked like or who you were, it was if you could do the job or not”

“At meetings we shared names and pronouns. Every time someone went through onboarding, they covered the LGBTQ community. Once a month we learned about other organizations that are doing the same thing.”

“I transitioned at my job and it went well. My boss apologize for misgendering and asked how she could support me. She did her best and I appreciated it.”

“Everyone from the management down had to use my correct pronouns, if there was any problem I would tell HR and it would be an issue. Gladly I never had to do any of that because people were kind and respectful.”

“It was liberating to be able to work in an office and be validated.”



# Negative Work Experiences

“Trans people are systematically pushed into the streets.”

Participants shared a number of negative experiences they had encountered in the workplace – including those generated by supervisors/managers, co-workers, and customers/clients. Many participants expressed being mistreated because their identification documents did not match their physical appearance, being subjected to sexual harassment, and being “outed” without consent or support. Participants also discussed their inability to use the restroom aligned with their gender identity, being intentionally mis-gendered by co-workers and supervisors, having to dress in a certain way that allowed them to “pass” to avoid confrontation or judgement.

Because most workplaces do not have cultural competency trainings related to gender identity, some stated frustration with being the only source of knowledge for people they worked with and felt the burden of having to educate everyone on Trans-related matters. In addition, participants shared the discomfort of being asked intrusive questions regarding intimate body parts and details around their sex lives. Furthermore, once these occurrences took place, many

expressed frustration that there was not an accountability system in place where they could report the harassment that they were enduring. Harassment from gay men and queer people was a topic that was brought up more than once that discouraged participants from being themselves and coming out in the workplace. Lastly, participants discussed the difficulties of obtaining work to begin with. Some stated that they could not get work even though they were very well qualified for the positions they were seeking. Others stated that they had never had an opportunity to work, and that lack of experience has hindered their search for employment. Some reported that they were discouraged about finding mainstream employment after being involved in sex work due to fears of being rejected and shamed. Participants also reflected on the emotional toll that resulted from having to endure constant acts of overt and covert discrimination.



“There is no such thing as a safe space. It is so much work coming out as trans. I do free-lance work because I am not willing to find regular work. It’s very emotional.”

“A lot of trans people don’t even apply for jobs because they feel that it is a waste of time. They think they will not get the job anyway, so why bother.”

“Trans people are systematically pushed into the streets.”

“(There is) so much pressure on us, we can do the job and get it done but having the stress of having to deal with others and their perspectives on trans identity is the problem. They feel like they can ask us the most intrusive question they would never think to ask cis people. If we could find a way to not focus on that and just do the job; we’re not there to make friends, just go to work, do our job and not even focus on them. No matter how much we want to and try to do this, they creep back up into our business. I hate that we have to continue to sit under this microscope.”

“It feels like Russian roulette. It feels no matter what you do someone’s going to find out you’re ‘T’. I find that I reel myself in to maintain a level of distance from people for my own safety. I never want to be too out there, or draw attention to myself.”



# Experiences with Workforce Development Centers

“Why are you sending me to Tender Greens if I have a bachelor’s degree?”

Most participants had not had any experiences with the local workforce development centers. Unfortunately, among those who had experience with the centers, many expressed dissatisfaction. They shared that they were not helpful in finding a job and lacked understanding of the Transgender and GNC community. Some felt disempowered after attaining employment that did not align with their qualifications and work experience and issues with gender inconsistency with appearance and identification documents.





“The thing about those places is that the people that work there are not educated. They don’t know how to treat us. When I went the first time, I remember that the person at the front desk spoke to me the entire time as ‘he,’ ‘he,’ and ‘he’ until at one point, I got tired of it and I told her, ‘I’m going to tell you something with the utmost respect...I like to be referred to as her. What you are doing to me, calling me by ‘he’... are you looking at a man?’ She said ‘No, but the problem is that you haven’t changed your name and because of policy, I cannot call you by her because you have a man’s name and I am seeing a man here, so I have to call you by that.’”

