



Evaluation Report: DC Black Pride 2023

ViiV Healthcare Initiative: Positive Action Community Grant

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Executive Summary:

This report presents an evaluation of the 2023 DC Black Pride event, assessing its success in addressing key areas of concern for the Black LGBTQ+ community. The event was designed to create a space for Black LGBTQ+ individuals to congregate and celebrate their community, while also offer programming that addressed mental and sexual health, orientation- and gender-affirmation, harm reduction, and social justice. Additionally, the event aimed to create opportunities for attendees to learn their HIV status and provided disease and sexual health preventatives. The report also examines the overall attendee satisfaction, with a specific focus on positive impressions. The findings demonstrate that the event achieved its objectives, providing valuable resources, education, and a positive experience for the majority of attendees.

Introduction:

This report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the 2023 DC Black Pride event, focusing on four key areas: programming addressing mental and sexual health, orientation- and gender-affirmation, harm reduction, and social justice; opportunities for attendees to learn their HIV status; provision of disease and sexual health preventatives; and attendee satisfaction. The evaluation aims to assess the event's effectiveness in meeting these objectives and achieving a positive impact on the Black LGBTQ+ community.

Purpose and Population Served:

The annual DC Black Pride event is a program of the Center for Black Equity inc., whose purpose for this event is to create a space for gathering, celebration, and information sharing among Black LGBTQ+ individuals. Event attendees visit from across the United States, but primarily are based in the DC Metropolitan area. This year over 17,000 individuals gathered in Washington, DC for the DC Black Pride weekend, which took place May 23-26. The majority of workshops, vending, and health-oriented activities took place in the Renaissance Washington, the host hotel of the event. In addition to this programming a series of partnerships with local party promoters in the DC metropolitan area were also made to host parties that catered to the target population.

Overview of DC Black Pride 2023

1) Programming Addressing Mental and Sexual Health, Orientation- and Gender-Affirmation, Harm Reduction, and Social Justice:

The 2023 DC Black Pride event showcased a diverse and robust program addressing crucial aspects of the Black LGBTQ+ community's well-being. Programming focused on mental and sexual health, orientation- and gender-affirmation, harm reduction, and social justice. Key highlights include:

a) Mental and Sexual Health: The event featured workshops, panel discussions, and interactive sessions conducted by experts in the field. Topics covered included mental health resilience (e.g., “Resources for LGBTQIA+ Veterans”), faith practices within the Black community (e.g., “Faith in Blackness”), healthy relationships, sexual health and disease preventative education (e.g., “PrEP for Pride”), and addressing the unique challenges faced by the Black LGBTQ+ community. Attendees had access to valuable resources and information to promote their well-being.

b) Orientation- and Gender-Affirmation: The event celebrated the diverse identities within the Black LGBTQ+ community. Workshops and seminars provided a supportive environment for individuals to explore their gender identity and sexual orientation (e.g., “Lez Talk About it”), workshops that provided introductions to sexual expression exploration (e.g., “Onyx University”), discussions surrounding gender expression and pronoun use (e.g., “Pots, Pans, and Pronouns”; “Trans Town Hall”), and spaces to foster self-acceptance and empowerment through creative expression (e.g., “DC Black Pride Mary Bowman Poetry Slam”; “Writer’s Forum”).

c) Harm Reduction: The event incorporated harm reduction strategies by offering educational sessions on substance abuse prevention, safe sex practices, and safer drug use techniques (e.g., “Brunch & Babes: 2nd Annual Black Pride Iconic Drag Brunch”). Attendees received information on harm reduction resources, reducing the risk of HIV transmission, and accessing LGBTQ+ affirmative healthcare services (e.g., “PrEP for Pride”).

d) Social Justice: DC Black Pride actively promoted social justice initiatives through panel discussions, advocacy workshops, and community engagement activities. The event facilitated meaningful conversations surrounding racial equality, intersectionality, navigating life as a Black LGBTQ+ individual, and the importance of inclusive policies for the Black LGBTQ+ community (e.g., “Moves Tank: Exploring What the Body Holds and How to Use them in Black and Brown Spaces”; “Resources for LGBTQIA+ Veterans”; “Trans Town Hall”; “Writer’s Forum”).

