

Council Bill 15-0249R

1 “survival crimes” such as shoplifting or prostitution. While living in the streets, these youth
2 are more likely to be detained in police sweeps and arrested for unpaid fines or outstanding
3 warrants.”

4 And once in the hands of the juvenile justice system homeless LGBTQ youth often do poorly.
5 They risk the permeant stigma of criminal convictions if charged as adults and are cut off from
6 the supportive services that they may need. Worse, in a national survey of juvenile justice
7 professionals, 80% cited physical safety as being a critical problem for LGBTQ youth.

8 This cycle of victimization and narrowing opportunity can be short circuited if shelters and
9 homeless services providers can present themselves as more welcoming to endangered homeless
10 LGBTQ youth. When providers offer appropriate, affirming placements and services, and treat
11 LGBTQ youth with respect, these youth are more likely to engage with them and benefit from the
12 resources that they can provide.

13 In many instances the inability of providers to communicate effectively with LGBTQ youths
14 or meet their particular needs is inadvertent, a product of misunderstanding rather than malice.
15 Cultural competence training in the needs of LGBTQ youths could greatly improve the ability of
16 these providers to reach this especially vulnerable population.

17 Cultural competence training is a widespread tool used to equip service providers and
18 professionals with a critical analysis and understanding of the various populations that they may
19 serve. LGBTQ cultural competence training specifically seeks to equip providers with a deeper
20 knowledge, understanding, and increased ability to provide effective services, create safer spaces,
21 and build trust and rapport with clients and consumers who may identify as LGBTQ.

22 Basic components of cultural competence training involve unpacking one’s own cultural
23 worldview, biases, and prejudices, and attaining new knowledge of language, terminology, and
24 the life experiences of different communities. Typically done in workshop style settings, training
25 can consist of a wide variety of activities – including PowerPoint lectures, small group
26 discussions, individual and organizational belief assessments and values clarifications, analysis
27 of service provision, and testimonials directly from LGBTQ community members.

28 If done effectively and taken seriously, a few of these sessions can significantly impact a
29 service provider’s ability to assist LGBTQ youth. If done systematically throughout Baltimore’s
30 network of homeless services providers, cultural competence training could dramatically alter the
31 accessibility of these services for this vulnerable population and reshape countless lives for the
32 better.

33 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
34 Council invites homeless services providers and advocates for LGBTQ youths to appear before it
35 to discuss how cultural competence training on the needs of these youths can be broadly provided
36 to service agencies to assist them in helping Baltimore’s vulnerable population of homeless
37 LGBTQ young people.

38 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
39 Director of the Mayor’s Office of Human Services, the Executive Director of the Journey Home,
40 the Health Commissioner, the President and CEO of Health Care for the Homeless, and the
41 Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.