“I feel like workforce centers are a waste of time. I don’t know if it’s because I’m trans but they make you feel like you’re guaranteed a job and then never call you back, and promise you this job but it feels like the door never really opens.”

“I think too often these workforce programs and services give us scraps and expect us to be happy with that, when they should be trying to empower us and get us the jobs that we want not just the jobs they think “we should be happy with”. At the end of the day it’s great to get a \$500 paycheck and pay rent but, I want to own my house.”

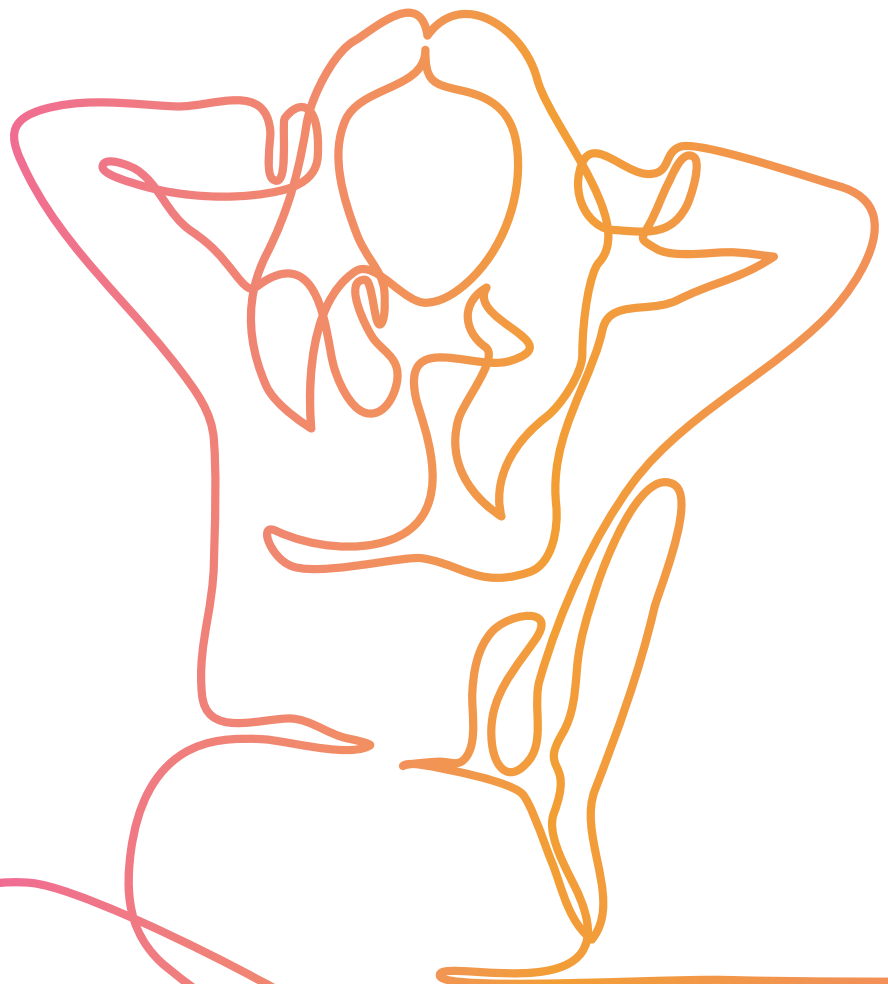
“My resume showed them I hadn’t been out of work for long and had all the skills they were teaching but in order for me to access those resources I was forced to take this competency skills training even though I already had those skills. I was laid off and they still made me go through that unnecessary training in order to access the aid.”



## Dream Job

“My dream job would be me working with people as myself - openly Trans! (that paid well)”

Participants shared what their dream jobs would be if they could work anywhere and not have to worry about being discriminated against or rejected at their place of work. Many participants shared their desire to work in Trans affirming spaces alongside other Trans and GNC individuals; to work within the LGBTQ community in any capacity; to work as a therapist or in the helping profession; or to be a small business owner or entrepreneur. Still others mentioned the desire to return to school. Many dream jobs involved working with others who shared the same experiences as the participants in this study.