2) Opportunities for Attendees to Learn their HIV Status:

A critical component of the 2023 DC Black Pride event was the provision of opportunities for attendees to learn their HIV status. This year DC Black Pride partnered with DC Health and Us Helping Us to provide these services at the Health and Wellness Pavilion in the host hotel. The organizers collaborated with local healthcare partners and implemented the following initiatives:

- a) **On-Site Testing:** The event provided accessible and confidential on-site HIV testing services, as well as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis. Trained healthcare professionals conducted rapid tests, ensuring privacy and sensitivity in delivering test results. Attendees had the opportunity to be aware of their HIV and sexual health status, promoting early detection, linkage to care and information regarding necessary follow-up care. They offered information on available resources, prevention strategies, and referrals to healthcare facilities for further assistance.
- b) **Community Engagement:** The event emphasized the importance of regular HIV testing within the Black LGBTQ+ community. Through informative sessions and outreach activities, attendees were encouraged to discuss HIV prevention and testing with their peers, further promoting awareness and knowledge dissemination.

3) Provision of Disease and Sexual Health Preventatives:

To ensure the well-being of attendees, the 2023 DC Black Pride event took proactive measures in providing disease and sexual health preventatives. Key initiatives included:

- a) **Distribution of Safe Sex Kits:** Safe sex kits, including condoms, lubricants, and educational materials, were distributed throughout the event as part of the DC Black Pride “swag bags”. Attendees were equipped with the necessary tools to engage in safer sexual practices, reducing the risk of sexually transmitted infections.
- b) **Vaccination Campaign:** In collaboration with local health authorities, the Health and Wellness Pavilion at DC Black Pride facilitated a vaccination campaign offering free and accessible COVID-19 and other relevant vaccines including MPOX (officially known as Monkeypox). This initiative prioritized the health and safety of attendees amidst the ongoing pandemic, emphasizing the importance of immunization.
- c) **Informational Resources:** Information booths were set up in the vendor area (i.e., Rainbow Row) as well as the Health and Wellness Pavilion to disseminate educational materials on disease prevention, sexual health, and the availability of local healthcare services. Attendees had access to up-to-date resources and information, empowering them to make informed decisions regarding their health.

4) Attendee Satisfaction:

A crucial aspect of evaluating the 2023 DC Black Pride event is measuring attendee satisfaction. Based on comprehensive post-event surveys conducted among attendees, the results indicate that:

a) 97% of attendees (i.e., 108 respondents) reported an overall positive impression of the event, highlighting its impact on their sense of community, well-being, safety, and empowerment. There were 3% of attendees (i.e., 3 respondents) who indicated a neutral experience.

