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Master of Public Administration

May 17, 2007

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## Trans Count<sup>©</sup> Executive Summary\*

Census data equips policy makers and administrators of public agencies, non-profits, and for-profit organizations with vital population information. This data gets used in determining customer and user groups, where to allocate services, and the legal or social validity of any given population. In 2000, the United States Census counted same-sex households for the first time. In addition, a recent study reports that over 12% of Seattle's population identifies as gay or lesbian (*Seattle Times*, 2006). This report validates gays and lesbians, and our families.

The same validation has not been given to transgender people. To our knowledge, no formal counts have been conducted in the United States to quantify the number of transgender people living in the country or in a particular geographic area. As a result, we only have guesses as to the number of transgender people actually live in Washington State. As members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community, we are excited to have the opportunity to present our initial outcomes from Trans Count 2007.

### MAJOR FINDINGS:

- **182 survey respondents**
- **24% unemployment for survey respondents**
- **Median income of \$30,000**
- **7.7% of survey respondents identified with two or more races**
- **Interviewees noted healthcare and responsive, culturally competent services as a major priority**

**TRANSGENDER** . . . *Transgender* is an umbrella term that includes those who experience incongruity between their birth sex and gender identity; the term is also used to include a wide range of self-chosen gender identities” (Sullivan, 2006).

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## Introduction ...

### TRANSGENDER PEOPLE COUNT

In 2006, sexual orientation was added to Washington State's civil rights statute, the Washington Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60). The addition prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender

expression/ identity in employment, housing, public accommodation, credit, lending, and insurance.

These new protections present a tangible challenge to social service providers, policy makers, and advocacy groups because there is limited information about the prevalence of transgenderism. This broad legal definition creates the opportunity and impetus for policy makers and others to speculate as to who or how many transgender people live in Washington State.

As with the passing of any state law or policy, the work of promulgating social policy does not stop at the legislative level. It requires the additional work of administering the policy through applicable government agencies, service organizations, and private businesses. Having a more accurate count will help policy makers, advocacy groups, and the transgender community know where to best allocate resources.

Advocacy groups trying to address the needs of this new protected class, specifically people within the transgender umbrella, require the following: a clear definition and understanding of who may identify as transgender; a reasonable approximation of the population size; and a forecast of potential policy and administrative needs and or impacts.

The purpose and intent of this project is to provide the following:

- A commonly understood (not legal) definition of "transgender" for Washington State;
- Create a statewide count of Washingtonians who self-identify as transgender;
- Examine and provide information about potential areas of policy and administrative impacts to advocacy groups, government agencies, social service organizations, and private businesses.

This report provides both quantitative and qualitative outcomes of Trans Count from March 12, 2007 through April 14, 2007. Additionally, we provide a brief examination of our research methodologies, including the contextual cultural, theoretical, and politically infused statistical models used in framing gender variance into a quantifiable and credible transgender count.

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The report concludes with suggestions for additional research into the Washington State transgender population that would benefit advocacy groups and public agencies that provide services to Washington State transgender residents. Finally, we provide suggestions for applying this analytical research as a model for other advocacy groups interested in performing a similar count.

The research was performed using both a quantitative format for the actual transgender population count and a qualitative inquiry to investigate some potential trends or issues missing from a count. The quantitative portion of the research was performed by creating and administering a survey (See Appendix A).



Using the U.S. Census Bureau demographic section as a template, we created a survey with the target population as people who live in Washington State (one month or longer on date of survey completion) and who self-identify with the umbrella term of “transgender.”

**Defining Transgender . . .** Based on information from an extensive literature review, we defined transgender as including one or more of the following identities:

- Transsexual
- Intersexual
- Crossdresser
- Drag Queen or King
- Two Spirit or 2
- Male to Female
- Female to Male
- Gender Queer
- Gender Non-Conforming

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**How the Survey Worked . . .**The Trans Count survey was created using the web-based program on Survey Monkey that generated the quantitative results in Excel. The purpose of using Excel for statistical data output is to allow the flexibility to submit our survey findings to our transgender community participant organizations. Survey participation was carried out through social marketing techniques using a “snowball” style of sampling that included extensive outreach to LGBT service organizations, and individuals in the LGBT community statewide. Additionally, a website was created to generate more interest and access to the project.

A total of 182 participants completed the survey. Based on survey results, it appears that transgender people are willing to identify in a “count” study if certain parameters are in place to ensure emotional safety and anonymity.

**What Interview Participants Said . . .**For the qualitative portion of the study, we interviewed people known to work with or be leaders in the transgender community. Individuals were contacted via email or phone to solicit participation as an interview participant. Nine participants were interviewed about their thoughts on transgender issues in Washington State (See Appendix A).