"I would like to work in the LGBT community. I am an older girl and I would like to speak to younger girls so they won't have to wait 'til my age to turn their lives around and that they don't have to be insecure and that we do exist and you have to just be alright with that."

"If I had my dream job it wouldn't be associated with any paid work, I would prefer to live in a village like stateless society outside of any country that's able to house people, be accessible, and be self-sustaining. Capitalism is not designed for us."

"... anywhere I can help anybody that doesn't have the opportunities that I have and that are struggling. This opens so many doors because you can always help someone that doesn't have what you have."

*"I used to work the streets, and (now) being able to give back to my community is very rewarding. I was the first trans woman to work at the Youth Center so I started support group for other trans girls."*

"I would want a job teaching...I want to see more trans people working management instead of being the little people"

"... somewhere where I can work outside, maybe travel, make enough money to support myself and my family without having to stress about finances. Somewhere where I can relax, be myself and not worry about people's questions and just be comfortable and be safe."



# Suggestions for How to Improve the Workplace

“I need an employer that will actually listen to you, not just talk the talk but walk the walk too.”

Participants were asked to share their suggestions for making the workplace more Trans-affirming. Many focused on the need for employers to establish guidelines on what to do if one is being discriminated against and to provide more education for employees on how to work with the Trans and GNC community more effectively. Participants believed that many of the workplaces that they have been in have not been welcoming of their identities and therefore have ruined their work experience and even hindered their ability to be self-sufficient.

In addition, some offered suggestions to improve workforce development centers such as offering more Trans affirming spaces for place of employment. Furthermore, others felt it was also important to offer more resources for the Transgender and gender non-conforming community such as teaching about the name change process, application procedure, and bathroom use.





“I would like to see organizations put money into already affirming environment or places that would be receptive to the trans community. I think that would be better than trying to train people that don’t know anything about our community.”

“Funds for startups that way people can make their own businesses since people will continue to be disrespectful. I know an organization that works with local banks to give money to communities. It’s an economic initiative where banks make money accessible. We need that for our community.”

“It would be nice to have guidelines in place to know what to do if something happens and report it. I get mis-gendered and there is no way of reporting that. It wouldn’t change the behavior so I didn’t see the point.”

“(In addition to work skills), Trans people need housing, food, clothes, basic needs and lots of people don’t have access to those things.”

“We need to be empowered to learn how to make our own money.”

“In the workforce, you need competent people to help you transfer your advocacy skills to job skills.”



# Resilience

“I want to help trans women and let them know **we got this.**”

Although participants shared many experiences of systematic oppression and discrimination, they also frequently expressed self-determination, strength, and resilience. As was highlighted above, it was remarkable and uplifting to see how many respondents felt the desire to give back to the community, especially given the mistreatment they had endured.









# Recommendations

## 1 Understand and respond to the specific educational and workforce preparation needs of Trans & GNC individuals

Generally speaking, there is great diversity among Trans and GNC individuals with respect to their backgrounds and their historical access to educational and workplace opportunities. So too, is there great diversity with respect to their immediate educational and employment needs. Many Trans and GNC people who have had to resort to the underground economy to survive for a significant length of time may need more intensive services to address lack of qualifying experience for employment. This is generally found among Transwomen of color who are in the 35 to 55 year old age bracket.

## 2 Create a pipeline for Trans and GNC individuals to become entrepreneurs

Because so many Trans and GNC individuals are systematically excluded from traditional workplaces, it is important to create specific training and internship opportunities that would allow them to pursue a career outside of the mainstream. Many who participated in this assessment vocalized a desire to start their own business and/or to create workplace environments that are free from harassment. Community based organizations (CBOs) that have demonstrated culturally competency working with Trans and GNC communities, should be tapped to develop or expand upon programs and services aimed to teach entrepreneurship skills and open entrepreneurial opportunities for Trans and GNC people.