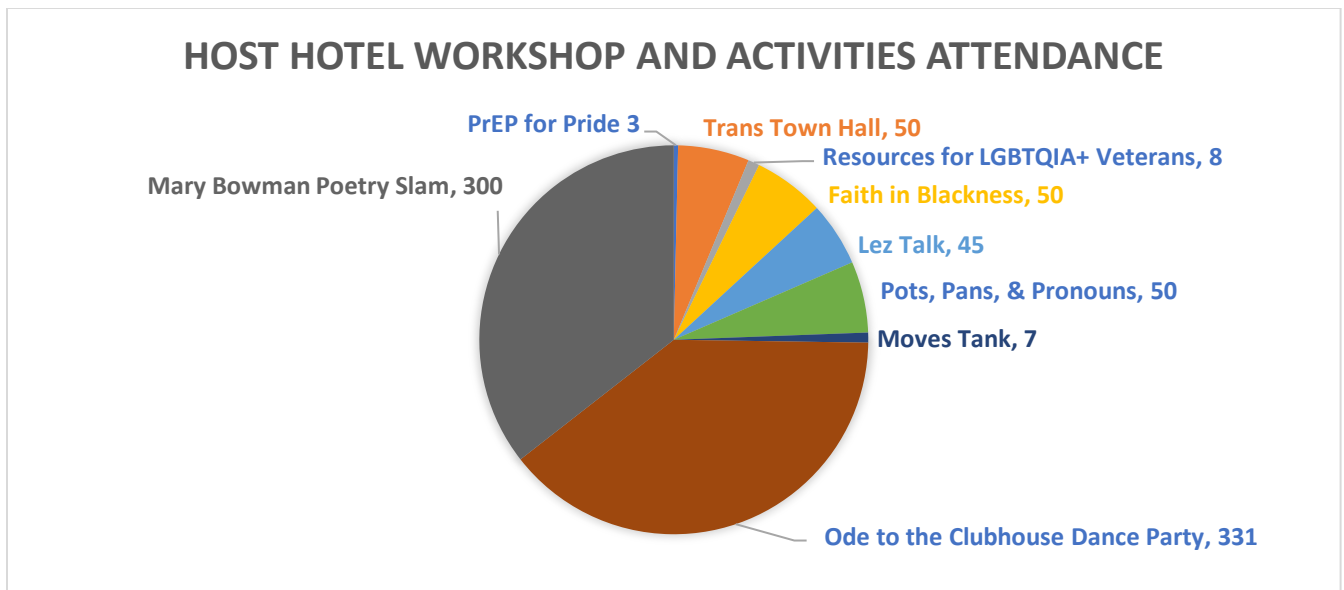
b) 97% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the programming addressing mental and sexual health, orientation- and gender-affirmation, harm reduction, and social justice. The sessions were deemed informative, relevant, and inclusive, providing attendees with valuable insights and resources. The availability of on-site testing through the Health and Wellness Pavilion and staff providing services received positive feedback, emphasizing the importance of supportive HIV awareness within the Black LGBTQ+ community.

DC Black Pride 2023 Program and Data

1) Programming Addressing Mental and Sexual Health, Orientation- and Gender-Affirmation, Harm Reduction, and Social Justice:

The 2023 DC Black Pride event prioritized programming that addressed the diverse needs of the Black LGBTQ+ community. Multiple workshops, panel discussions, and interactive sessions were organized to provide information and support in various areas. All workshop programs and activities offered within the host hotel were free to attendees to ensure economic situations would not be a barrier.

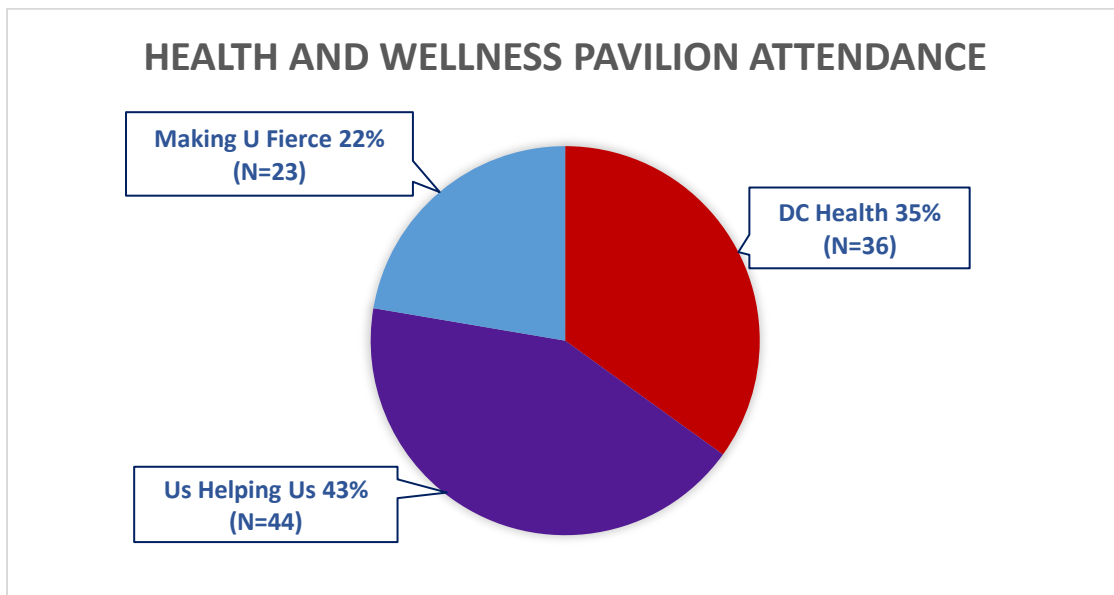
Mental health workshops focused on addressing issues such as stigma, self-care, and coping strategies. Sexual health programming covered topics like safer sex practices, STI prevention, and access to healthcare services. Orientation- and gender-affirmation workshops aimed to create a safe space for attendees to explore and express their identities. Harm reduction discussions centered around substance abuse, addiction, and strategies to reduce associated risks. Finally, social justice sessions focused on advocacy, intersectionality, and addressing systemic inequities. Feedback from attendees indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programming, with over 98% expressing that it met their needs and expectations.



