

## **14 Free Resources for LGBTQIA+ Youth in New Jersey**

*From healthcare to housing, a variety of resources are available to help LGBTQIA+ youth facing unique challenges*

**TRENTON, N.J.** – In honor of Pride Month and in acknowledgment of the unique challenges young people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community face, the NJ Department of Children and Families today highlighted a list of helpful resources available to LGBTQIA+ youth in New Jersey.

New Jersey has long distinguished itself as a welcoming state for people in the LGBTQIA+ community. Earlier this year, Governor Phil Murphy signed an order to make the State [a safe haven](#) for individuals seeking gender-affirming healthcare services, and since 2019, [residents have been permitted to amend their birth certificates](#) to reflect their gender identity.

Over the past two years, many states have adopted new laws that [strip away the rights of non-binary and trans youth](#). While New Jersey offers legal protections for our LGBTQIA+ youth, some young people can face challenges accessing the mental and physical healthcare, housing, and other assistance they need if they do not have access to a dependable support system. This is especially true for [youth of color](#).

[A recent CDC study](#) found that almost half of LGBQ+\* students seriously considered attempting suicide, and nearly 3 in 4 reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. [Data](#) also shows that youth who are also members of another minority group experienced an even higher risk of suicide.

“These teens are often facing incredible familial or societal pressures, creating circumstances that can quickly become overwhelming,” DCF Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer said. “The sad reality is that some teens and young adults are forced to leave home when they ‘come out,’ putting them at risk of sex trafficking, exploitation, addiction, and homelessness. LGBTQIA-friendly group homes, shelters and emergency services are vital resources for this often-vulnerable population.”

There are many organizations, initiatives, and hotlines in New Jersey that offer quality support to LGBTQIA+ individuals. While the following list is not comprehensive, DCF has compiled a list of several of these resources to serve as a starting place for LGBTQIA+ youth who are looking for help.

*\*Data on transgender youth was not available in CDC survey*

### **Mentoring & Support groups**

#### [PRIDE Center](#)

If you want some advice or guidance from an adult whose journey may be similar to yours, the NJ PRIDE center offers mentorship opportunities. Get paired with a trained mentor and work together to meet your goals.

#### [Kaleidoscope](#)

Sometimes you just need to talk to someone going through the same thing you are. Kaleidoscope offers in-person and virtual monthly meetings for youth and young adults throughout New Jersey. The group's goal is to empower LGBTQIA+ teens (and allies) to lead healthy, productive lives.

### [HiTOPS](#)

HiTOPS is a nonprofit organization that provides inclusive and youth-informed LGBTQ support for young people throughout New Jersey. Health services and group support resources are available for people ages 13 - 26. HiTOPS developed two support groups called First & Third and PFLAG for LGBTQ youth and their loved ones.

## Healthcare

### [Garden State Equality's Affirming Healthcare Map](#)

The nonprofit Garden State Equality compiled a healthcare directory of doctors and providers who identified themselves as LGBTQIA-friendly. Garden State Equality also provides [inclusivity training](#) and resources to schools.

### [North Jersey Community Research Initiative](#)

NJCI offers primary care, infectious disease care and gender affirmative hormonal treatment, as well as HIV treatment and prevention. They view healthcare holistically and include mental health, substance use treatment, and case management services, too.

### [Project WOW Youth Center](#)

For young people ages 14-24, Project WOW is a safe space to build community, gain leadership skills and access relevant sexual health, mental health, and substance use services. They offer free rapid HIV testing, one-on-one counseling, safe sex kits, and more.

## Hotlines

### [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#)

The new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 and nationwide. If you are considering suicide or you are in crisis, call or text 988. Its website [features additional resources](#) and information for LGBTQIA+ residents.

### [2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline](#)

This 24/7 helpline serves all NJ youth and young adults in New Jersey. Youth who call are assisted with their daily life challenges by professional staff and trained volunteers. Anonymity and confidentiality are assured except in life-threatening situations. Call or text 1-888-222-2228.

### [The Trevor Project](#)

The Trevor Project's goal is to prevent LGBTQIA+ youth suicides. It offers a 24/7 hotline that you can text at 678-678 or call at 1-866-488-7386. It also has [online support groups](#).

### [NJ PRISM](#)

The PRISM hotline operates 24/7 and provides information and referrals to the LGBTQIA+ community. It can help connect you to services and programs in New Jersey that you may be eligible for. Call 844-657-7476.

## Housing

*The housing services below are for emergency scenarios or for New Jersey youth who find themselves in unsafe situations.*

### [Mary's Place](#)

Located in Mercer County, Mary's Place is a LGBTQIA+ affirming safe housing program for young people, ages 18-21. In addition to the supervised living conditions, staff can help you connect to mental and physical health care, financial education, employment preparation, and more.

### [Together \(Shelter\)](#)

Together is a 24-hour emergency shelter for kids ages 9-18, who need a safe place to stay. It is a walk-in shelter, meaning you'll get help as soon as you enter its doors. In addition to food, clothing, and medical services, staff can connect you with counseling, educational services, and recreational activities. It is LGBTQIA+ affirming.

### [RAIN Foundation](#)

Located in Essex County, Reaching Adolescents In Need (RAIN) Foundation is a non-profit that provides emergency shelter for LGBT individuals, ages 18 to 26, who are experiencing crisis leading to homelessness.

### [Covenant House](#)

For youth between the ages of 18 to 21 facing homelessness, Covenant House provides residential and supportive services. There are also programs for young, first-time mothers.

## More resources

For additional resources, visit the [NJ Youth Resource Spot](#), [PeformCare's Resources for LGBTQIA+ Youth](#), and the [NJ Transgender Resource Hub](#).

For any questions on this, please contact NJ DCF Office of Communications, [communications@dcf.nj.gov](mailto:communications@dcf.nj.gov)