### 3 Invest in CBOs that address the work force readiness needs of Trans and GNC individuals

Due to disparities with respect to employment opportunities, low levels of education and, consequently the inability to obtain jobs, funders need to allocate monetary resources to provide specific training and support for the Trans and GNC community. This includes training on professional development skills (e.g. interviewing, resume preparation, workplace presentation and communication skills), as well as the provision of basic needs (transportation, professional clothing, etc.). To do so, utilizing organizations that have demonstrated competency in working specifically with Trans and GNC individuals is critical. Creating funding opportunities such as the VUP (vulnerable populations) initiative from the City of Los Angeles' Workforce Investment Board will create more opportunities for Trans and GNC to prepare for workplace opportunities.

### 4 Invest in CBOs to develop a workplace training center specifically for current or former Trans/GNC sex-workers

Because of the compounded stigma and discrimination that Trans/GNC sex-workers face, it is essential to provide a safe space for them to identify and address their workplace readiness needs. Such training should be strength-based and client-centered and include the valuation and transferability of skills developed as sex-workers.

### 5 Enforce recent legislation to ready the workplace for Trans/GNC employees

In 2017 Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 396, mandating employers with 50 or more employees to provide sexual harassment and gender identity training for all . Educating employers about this legislation and other workplace readiness measures will help to ensure a safer workplace for Trans and GNC individuals. Now that the law has passed, it's imperative that the law is enforced and that those who deliver the training have demonstrated competency with respect to Trans and GNC individuals.



## 6 Improve Workforce Development Centers (WDCs)

Mandate the following actions to ensure that WDCs better address the needs of Trans and GNC individuals.

- a. All entities that receive funding from EDD through the City of LA must train their staff on Trans and GNC competency. Develop a "Trans and GNC Competency" training certification to do so.
- b. Designate resources to have a Trans/GNC-specific WDC.
- c. Conduct further analysis of workforce development centers to identify gaps and develop specific recommendation for improvement.

## 7 Convene a diverse panel of Trans and GNC individuals and representatives from Trans-led CBOs to develop standards

Related to these workplace readiness recommendations herein. The assessment reflected in this report is the first Los Angeles workplace needs assessment of Trans and GNC individuals. The findings, however, are meaningless if they are not operationalized. It is not enough to *understand* the workplace needs of the Trans and GNC community, those needs must be addressed with meaningful *action*.

## 8 Convene a diverse panel of Trans and GNC individuals and representatives from Trans-led CBOs to strengthen the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board's Local Plan (2017-2020)

To be more Trans/GNC inclusive. The plan outlines the strategies to be taken to prepare the workforce and to strengthen career pathways and system-level collaborations. An analysis of this report reveals specific steps to be taken to be more inclusive of and relevant to Trans and GNC individuals. For example, when describing a "focus on the reentry population" the report does not note the specific barriers that the Trans/GNC population faces with respect to incarceration and reentry. Similarly, the "ensuring gender equity" narrative does not include statistics pertaining to Trans or GNC individuals, only cisgender "women" and "men."



# Conclusion and Call to Action

“Society is more comfortable controlling us rather than us leading the charge.”

Article 23.1 of the declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.”<sup>5</sup> Article 23.2 states that “Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.” Unfortunately, in 2018, Trans and GNC individuals across the country continue to be greatly impacted by systemic and pervasive workplace discrimination. Desiring to change this, leadership of The City of Los Angeles’ Workforce Investment Board decided that it was important to capture the workplace experiences of the local Trans and GNC community, resulting in the assessment described in this report. Assessment findings suggest that community members severely struggle with obtaining and maintaining employment due to a confluence of factors anchored in the wide-spread and life-long oppression of Trans and GNC people. As such, these factors are best understood and best addressed from a social justice perspective.