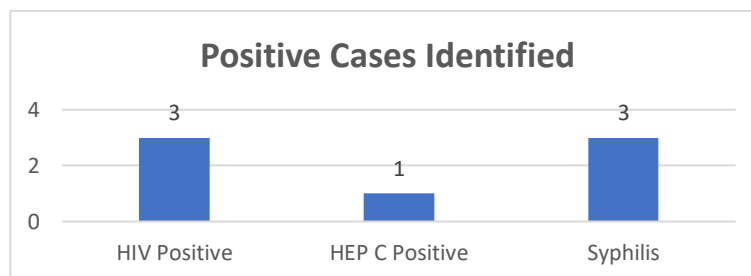
Approximately 844 individuals attended the workshops and activities on Saturday. The host hotel activities that held the greatest attendances (N= 631) were those that promoted intergenerational community across all aspects of the LGBTQ+ spectrum (i.e., Mary Bowman Poetry Slam; Ode to the Clubhouse Dance Party). These free activities were integral to creating the sense of “family” and “community” reported by 98% of attendees.

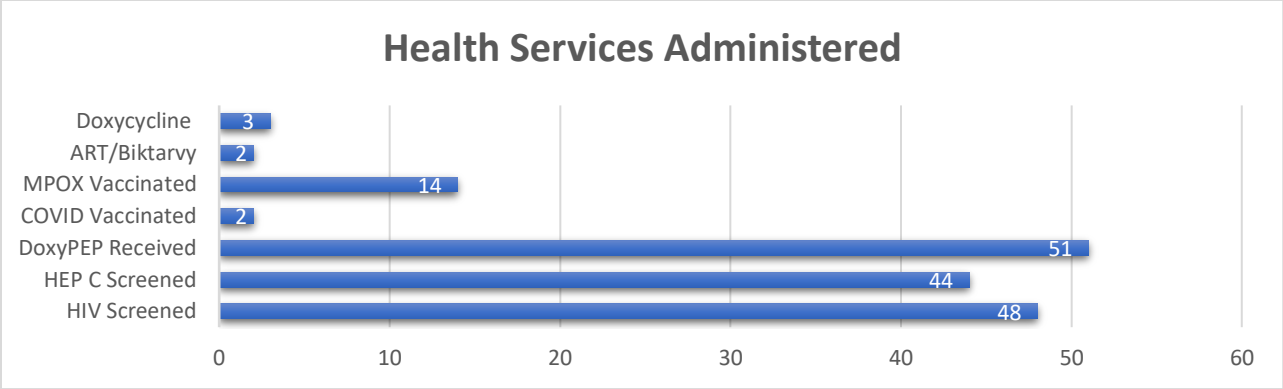
2) Opportunities for HIV Testing, Education and Wellness:

DC Black Pride placed significant emphasis on promoting HIV testing and education, as well as caring for the whole individual. Service vendors were sourced from the local health department (i.e., DC Health), a DC-based sexual health and wellness nonprofit that caters to the Black and Brown population (i.e., Us Helping Us), and a local Black, lesbian-owned aesthetician company (i.e., Making U Fierce). These vendors were chosen for the variety of services offered, as well as to address the needs of the DC Black Pride attendees. This combination of services saw over 100 individuals.