Analyzing the qualitative data required combining the results of the separately conducted phone interviews and analyzing the data to examine possible service gaps and or major issues facing the transgender community. Examples of these service gaps included: access to mental and physical health care, employment, and knowledge of state anti-discrimination laws.

Based on survey results, we looked for possible service gaps and major issues that might be impacting the transgender community. Examples of these possible service gaps included: access to mental and physical health care, employment, and access to Internet resources.

**“I often think the trans community is big and then I often think it is bigger than I think it is. Then I meet more people and realize it is even bigger than I imagined. I would say it’s at least in the thousands, two to four thousand.”**  
**- Interview Participant**

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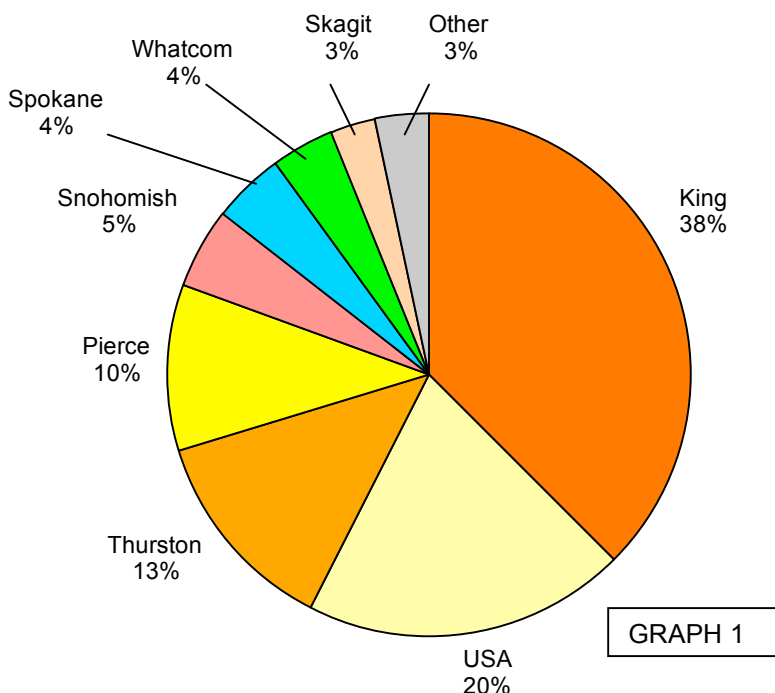
**COMMON THEMES: Healthcare + Discrimination + Employment + GLBT**

The themes found in the interviews were compared to previous literature and illuminate areas of lacking literature found during our background research. Additional literature searches may be undertaken to clarify areas of knowledge or new and related research topic.

Interview participants had a wide range of responses when asked about the size of Washington’s transgender population. One person responded that the number could be in the range of 400-600 people; another person thought that as much as fifteen percent of Washington’s population might be transgender. Regardless of the actual number, people contemplated this question with great enthusiasm.

**AND THE SURVEY SAYS :**

**Geographic Distribution Across Washington State . . .** Surprisingly, there were no respondents from Clark County, considering the large urban centers of Vancouver, WA and Portland, OR. Surveys for this research were distributed to LGBT organizations, and community colleges and four-year colleges and universities throughout Washington State that had student LGBT organizations. The lower ratio of LGBT organizations and schools east of the Cascade Mountains, in combination with an overall higher conservative voting population could account for the lower response rates from Eastern Washington.



Knowing the distribution of transgender individuals across Washington State builds a basic understanding of where services for transgender people should be located. The following chart illustrates a strong prevalence of transgender people living in the Greater Puget Sound Area. The following counties had represented 1% or less of responses: Kitsap, Jefferson, Chelan, Asotin, and Mason Counties.

