

TRANS COMMUNITIES & UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

FACT SHEET

Universal Basic Income (UBI) programs will be powerful tools to support the health and wellbeing of transgender communities. UBI projects can provide low-income transgender people the means to afford basics such as housing, groceries, and utilities to create a minimal level of financial security.

Poverty in Transgender Communities

Transgender and gender non-conforming people are more likely to live in poverty than cisgender people. [Three in ten \(29%\) transgender](#) people live in poverty, and transgender people are [4x more likely to earn less than \\$10,000 a year](#) than the general population.

Income gaps are even greater for trans people who are also members of other marginalized communities, including people of color, immigrants, and those who are justice-involved. [38% of Black trans adults live in poverty](#), as do 48% of Hispanic trans adults.

Employment Gaps

Unemployment, underemployment, & discriminatory barriers to career advancement can severely affect the earnings of trans workers. [Nearly half \(48%\) of transgender employees](#) reported being fired or not hired based on their LGBT status and 45% report harassment and hostile treatment on the job from supervisors and coworkers.

Difficulties generating income through employment in the formal economy leads many trans and gender nonconforming people to engage in underground economies. [One in five trans adults report having done work that is currently criminalized](#) at some point in their lives (20%)—including 9% who report having done so in the past year—in order to generate income to support themselves and their families.

Food Insecurity

During the pandemic, [one in five transgender adults experienced food insufficiency](#) (20%), 2.5x more often than for cisgender adults (8%). Transgender people of color were even more likely to experience food insecurity (28%). Despite greater need, transgender adults were less likely receive public food assistance.

Only 29% of transgender adults eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, aka “food stamps”) were enrolled, compared to 39% of cisgender adults.

Housing Insecurity

Trans people are more likely to experience homelessness and housing insecurity. In 2020, [8% of transgender reported they had been homeless](#) in the prior year. Nearly [one third \(30%\) of trans people say they have experienced homelessness at some point](#) during their lives. Over a [third of transgender youth \(38%\) report experiencing homelessness](#) or housing insecurity.

Effects on Health & Wellbeing

Lack of access to financial means and tools contributes to negative health outcomes for trans and gender nonconforming adults. [More than a third \(37%\) of transgender Californians rely on Medi-Cal or other public insurance](#) for healthcare, as compared to only a fifth (21%) of cisgender Californians. One in three trans Californians reported delaying or skipping needed healthcare, over 2x more often than cisgender Californians (14%).

The Case for a Universal Basic Income

UBI programs have recently attracted new support from state and local governments. A Universal Basic Income program is a government program in which individuals receive a set amount of money regularly. The goals of UBI include alleviating poverty and enabling individuals to meet basic household needs such as food, housing, and clothing.

In California, newly proposed programs include projects in Palm Springs and San Francisco to [provide UBI to low-income transgender individuals](#). These programs will help address the disproportionate levels of poverty, food insecurity, and housing insecurity for transgender communities, and support the health and wellbeing of transgender people by empowering them to create a basic level of financial security for themselves and their families.