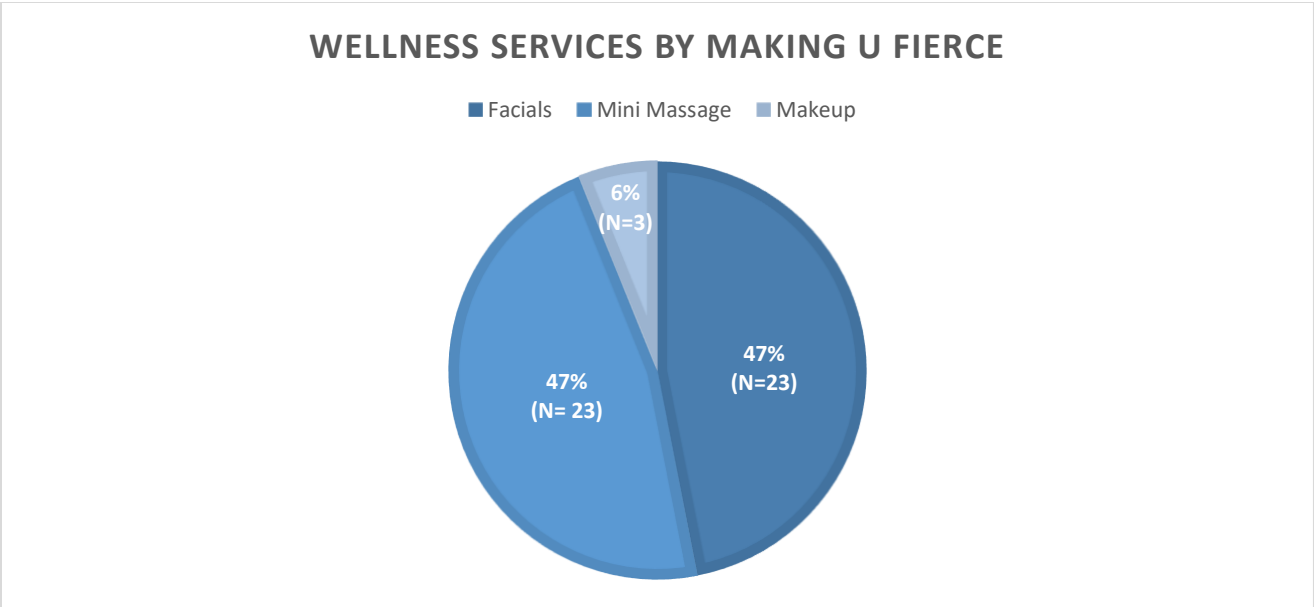


Reaffirming DC Black Pride’s commitment to sexual health awareness and education, on-site testing facilities were set up, offering free and confidential HIV testing to attendees by DC Health and Us Helping Us. Rapid tests for Chlamydia, Syphilis, and Hepatitis C were also offered. Trained healthcare professionals provided pre- and post-test counseling, ensuring individuals had access to accurate information and support. Individual educational sessions were conducted with attendees to raise awareness about HIV transmission, prevention, and available resources. Additional preventative services were offered through COVID and MPOX vaccination, and disbursement of DoxyPEP, PrEP, and Doxycycline. These services allowed for more than 51 individuals to receive HIV testing, or a sexual health related treatment.





The aesthetician services offered by Making U Fierce through the Health and Wellness Pavilion largely focused on improving how attendees felt physically, as well as education on skin care during a treatment. Facials, massage, and makeup services were offered, with a total of 23 attendees taking advantage of this offering.



Attendees quantitatively and qualitatively reported their appreciation of the convenience and accessibility of on-site testing. 100% of attendees to the Health and Wellness Pavilion reported having a positive experience with the offerings, as well as the compassionate and warm staffers administering services.

3) Disease and Sexual Health Preventatives:

The event took proactive measures to ensure the provision of disease and sexual health preventatives to attendees. Free condom and lubricant distribution booths were strategically placed throughout the venue at the vendor's Rainbow Row area, as well as the Health and Wellness Pavilion booths. Vendor booths also offered educational materials, including pamphlets and brochures, covering a wide range of topics such as STIs, preventatives, contraceptive methods, and overall sexual health. Attendees who visited the vendor tables reported feeling well-informed and appreciative of the event's commitment to promoting safe sexual practices.