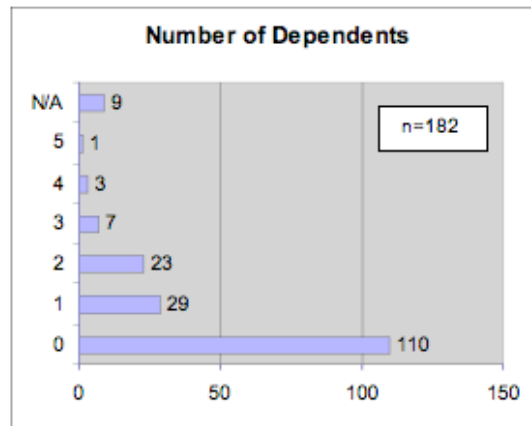
GRAPH 1

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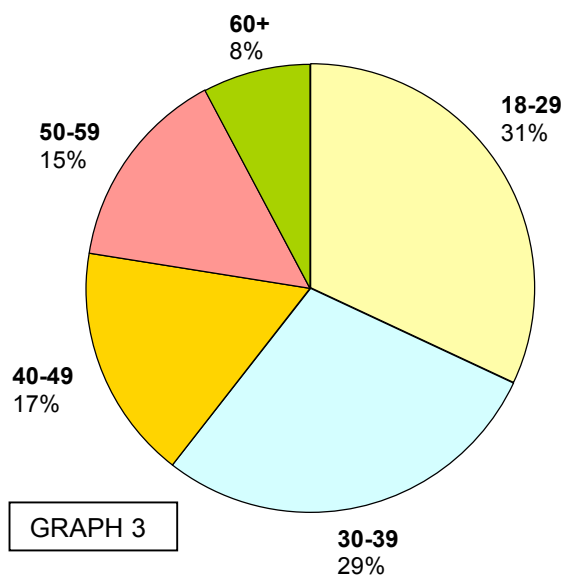
**Income . . .** The median income for transgender respondents was \$30,000 compared to Washington State median income of \$58,000.<sup>1</sup> The range of incomes varied from earning \$0 to \$325,000. Within this wide range, an additional question was asked regarding the number of people an individual provided for financially. A median income of \$30,000 might be acceptable if that were enough money for one person to maintain a standard of living.

However, since over 75% of respondents were from the Greater Puget Sound Area, a regional comparison of median incomes is appropriate. Comparatively, the lowest median income around the Puget Sound is \$42,800 in Clallam County illustrating the difference in median income for transgender people of approximately \$12,000. Qualitative interviews with members of the transgender community and community service providers iterated the need for medical insurance. Considering the high costs of medical treatment for transgender people, the median income of survey respondents, and the generally high cost of living of the Greater Puget Sound Area, transgender people are at a disadvantage when it comes to providing for their unique health care needs.

The need for equal health care coverage becomes more important when additional financial responsibilities are considered. The above chart shows the number of dependents provided for by respondents. Providing for one’s own medical needs competes with the needs of another. Providing health care benefits to transgender people shows an understanding of the link between healthy citizens and healthy society.



GRAPH 2



GRAPH 3

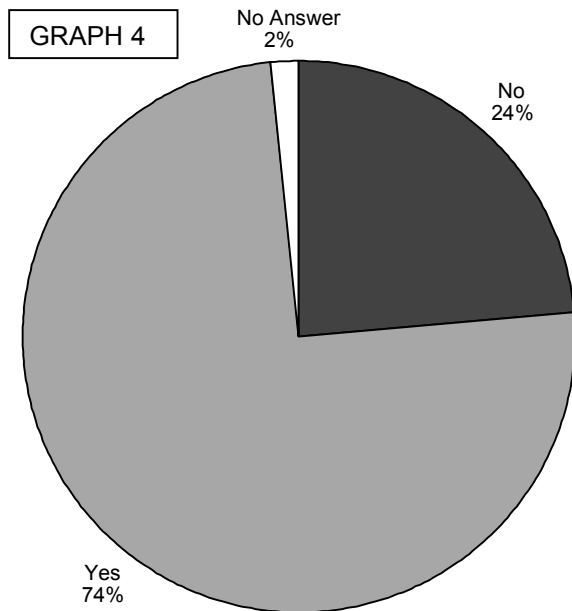
**Age Distribution . . .** Sixty percent of survey respondents reported being age 39 and under, with almost a third of total respondents identifying as 29 and under. The graph to the left shows the distribution of age for transgender persons. The mean age for all respondents was 38 with a median of 35. When analyzing how age related to self identity, the findings for individuals identifying as gender queer and gender non-conforming yielded some

<sup>1</sup> Composite taken from the 2005 American Community Survey, and the Washington State Office of Financial Management 2006 projections.

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interesting results. We found that 57 individuals or 31% of respondents identified as gender queer or gender non conforming. The age spread of individuals in this subgroup ranges from 19 to 57 years old. The mean age of respondents in this subgroup is nearly 31, with a matching median of 31. This shows that respondents that identify as gender queer and gender non conforming tend to represent the younger transgender respondents in this research. Further research can be used to determine correlations between different variables.

**Employment . . .** The graph below illustrates the unemployment rates of survey participants. Unemployment for transgender individuals seems unusually high, but is may be understandable within the context of a marginalized population. Outwardly prohibited by Washington’s Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), transgender people often face the reality of institutionalized forms of discrimination in the form of barriers to employment. Transgender people may find themselves unemployed because of issues that arise during the initial employment contact process.



