

Work resumes on the nation's only major transgender study

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After two years of delays, work on the only comprehensive study of transgender life has restarted. The National Center for Transgender Equality announced on Monday that it is collecting data for a [2022 U.S. Transgender Survey \(USTS\)](#).

The USTS, which started in 2013, has provided some of the only thorough research on transgender health, employment, housing, education and experiences of discrimination, stepping in where federal data collection has failed. Josie Caballero, the survey project manager, said that people from every state had already signed an online [pledge](#) to complete the survey. The last survey in 2015 drew more than 27,000 responses. Organizers say they expect an even bigger sampling this year.

“Just looking around and seeing the amount of trans people that are just so openly proud to be trans people, we are expecting a large number of people to take a survey, much more than before,” Caballero said. “But time will tell.”

The data has been used by [Congress](#), the Supreme Court, major news agencies, law enforcement, universities, medical institutions and local governments for everything from writing legislation to creating social service programs. But the pandemic and internal turmoil threatened to thwart this latest release.

The study was due out in 2020, but as staff were gearing up to conduct research in 2019, leadership at the time was [hit with allegations of racism and union busting](#). The 23-person team, which helped the Obama administration craft the nation's first trans policies, was reduced to just [seven in a massive buyout](#).

The survey wasn't the only casualty of the exodus. [NCTE had been crucial](#) in securing protections for transgender people in the Affordable Care Act, creating policies that allowed gender marker changes on passports, and crafting nondiscrimination requirements for federally funded shelters, among other things.

Current Executive Director Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen was left to rebuild the organization's staff and brand, and said in late 2020 that the survey would be delayed by at least a year.

The NCTE website now boasts 14 staffers. The group has also launched the 2022 study in partnership with transgender organizations that are run by and serve communities of color — the Black Trans Advocacy Coalition, TransLatin@ Coalition, National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance. Caballero said the group has secured the backing of 150 transgender organizations nationwide.

“We've done a lot of internal work,” Caballero, who started in early 2021, said. In November, the organization [announced](#) the recognition of its staff union.

The 2022 survey will build upon the organization's past data. Caballero said the group will examine the impacts of COVID on the community, try to shed light on participation in sports as legislators target trans athletes, and explore fertility and families. Finally, the new survey will capture younger people; the organization is lowering the age requirement from 18 down to 16.

Trans people interested in taking the survey can [pledge to do so here](#). Data collection will begin in February. Results are expected out by the end of the year.