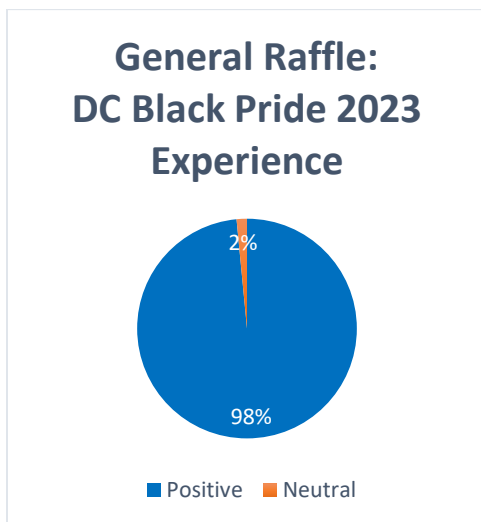
Center for Black Equity worked with tabling vendors, sponsors, and local organizations to also provide additional materials in the official "DC Black Pride Swag Bags". These reusable bags were provided to all attendees who visited the host hotel, and 550 were given out. Swag bag contents included: physical copies of the Pride Guide, which lists the workshops and events for the weekend as well as includes advertisements from local providers and businesses; condoms and lubricant; and hand flyers and business cards for local healthcare services as well as pharmaceutical companies offering biomedical intervention medications.

A local nonprofit who serves the House/Ballroom community, the Capitol Ballroom Council, provided additional sexual health and harm reduction kits. Recognizing the growing impact of substance abuse among the Black LGBTQ+ community, harm reduction kits that included Naloxone, condoms, lubricant, facemasks, fentanyl testing strips, and information regarding how to test substances for harmful chemicals were provided. 550 of these small harm reduction kits were provided at various events throughout the weekend to ensure that safety was a priority for all event weekend attendees and participants.

4) Positive Impressions and Overall Experience:

To assess the attendees' impressions and overall experience, a comprehensive survey was conducted following the conclusion of DC Black Pride. The results indicated an overwhelmingly positive response, with 97% of respondents reporting a positive impression of the overall event. Key factors contributing to this positive experience included the diverse and relevant programming, the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, the availability of resources, the sense of “family” in the spaces, and the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals. Attendees expressed gratitude for the event's impact on their mental and sexual well-being, as well as its role in fostering a sense of community and empowerment.

Impression data was collected from three sources, two raffles occurring during the DC Black Pride 2023 weekend (i.e., “General Raffle”, “Health and Wellness Pavilion Raffle”) as well as a feedback survey sent out after the event weekend (i.e., “Feedback Survey”). Through these tools, 111 individuals provided their overall experience impressions along a scale of “positive” “neutral” and “negative” experiences. The option to provide qualitative explanations for their responses were also available.



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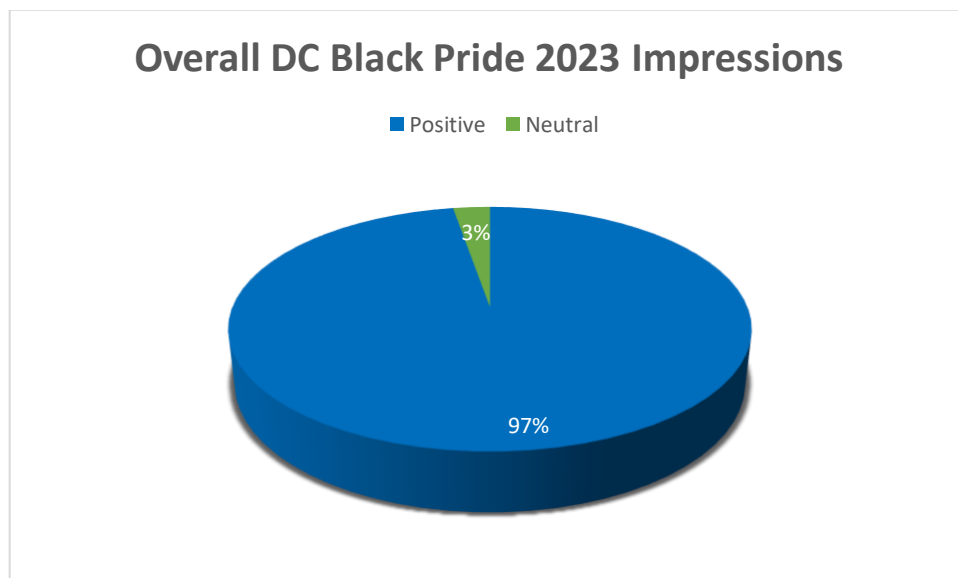
General raffle responses indicated 98% of 66 individuals had a positive experience at DC Black Pride, 1 person indicated a neutral experience because they were working during the event. Qualitative data indicated themes of appreciation for the “Black Queerness” of the experience, the friendliness of attendees and staff, feeling safe to be one’s “authentic self”, and the sense of “family”.