During the job interview process many employers have to reconcile names on a resume that may or may not match up with the physical representations that are preconceived. Transgender people that do not mimic socialized gender types in their physical appearance are often the victims of discrimination, either by not being hired or settling for a job that is below their skill sets. Ending discrimination based on "gender and gender expression" is the challenge for transgender people and their allies in order to achieve employment parity with other Washington residents.

Considering that the Trans Count survey was distributed during the winter, a high time for unemployment, none of the employment data was seasonally adjusted. Additionally, respondents were not asked what industry they work in or if they were retired or on disability or other leave from their place of employment. Using a cross comparison with Washington State employment statistics for the first quarter of 2007, the average unemployment rate for the entire state was 4.8 percent.

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**Race and Hispanic Origin . . .**The racial/ethnic distribution of transgender individuals in this study parallels similar trends of racial/ethnic distribution in Washington State. Using demographic data from Washington State as a comparison, the following table depicts the similarities between the two populations.

| Race and Hispanic Origin       | Trans Count |               | Washington*      |               |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 1           | 0.5%          | 92,298           | 1.4%          |
| Asian/Pacific Islander**       | 5           | 2.7%          | 431,760          | 6.8%          |
| Black                          | 1           | 0.5%          | 214,119          | 3.4%          |
| White                          | 153         | 84.1%         | 4,894,260        | 76.8%         |
| Hispanic                       | 5           | 2.7%          | 565,377          | 8.9%          |
| Two or More                    | 14          | 7.7%          | 177,786          | 2.8%          |
| No Answer                      | 3           | 1.6%          | N/A              | N/A           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>182</b>  | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,375,600</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

\*Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2006 population estimates  
 .\*\*Asian/Pacific Islander categories combined to correspond with OFM categories.

GRAPH 5

**Next Steps . . .** In the final capstone class, we will present the results of Trans Count in actual number and spatial population distribution via Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping by county for Washington State.

We will include in this data voting district and transgender service providers in those area where known. Additionally, we will discuss our analysis of our qualitative research regarding identifiable issues and service needs important to the Transgender population in Washington State.

Local representatives of LGBT organizations will be specifically invited to our Capstone presentation including the National Gay-Lesbian Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, and Lambda Legal. National advocacy groups will be provided with a toolkit for Trans Count<sup>©</sup> replication in other areas of the country.

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**APPENDIX A**

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**ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you identify with the umbrella term of transgender?

For the purposes of this study, transgender includes one or more of the following identities: Transgender; Transsexual; Intersexual; Cross Dresser; Drag Queen/King; Male to Female (MtF); Female to Male (FtM); Gender Non-Conforming; or Two-Spirit.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

2. If so, how do you identify? Please check all that apply.

\_\_\_\_\_ Transgender                      \_\_\_\_\_ Transsexual                      \_\_\_\_\_ Intersexual  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Cross-Dresser                      \_\_\_\_\_ Drag Queen/King                      \_\_\_\_\_ Male to Female or MtF  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Female to Male or FtM                      \_\_\_\_\_ Two-Spirit or 2                      \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Queer  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Non-Conforming                      \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Identities \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your age in years?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What county do you live in?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you work in the same county that you live in?

\_\_\_\_\_

If YES, skip to question 7.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

6. If No, please tell us what county you work in.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How long have you lived in Washington State?

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 1 month                      \_\_\_\_\_ 1-11                      \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years                      \_\_\_\_\_ +5 Years

8. Are you currently employed?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

9. How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ American Indian or Alaska Native  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Asian  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Black or African-American  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic or Latino/a  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Two or more races

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\_\_\_\_\_Additional race/ethnicity not listed (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is the best estimate of your 2006 net household income? Include any income from wages, tips, compensation, Social Security, public assistance, rental property income, unemployment benefits, or other sources. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Not including yourself, how many people depended on you for more than half of their financial support in 2006? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Where are you currently filling this survey out?

- \_\_\_\_\_ My home
- \_\_\_\_\_ My work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Community resource center
- \_\_\_\_\_ LGBT center
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library
- \_\_\_\_\_ Friend's house
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

In what capacity do you work<sup>1</sup> with the transgender community?

Why do you believe your work is important?

What is your sense of the size of Washington's transgender community?

What is the basis of your population estimate?

What do you think are the top issues and/ or service gaps facing Washington's transgender population today?

Thank you for your time, is there anything else you would like to add?

\_\_\_\_\_

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