



BLACK CAUCUS COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JULY 9, 2025

“CENTERING THE VOICES OF THE BLACK TRANSGENDER
COMMUNITY IN LA COUNTY ”

INTRODUCTION

On July 9, 2025, the Black Caucus of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, in partnership with the Transgender Caucus and AMAAD Institute, hosted a community listening session at AMAAD Institute in South Los Angeles, centering Black transgender individuals and their experiences navigating sexual health systems of care. Facilitated by Diamond Paulk, the session explored stigma, access barriers, cultural responsiveness, and the need for affirming, wraparound care models. A total of eight participants attended and received a \$50 Visa gift card, refreshments, and community resources.

OBJECTIVE

Through community listening sessions focusing on seven key populations identified in the Black Caucus (formerly the Black/African American Community Taskforce [BAAC]) recommendations, we aim to quantify the sexual health needs of Black communities in Los Angeles County. These discussions will guide improvements in HIV prevention and care service delivery, ensuring cultural responsiveness and a comprehensive understanding of the diverse sexual health care needs of our Black communities in Los Angeles County.



KEY DISCUSSION TAKEAWAYS

Stigma, Safety, and Structural Discrimination. Participants shared the harsh reality of navigating systems that often criminalize their identities. Several expressed concern over recent rollbacks in DEI efforts and the chilling effect of national anti-transgender rhetoric. They described being highly selective about the spaces they enter, and how safety is never assumed. This heightened vigilance is a direct result of both anti-Blackness and transphobia.

Culturally Responsive and Affirming Care. The need for care that understands and affirms Black transgender identity was a resounding theme. Participants described feeling unseen by providers, misgendered at intake, and dismissed in clinical settings. Many providers, they noted, lack the cultural education and humility necessary to meet their needs with dignity and respect.

Education was called out as grossly lacking in the healthcare system—with a clear consensus that trans-competency, racial equity, and cultural humility must be mandatory components of medical and allied health provider training.

A One-Stop Hub for Health & Wellness. There was strong support for the creation of a centralized, comprehensive health and wellness hub—designed by and for Black trans people. Such a space would offer wraparound services including HIV prevention, hormone therapy, mental health support, job readiness training, housing referrals, and spiritual support—all in one location.

Barriers to Access. Barriers included being turned away due to mismatched identification, fear of mistreatment, and providers who lacked gender-affirming training. Participants noted that while programs may exist, they are often siloed or unknown within trans communities.

Spirituality and the Role of the Church. Faith-based community members acknowledged the need to create inclusive and affirming dialogue within spiritual spaces. One participant noted that while they found support within their own spiritual community, “the church must also be the place where these conversations happen.” Given the church’s centrality in many Black communities, participants emphasized the importance of engaging faith leaders in sexual health and trans advocacy.

Perspectives from Non-Trans Participants. Providers and allies in attendance expressed gratitude for the opportunity to listen, learn, and be educated. Several emphasized that understanding culturally appropriate language is a critical first step toward providing responsive and affirming care. They acknowledged the need for deeper training and ongoing relationship-building with trans communities to ensure their services are truly inclusive.

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FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish** trans-led wellness hubs with wraparound services.
- **Require** intersectional cultural humility training for providers, including mandatory trans and racial competency curricula.
- **Fund** and **amplify** trans voices in health planning and policy development.
- **Engage** Black faith-based institutions in affirming conversations about gender and sexual health.
- **Expand** community health worker and peer navigator programs led by Black trans individuals.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

The session concluded with appreciation for participants' honesty, courage, and willingness to share. The Black Caucus reaffirmed its commitment to uplifting these voices and translating their insights into concrete policy recommendations, systems change, and program investments.

Participants recommended continuing these conversations and hosting a 'Bridging the Gap' collaborative session. This future gathering would invite broader community participation to learn from one another, share experiences, and collectively bridge the gap that too often divides us and fosters stigma.