The most positive responses were found among the attendees who visited the Health and Wellness Pavilion. Only attendees who received a provided service or treatment were able to gain access to this form, and 100% indicated a positive experience with DC Black Pride 2023:



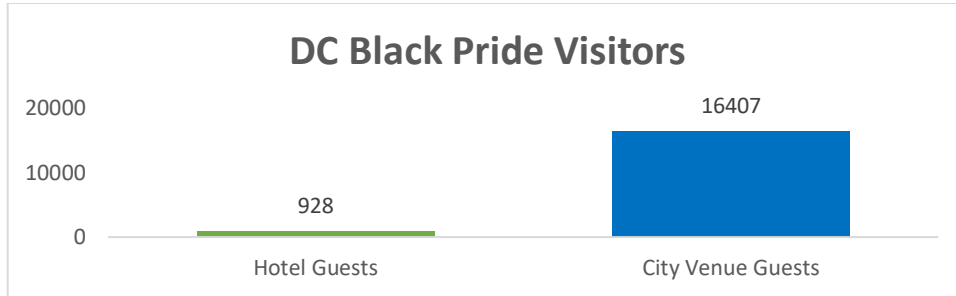
Qualitative response data from this sample not only highlighted a general positive experience, but themes related the services provided at the Health and Wellness Pavilion including “friendly and professional vendors”, welcoming and educational services, and appreciation for the emphasis on being able to check on one’s personal health. These findings indicate that this offering was instrumental to the overall positive experience of DC Black Pride 2023 attendees.

Data collected through the feedback survey following the weekend was small (N=9), and has been included in the following aggregate impressions chart below (N=111)

