

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Harvard University

The Gender Inclusive Restroom Mapping Project

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): #8

Description of Work:

It is well documented that transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals face disproportionate rates of harassment, especially in restroom facilities. According to the 2015 National Transgender Discrimination Survey, more than half (59%) of respondents avoided using a public restroom that year because they were afraid of confrontations or other problems they might experience. The same survey indicated that nearly half (46%) reported having experienced verbal harassment in the past year.

In a 2017 survey of 153 LGBTQ student experiences at Harvard, 29% of open-text responses to the question “Do you feel safe at Harvard?” cited hostility to gender-nonconforming community members as a factor that contributed to feeling unsafe. Responses characterizing such experiences included: “Buildings need more gender-neutral restrooms,” “I am completely closeted as a genderqueer person... because my department can’t handle that,” and “Being told [we] can’t use the bathroom that matches [our] gender identity.” Responsive resources that increase accessibility and combat marginalization are necessary to benefit those who are directly affected and to improve the climate of inclusion for all.

Consistent with the NASEM recommendation of “*identifying and reinforcing community values*,” the Gender Inclusive Restroom Mapping Project for Harvard University seeks to ensure that all Harvard community members and guests, including those who are transgender, gender non-binary, and gender nonconforming, have an accurate and inclusive means of locating restroom facilities while on campus. The project will inventory and discreetly communicate, via a mobile/web application, where gender neutral and/or inclusive restrooms are located in every building on Harvard’s Allston, Cambridge, Boston campuses.

The Project aims to develop a School-approved inventory of inclusive bathroom spaces to be displayed on an interactive map of Harvard’s campuses. Information about campus bathrooms in each building and descriptions of their locations would be displayed by tapping on the map or using a search function. This project is ongoing with a completion date of September 30, 2020.

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Website for further information: innovationfund.evp.harvard.edu/gender-inclusive-mapping-harvard-university

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