Participants in this study shared both their positive and negative

experiences in the workplace, as well as their experiences with workplace development centers. They also shared their dreams for the future and their ideas for improving the workplace environment for themselves and their community. This assessment underscores that, despite multiple barriers, Trans and GNC individuals, continue to demonstrate strength, survival and resilience. It also underscores that there is still much to do to improve the workplace experiences of the Trans and GNC community in the City of Los Angeles and beyond. Thankfully, there is some momentum to build upon. The state of California, for example, has recently made significant strides in addressing workplace issues with the 2017 Transgender Work Opportunity Act, which mandates training on recognizing and responding to transgender sexual harassment in the workplace. This is meaningful legislation, but it is not enough.

We are at a critical moment where elected officials and other stakeholders have to be held accountable with respect to supporting Trans and GNC people in the workplace. It

<sup>5</sup><http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>



## The TransLatin@ Coalition remains committed our vision - to provide education, opportunities and resources in order to empower Trans Leaders.

is imperative that this assessment and this report propel all stakeholders into action. It is imperative that elected officials are intentional in their efforts to operationalize the recommendations found herein. The Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and all elected officials must mandate workforce development agencies and departments to improve their practices with respect to the treatment of Trans and GNC clients. It is also imperative that our elected officials support and allocate resources to community based organizations that are implementing Trans and GNC workforce development programs. Our elected officials need to align with the social justice principles reflected in both the City of Los Angeles, and in local community-based efforts.

The TransLatin@ Coalition remains committed our vision - to provide education, opportunities and resources in order to empower Trans Leaders. It is antithetical to this vision that members of the Trans and GNC community feel that our

“Society is more comfortable controlling us rather than us leading the charge.” It is our collective responsibility to invest in, empower and support Trans and GNC people in eliminating discriminatory practices in the workplace. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that members of the community are leading the charge when it comes to changing the workplace, so that instead of feeling controlled, they feel as though they are rightful agents of change.



# Appendices

## Appendix A Focus Group Questions

### **1. What has been the best job that you have had since living your life as a Trans or gender non-conforming person.**

- a. What do you (or did you) like about it?
- b. What kind of job was it or is it?
- c. Salary, benefits?
- d. Being out as Trans?
- e. Sensitive boss?
- f. Good treatment from Co-workers, boss, clients/customers?
- g. What you do there, or did?
- h. Location?
- i. Was there anything you do not or didn't like about it?
- j. Are you still there now?

### **2. What is the worst job that you have ever had or you still have, since living your life as Trans or gender nonconforming person?**

- a. What didn't you like (or maybe still don't like) about the job?
- b. What kind of job was it or is it?
- c. Salary, benefits?
- d. Being out as Trans?
- e. Horrible boss?
- f. Awful treatment from Co-workers, boss, clients/customers?
- g. What you do there, or did?
- h. Location?
- i. If there was anything you DO or DID like about this job, what was it?
- j. Are you still there now?

### **3. Have you ever tried to use one of LA's Workforce Development Centers?**

- a. If yes, what happened?
- b. Did you feel respected and supported by the staff? If not, why not?
- c. Did you end up getting a job where you stayed at for a while? If not, why not?



d. Did you receive any type of training or support to get the job that you wanted?

e. Anything else that you would like to share about your experience at the work force center?

f. How did you learn about the work force center?

g. Where was it? (what part of the city?)

h. If you never tried to use one of LA's Workforce Centers, why not?

**4. Have you ever used career training or skills development programs to get the job that you want (or to work towards that job)? Tell us about that those experiences.**

a. What worked for you? (if so, how was your experience?)

b. What did not work for you? (what do you think would have been better?)

c. Anything else that you want to share?

**5. Now, let's imagine a job that you would really like to have.**

a. What would be your dream job?

b. What makes it hard for you to get that job?

c. What kind of support you think you need in order for you to get the job that you want?

**6. Is there anything else that you would like to add to our discussion?**



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This report was funded through the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board in partnership with The TransLatin@ Coalition, Special Service for Groups and the California State University Northridge.

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