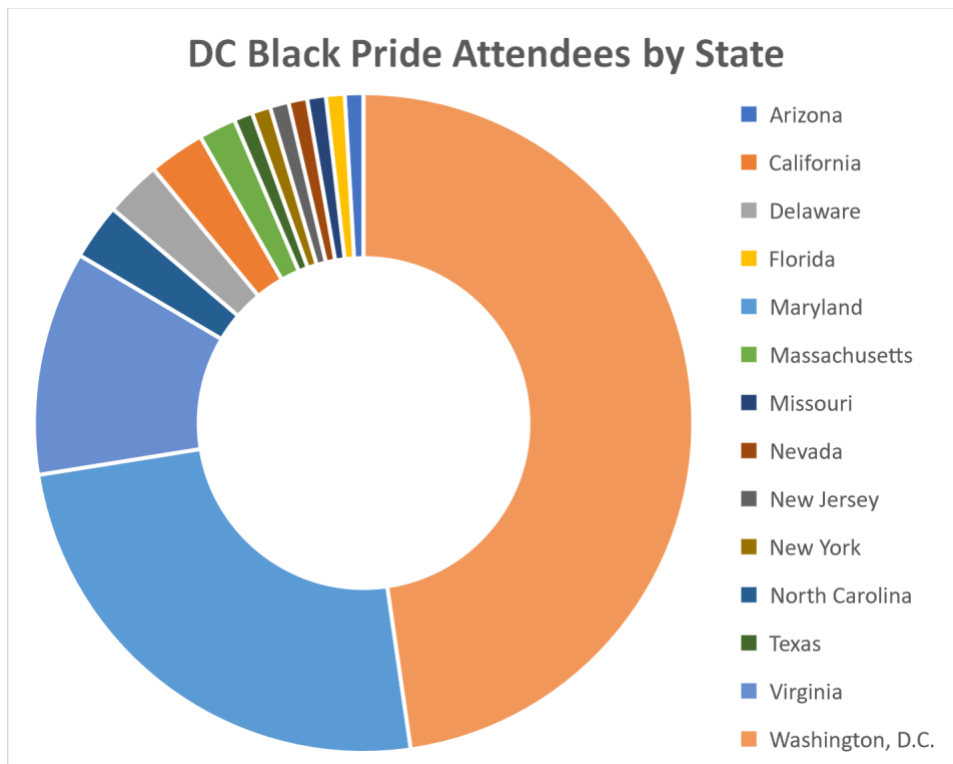


5) Hotel and Venue Attendance in Washington, DC:

One aspect of the DC Black Pride event weekend that must also be acknowledged is the economic impact attendees have on the city of Washington, DC. Across the event weekend, it is estimated that 17,335 guests offered patronage to the host hotel and various venues (e.g., clubs, bars, lounges, restaurants, etc.) in the city. However, many guests of the weekend do not participate in activities organized by Center for Black Equity, and we are unable to capture their attendance in this report. Data from the official event hosting venues and Renaissance Washington hotel block guests contribute to the following totals:



While this official count is much lower than the actual number of guests in Washington, DC for the weekend’s events, both official and unofficial, data collected through the feedback and raffle surveys indicated guests represented 14 states:



Positive Action Community Grant Objectives and Outcomes

- 1. Will Center for Black Equity maintain their commitment to the Black and Queer community by offering programming that address mental and sexual health, orientation- and gender-affirmation, harm reduction, and social justice for this community?**

Through the workshops and events described in this report, it is evident that Center for Black Equity's DC Black Pride 2023 weekend maintained a strong commitment to the Black LGBTQ+ community. Community feedback in response to program offerings highlight the success of this event in creating a safe space for Black individuals to congregate, celebrate, and care for themselves. The introduction of a Health and Wellness Pavilion and partnering with local organizations to provide harm reduction tools, allowed this event to offer weekend-long immersion into topics and experiences that cater to the target population.

- 2. During the event, will at least 50 attendees learn their HIV status, and/or receive linkage to care?**

The services offered through partnering entities DC Health and Us Helping Us at the Health and Wellness Pavilion ensured this objective was met. Among other services highlighted in this report, the two vendors reported a total of 48 HIV screenings, with 3 newly positive results, as well as 51 attendees receiving DoxyPEP.

- 3. Will DC Black Pride offer relevant disease and sexual health preventatives to attendees?**

Across the weekend, condoms, dental dams, lubricants, PrEP, and PEP were discussed and offered. Specific workshops were provided on these topics, however the emphasis on sexual status awareness and health were ongoing themes for the event. Through the Health and Wellness Pavilion, Us Helping Us was able to screen for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis, and offer immediate treatments and linkage to care for those who were positive or thought they may have been exposed. Additionally, DC Health offered COVID and MPOX vaccinations to support prevention of new infections.

- 4. Will at last 90% of the participants report positive impressions of their experience?**

Across all data collection tools, 97% of respondents indicated a "positive" experience with DC Black Pride 2023, with 3% responding "neutral". No negative impressions were reported.

Conclusion:

The 2023 DC Black Pride event successfully addressed the mental and sexual health, orientation- and gender-affirmation, harm reduction, and social justice needs of the Black LGBTQ+ community. By providing programming that covered these critical areas, creating opportunities for HIV testing and education, offering disease and sexual health preventatives, and generating a positive overall experience, the event demonstrated its commitment to the well-being and empowerment of its attendees. The overwhelming majority of respondents reported a positive impression of the event, indicating its significance as a valuable resource and catalyst for positive change within the community. The success of the 2023 DC Black Pride event serves as a testament to the importance of providing comprehensive support and advocacy for the Black LGBTQ+ population.