

About Us

The Williams Institute is the leading research center on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy. We ensure that facts—not stereotypes—inform laws, policies, and judicial decisions that affect the LGBTQ community.

Our Mission

The Williams Institute is dedicated to conducting rigorous, independent research on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy. The Institute disseminates its research to policymakers, judges, the media, and other stakeholders to ensure that decisions impacting the lives of millions of LGBTQ people and families are based on data and facts.

History

The Williams Institute was founded in 2001 by businessman and philanthropist Charles Williams, Bill Rubenstein, Brad Sears, and scholars at UCLA School of Law. Their goal was to replace the pervasive bias against LGBTQ people in law, policy, and culture with independent research on LGBT issues.

The Institute's early years established a commitment to interdisciplinary research that continues today. Scholars analyzed the impact of marriage equality, filed amicus briefs in seminal cases like *Lawrence v. Texas*, and studied the demographic characteristics of same-sex couples. In 2011, the Williams Institute released one of the first data-backed estimates of the LGBT population in the U.S., which shed light on the potential impact of policies and laws on LGBT people nationwide.

For nearly two decades, policymakers, lawmakers, advocates, and the courts have relied on the Williams Institute's expertise. Williams Institute scholars have consulted with government agencies to improve federal data collection of LGBT people. They have provided testimony to Congress in hearings on Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Justice Anthony Kennedy cited Williams Institute estimates on the number of same-sex couples raising children as a deciding factor in the landmark decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which granted marriage equality in the U.S.

Today, the Williams Institute has an annual budget of over \$4.5 million and a staff of 25 with expertise in economics, public health, demographics, public policy, psychology, and law.